



The Trinity Window

January 2024

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

292 Orange St. New Haven, CT. 06510
Phone: 203.787.6521 | Fax: 203.776.7915
office@TrinityLutheranNH.org

www.TrinityLutheranNH.org



From the Pastor

*Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.
For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the Lord will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.
(Isaiah 60:1-2)*

Arise, shine! The true Light, Jesus Christ, has come to shine on you! Into the midst the cold New Year, into the midst of the January darkness, into the midst of our post-holiday slump, and even into the midst of our sin and death, Jesus Christ comes to shine on you and me and all the world!

On January 7, we will celebrate the Epiphany, remembering the manifestation of Jesus to the Wise Men. Strangers from outside of Israel, the Wise Men were led by the light of the star as far as Jerusalem. But it was only when they could go no further, and stopped to ask for directions from King Herod, that they heard the promises of the Scriptures, that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. Finding the star stopped

over the house, they found the child Jesus with Mary, his mother, and bowed down to worship him. They then returned to their home country changed, "by another road."

So **"rise and shine"** and start the Year of our Lord 2024 off right! Come and worship Him who shines upon you, come and find new direction for a new year, come and hear the sure and certain promises of God for you. Come and be changed by God's grace shining upon you, upon his people at Trinity, and on all the world.

This January we continue our Christmas celebrations with the **Epiphany** on January 7 and look forward to a new year of mission and ministry at Trinity with our **Annual Meeting** after worship on January 28. Throughout 2024 we will **"rise and shine"** anew with many opportunities for growing together more closely as a congregation, and serving God through serving our neighbors and community.

So Blessed Epiphany, and Happy New Year 2024!

And **"Arise, shine, for your light has come!"**

--Pastor Mills+

Sanctuary Eternal Light

Burns to the glory of God *In Memory of:*
Charles Rhinebeck and
Viginina Masciola **Dec 17th**

Burns to the glory of God *In Honor of:*
Erik Sundermann **Dec 3rd**
Logan Setaro **Dec 10th**
Beth Lubenow **Dec 24th**

Altar Flowers



Given to the glory of God...
In Memory of all the Faithful De-
parted

Shirley King **Dec 3rd**
Charles Rhinebeck and
Viginina Masciola **Dec 17th**

In Honor of:

Men's Fellowship Group

The next meeting of the Men's Fellowship Group will be announced at an upcoming worship service. Please stay tuned for details. Please contact Pastor Mills with any questions.

Trinity Window Articles

Trinity Window articles for the next issue are due by the 15th of every month. It is important that you get your articles in on time and think ahead for the next month. Please email articles to: Office@TrinityLutheranNH.org.

Articles **must** be submitted in **WORD** or **PDF** format.

PLEASE DO NOT EMBED THE TEXT OF YOUR ARTICLE IN THE EMAIL.

Oremus

"Let us pray"

This month we prayed for the following members and friends of Trinity who were sick and/or hospitalized:

Karen Johnson, Annie Wright, John Chaffin, Donald Langlois Jr., Christine Thomforde, Margaret Hawkins, Thaddeus Gensicki, Pat Panza, Jake Swanson, Don Johnston, Sandy Langlois, Debbie Boychuck, Joseph Aceto Jr., Michael Pingle, Richard Werner, Mindy Durham, Dan Zawack, Rosie Weaver, Amanda Rice-Johnston, William Douglas, Julia Kanozo, Rita Roman, Mike & Lucy Nieves, Nancy Kops, Yoly Ortiz, Rachel Thompson, Katheryn Patrick, Wendy Lynn, Allison Empringham, Mimi Thompson, Mary Ellen Schoonmaker, Philip Cerrone, Sandy Noonan, Maria Roman, Elizabeth Leone, Pamela Simone, Vincent Villano, Frank Wright, Esther Goffinet, Nicole Donzello, Cindy Quinn, David Lewis, Glenn Pelc, Joe Marinelli, Suzanne Pallanti, Florence Flynn, Carol Lee Robinson, Melanie Thayer, Mary Wade Home and all assisted living facilities, Christian Community Action, and all who serve in the armed forces, especially: Daniel Burk, Christopher Bushy, Justin Coonrod, Jonathan Outlaw, and Ben deLaubell.



Upcoming Events

Here is a preliminary listing for the events we have for this month. Please mark your calendars in advance so you can save the dates.

January

Jan 8 th	5:00 pm	Confirmation Class
Jan 14 th	After Worship	Blood Pressure Screen
Jan 18 th	2:45 pm	Mary Wade Home
Jan 18 th	7:00 pm	Choir Practice
Jan 22 nd	5:00 pm	Confirmation Class
Jan 28 th	After Worship	Annual Meeting

Confirmation Classes will be held at Christ the Good Shepherd in Hamden

Operation Christmas Child



Operation Christmas Child

"Rejoice in the Lord always, Again say Rejoice"

Merry Christmas and Happy New Years to you all.

I am indeed Rejoicing in our Lord and all does for each of us.

Thank you to the many wonderful volunteers who came together and helped in oh so many ways. Collection week 2023 was phenomenal.

397 shoeboxes passed through Trinity during collection week. Up 82 shoeboxes from last year.

Thanks be to God..

Remaining items from our packing party in October have been inventoried and stored away in anticipation of packing party 2024.

Some information that some of you may not know. 2023 marks the 10th year Trinity has seen a drop of location for collection week.

In our first 9 years we took in a total of 7 098 shoeboxes.

Every 60 seconds

20 people hear the Gospel

8 people enroll in The greatest Journey

6 people Graduate The Greatest Journey

5 people accept Jesus

5 people to Pray/share.

As always it is never too early to start shopping for shoebox items for 2024. The OCC collection box is always available in the Narthex

Remember your standard size shoeboxes are always welcomed.

Once again thank you all very much for your continued support of this Ministry.

Happy New Years and blessings to you all.

Yours for the Children

Barbara Mourer Shoebox Chairperson/ Drop off Coordinator

Mary Wade Service

Join us in our outreach to The Mary Wade Home, 118 Clinton Avenue, New Haven. Come help sing, assist in worship and/or visit with the residents! Our next service will be Thursday, January 18 at 2:45pm.

CHURCH COUNCIL

President – Scott Prud'homme – scott.prudhomme@outlook.com

Vice-President - Ruth Setaro - ruthsetaro@snet.net

Secretary - Louise Bahner - lbahner4117@gmail.com

Heidi Edgerton - Heidi.edgerton@gmail.com

Drew Gensicki - drew.gensicki@gmail.com

Nancy Lamont - nlamont359@gmail.com

Deborah Nicolson – debnicolson@optimum.net

Linda Thompson - linthompson125@yahoo.com

Pastor Mills - pastor@trinitylutherannah.org

Weather Related Church Closings

Winter is here and we never know what it can bring! Please note that any weather related delays, cancellations or closing of Trinity will be broadcast on WTNH 8, WFSB 3, NBC 30 and Fox 61. This information is also available on their websites at www.wtnh.com, www.fox61.com, www.wfsb.com and www.nbcconnecticut.com

Annual Meeting / Reports

On Sunday, January 28th after worship Trinity will hold its 158th Annual Meeting. All members are encouraged to attend!

Annual Reports are due in the office by Wednesday, January 10, 2023. The reports must be submitted in either WORD or PDF format.

Monthly B.P. Screening



Deb Nicolson, Parish Nurse, has scheduled the next Blood Pressure Screenings for **Sunday, Jan 14th** Deb will do the screenings in Pastor's office after worship. A quick cleaning of equipment will be done

between each person.

DON'T FORGET YOUR FLU SHOT and the UPDATED COVID VACCINE ! if it is recommended by your doctor. Also, anyone over age 60 should consider getting the RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) vaccine.

Are You Interested in Serving?

Are you interested in serving on the Altar Guild, being a lector, or usher? Please email or call the office to let us know how you would like to assist in worship at Trinity. The office phone number is 203-787-6521 or email Office@TrinityLutheranNH.org

INSPIRATION

Faith is the bird that feels the light when the dawn is still dark.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)

Where Are You ?

As you might imagine the church has quite a collection of phone numbers, home and email addresses. We are hoping to "clean-up" our files and get rid of any outdated information. We're asking that you please fill out one of the forms provided and return it to the church office.

PARKING AT TRINITY

Everyone is aware that there is limited off-street parking available at Trinity. There are spaces in the driveway and behind Emerson. We are happy to make these spaces available when possible. There are deliveries, and contractors who also need access to these spaces. **If you would like to use these spaces you MUST contact the church office for approval before you park. Do Not just park and assume that it's okay.**

ELEANOR HERPICH SCHOLARSHIPS

We are pleased to announce that the Eleanor Herpich Scholarships have been awarded to Kevin Morris, Ryan Morris and Patrick Morris. Congratulations ! The scholarships will be presented at a date to be determined

THANK YOU !

A very special THANK YOU to Pastor Gollenberg for filling in (on very short notice) and leading us in worship for the candlelight service on Christmas Eve.

Seafarers International House

Dear Friends of Seafarers –

Well, we made it. Happy, happy New Year! It has been a very busy several months as I have collected Christmas-at-Sea satchels from churches in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York, 393 in total plus many extras of hats, socks, t-shirts, candy, nuts and treats. It is truly AMAZING and I am so grateful for the tremendous support for this program.

I have spoken with seafarers far away from home this Christmas and talked to them about the loneliness they feel. One cook told me that he has been on the ship for 1 year because the company could not find anyone to replace him, his 3 children don't understand why he can't come home. He planned to prepared a special meal for the crew and that they would open their satchels while in the middle of the ocean heading to South Africa. They are lucky if they have a little time to celebrate because the work of the ship never stops.

And now, as the new year starts, I will officially be retiring on January 31. This has been a very difficult decision for me because ships and seafarers have been my life for the past 27 ½ years and I have loved every minute of it but it is time to begin a new chapter of adventures. I have met people from all over the world, some from countries I had never heard of. I began at a time when there was no security at the port to now very high security. I visited ships years ago that I would refer to as rust-buckets that were barely afloat to ships regularly inspected by the Coast Guard for safety. I have lost friends when a ship sank in a storm and have assisted in funerals for seafarers who have died at sea. I have gone into operating rooms

with injured seafarers, burn units and cardiac units, brought seafarers to get covid vaccinations and done much shopping and amazon orders for seafarers unable to get off their ship because they did not have a visa, brought sim cards and wi-fi to ships so crews could contact home and made hundreds of trips to Walmart and Best Buy. I have been graciously welcomed and fed with ethnic food from around the world. I have been truly blessed and I thank God for each and every day he has given me. Thank you, Trinity, for all the support you have given me all these years.

Many, many thanks

Ruth Setaro, Chaplain

Thank You !



Chaplain Ruth

Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers

30 Gillies Road,
Hamden, CT 06517
203-230-8994; www.carenewhaven.org

38 YEARS AS THE GOOD NEIGHBOR

Are you looking for a new volunteer opportunity? Can you drive an elderly person to a doctor's appointment? Visit with an elder from time to time? Please consider joining our team and discover how your small acts of kindness can make a huge difference in the life of an elder in our community. Since 1983, Interfaith Volunteer Care Givers (IVCG) has assisted seniors in the Greater New Haven area by fostering independent living and reducing isolation. We train and insure volunteers from area faith communities and civic organizations to offer free neighborly services with compassion and love.

To find out more, please check out our website: www.carenewhaven.org

Volunteer Orientation & Training At The Connecticut Hospice, Inc.

The Connecticut Hospice, Inc. (inpatient and homecare). is sponsoring volunteer orientation and training this fall. If you or someone you know is looking for an opportunity to serve others in your community, we would like to hear from you. Our patients and families are in need of your care and support. As a volunteer, you can fill your hours (week-days/evenings or weekends) by assisting in a clerical capacity or offering direct patient/family contact as a friendly visitor, provide pastoral care or bereavement services, help in arts, massage therapy, pet therapy, hairdresser/barber or provide transportation. For more information, please contact Joan Cullen at 203-315-7510 or jcullen@hospice.com

Time for a Laugh

A woman starts to wake up after an operation. Still half under the anesthesia, she has an epiphany and sees God.

She asks, "Did I die?"

God says, "Oh no, you have another thirty years to live."

She thinks, in that case, while I'm here in the hospital anyway, I should have some work done. So she has a tummy tuck, a nose job, and a face-lift. As she's leaving the hospital—BAM!—she gets hit by an ambulance, dies and ends up in heaven.

She asks God, "What happened - You told me that I had 30 years to live?"

God shrugs his shoulders and says, "Sorry, I didn't recognize you."



JANUARY CELEBRATIONS AND ANNIVERSARIES



BIRTHDAYS

Jan 13 th	Karen Chaffin
Jan 19 th	Jason Auman
Jan 21 st	Dayna Johnson
Jan 21 st	James Mourer
Jan 23 rd	Constance Clark
Jan 23 rd	Gail Pederstuen
Jan 24 th	Susan Jahnke
Jan 27 th	Kayla Burk
Jan 27 th	John Radziunas
Jan 28 th	Fred Lubenow
Jan 28 th	Allie Mims
Jan 31 st	Debbie Hart



BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARIES

Jan 13 th	Kevin Morris
Jan 16 th	Emylie Masella
Jan 17 th	Bethany Hayes
Jan 19 th	Amanda Schmidt
Jan 26 th	Monasia Harris



WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Jan 8 th	Debbie & Devon Hart
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Advent Decorating – Dec 3rd



First the Tree ...

and don't forget the Creche !



Thank You !

Operation Christmas Child



Delivery Day - Thank You !

Congratulations Elizabeth Brophy !



Christopher Martin's Run for Children 5K – Dec 3, 2023

Congratulations Kevin Morris !



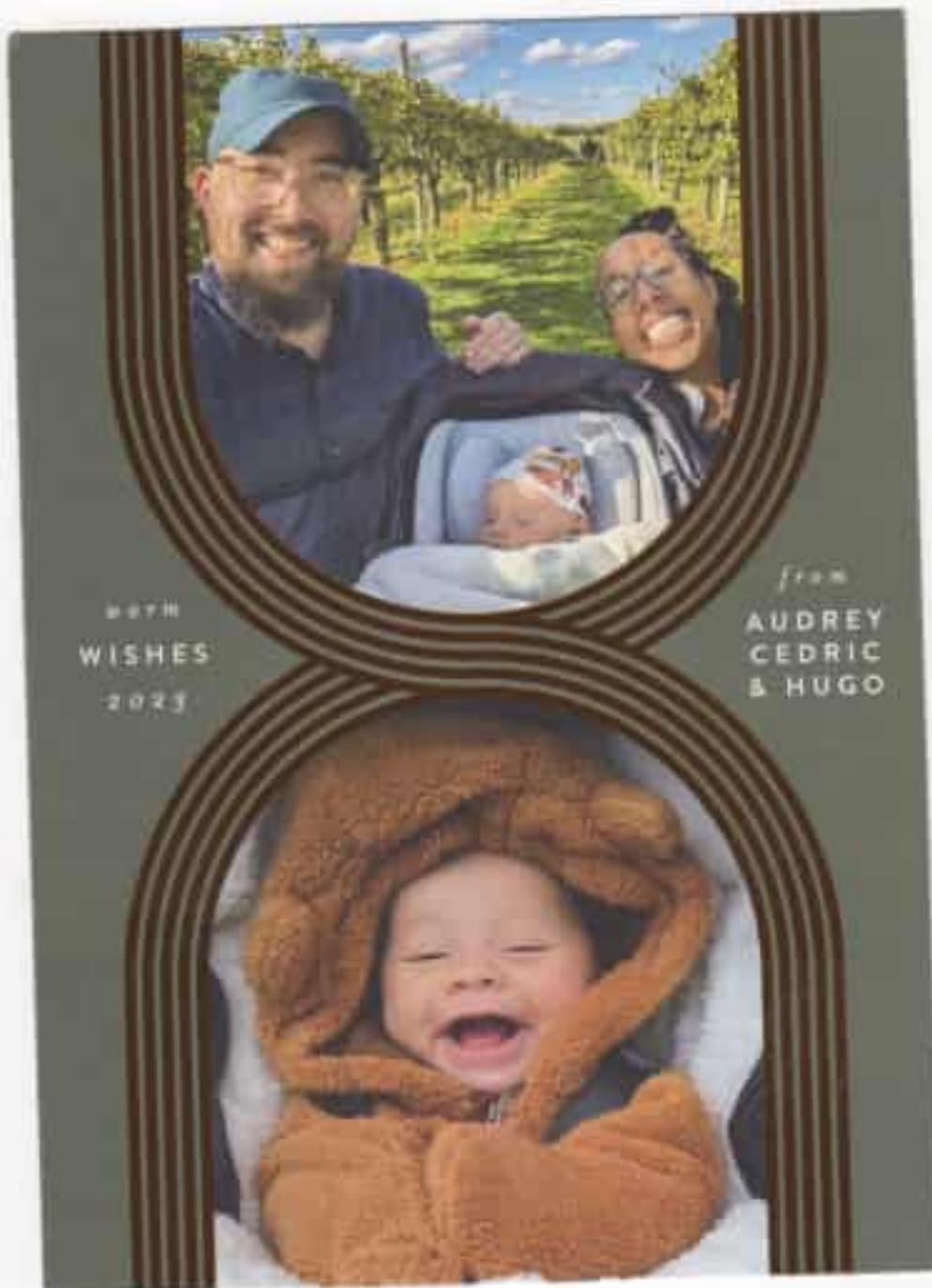
**Sacred Heart University
BA Accounting and Finance**

Intergenerational Fellowship



**Sunday Morning – 9 am
Come and Join the Fun !**

MERRY CHRISTMAS !



From
Cedric, Audrey & Hugo Jacobson

NUTRITION SECURITY SOLUTIONS

Dec 14, 2023

Dear Fellow Members of Trinity:

Thanks to all Trinity Volunteers who helped make the Holiday response from NSS, Inc. to Hamden seniors a huge success last month. It was amazing to see what was accomplished. Remember, the need continues after the celebration lights of the Holidays grow dark. We want our neighbors to know that we continue to be there for them, so please consider dropping by 7 Corporate Drive # 104 in North Haven to assemble food packages for a few hours whenever you can lend a hand (10:00 AM- 2:00 PM, weekdays, Monday -Friday).

In the meantime, on *the first Tuesday of each month at 10:30 AM*, there will be a coffee hour at our warehouse location to orient new volunteers to our program activities and how they can assist with maintaining pantry services:

1. taking online orders over the phone,
2. assembling customized pre-ordered packages
3. delivering the packages to final destinations, either at drop-off sites like Trinity or directly to the homes of pantry clients.

Rev. Ryan, an NSS, Inc. Board of Directors member, has been working closely with me to obtain grant support to establish a satellite pantry site at Trinity, NH, a program that would be Trinity's own. More on that later..... We will work hard to keep you posted!

Thank you again for your support !

Kind regards

Sandra Kops



Trinity Lutheran Church
292 Orange St
New Haven, CT 06510-1768

November 20, 2023

Dear CSK Friend,

Please accept my sincere thanks for your recent gifts in the total amount of \$1,500.00 which we received this year through October 30, 2023.

Speaking for our staff, Board and volunteers, I wish to stress that your generosity is the life blood of Community Soup Kitchen. We rely solely on gifts from our donors and have no other source of cash income to run our operations. Now that governmental Covid-19 funding has ceased, we face ever-increasing dependency on our donors in the face of ever-increasing demand for our food services in these difficult times.

Again, thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Burton Alter", is written in blue ink.

Burton Alter, Board Chair

Community Soup Kitchen, Inc. is a nonprofit organization recognized as tax exempt by the IRS under Section 501(c)(3). No goods or services were exchanged in consideration of this gift, so your gift is fully tax deductible as provided by law.

FEIN: 84.4509795

Dear members of Trinity Lutheran
Church - New Haven,

I was overjoyed to receive the
\$500 donation from you today.
I am not sure you all know
that Rev. Ryan and I have
been working hard to establish
a satellite NSS sub pantry at
Trinity in order to provide food
assistance to individuals that are
in the neighborhood or known to
church members, who are experiencing
a special hunger or food insecurity,
described as "nutrition" insecurity.

NSS, Inc. food pantry programs
provide special foods that are
appropriate for individuals who
have special dietary needs or
requirements. These individuals are
usually elderly or disabled, but
some have various compromised
health or cancer. We provide
foods that they cannot receive from
(over)

Security Solutions, Inc.
Nutrition



other pantries

The number of individuals
reaching out to us for this
unique service is rapidly growing.
So, your donation will be put to
good use.

Please consider lending your
help as volunteers. We would
love to see you, any day M-F from
10 until 2 PM

Every Blessings of the season,
Sandy Kipo, Founder, President



Our Community, Our Food Bank

December 14, 2023

Pat Sundermann
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
292 Orange St
New Haven, CT 06510-1768

Dear Pat,

Thank you so much for your gift of \$650.00 on 12/13/2023 to Connecticut Foodshare. Your generosity plays a vital role in ensuring our neighbors have access to the nutritious, food their families need to thrive. We are grateful for your partnership.

According to the 2023 United Way ALICE report, a family of four in Connecticut needs to earn over \$125,000 to make ends meet, meaning many still struggle to put food on the table. Your investment allows us to serve our most vulnerable neighbors, including seniors and children. Your support enables us to:

- Provide enough food to make over 40 million meals in the last year
- Conduct more than 100 bi-weekly mobile food distributions across the state with a focus on providing fresh produce to individuals, families, and seniors
- Support 500 partner agencies, including food pantries, community kitchens, and backpack programs who are meeting their communities' unique needs
- Address root causes of hunger to increase economic stability and build long-term food security.

On behalf of all of us at Connecticut Foodshare, we are very thankful for your gift. Stay safe and well!

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jason", written in a cursive style.

Jason Jakubowski, President and CEO

This letter certifies that no goods or services were provided in exchange for your contribution of \$650.00 on 12/13/2023



All Nations Christian Academy

December 2023

Dear Friends of All Nations Christian Academy,

Advent greetings from New Haven. In late August we started the academic year 2023-2024, our seventeenth year, with twenty-four students, five from families new to the school community.

In this letter I want to highlight music and drama at All Nations Academy. Throughout the year we sing and dance to Jesus as part of our daily worship. In addition, we put on two major shows—a Christmas program in December and a graduation program in June. Our director, Blanca Little, has a knack for finding hidden talents in each child and developing their skills in making public presentations. Every student takes part singing, dancing, doing plays—all to declare the glory of God in front of many relatives and friends who do not know the Lord.

For the Christmas show this year, two of our alumni girls who are still active in dancing worked with two of our younger student girls to prepare a dance presentation celebrating the glory of God at the birth of Jesus Christ.



The dancers after rehearsal

If you would like to view a sample of performances, please go to our website www.allnationschristianacademy.org and click on the YouTube button at the bottom of the page.

Please pray for the work of the Academy:

- Give thanks for the 24 students from sixteen households in and around New Haven.
- Pray for the school staff: Blanca Little, Geoffrey Little, Judy Emery, Tara Edmundson, Celia Ortiz and Fernando Farrell
- Pray for the students who struggle academically, that God would supply wisdom.
- Pray for God's continued financial provision of donations from churches and individuals to help keep tuition affordable for low-income families in the city

Perhaps you will consider making a monthly donation of \$10 or \$25 or \$50. You can send a check payable to "All Nations Academy" in the enclosed envelope, or use the "Donate" button on our website.

God bless you. Thank you for your continued support of All Nations Academy.

In Christ,

The Rev. Geoffrey Little
Director of Operations



"There is Power in the Blood"

Thank you for your support of the school. Blessings at Christmas.

All Nations Christian Academy

358 Lenox Street, New Haven, CT 06513

Phone: (203) 467-6083 Fax: (203) 468-0129 Website: allnationschristianacademy.org



A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR FINANCIAL SPONSORS

CliftonLarsonAllen St. Thomas More Yale Office of NH Affairs

AND TO OUR GROUP DONORS & VOLUNTEERS

All American Waste

I Wage Peace

Bethesda Lutheran Church

Imperial Dade

Blessed Michael McGivney Parish

KBE Building Corporation

Catholic Charity League

Marcum

CCA Board

Medtronic

Church on the Rock

Spa Suites

CliftonLarsonAllen

St. George Parish

CT Foodshare

St. Peter's Episcopal Milford

Delta Sigma Theta

Trinity Baptist Church

First Church of Christ Congregational Redding

Trinity Lutheran Church

First Congregational Church of Cheshire

UNH Cru

First Congregational Church of Madison

Unitarian Society of New Haven

First Presbyterian Church

United Rentals

First United Church of Christ Milford

Vox Church

Grace Worship Assembly

Wethersfield United Church

High School in the Community students

Yale Athletes in Action

Holy Trinity Church of God

Yale Divinity School students

Yale Students for Christ

AND TO OUR INDIVIDUAL/FAMILY VOLUNTEERS

**MANY THANKS,
CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY ACTION, INC**



150 YEARS

Seafarers International House • 125 East 100th Street, New York, NY 10007 • Phone: (212) 677-4800 • www.sihnyc.org

December 12, 2023

Rev. Ryan Mills
Trinity Lutheran Church
292 Orange St
New Haven, CT 06510-1716

Dear members of Trinity:

Year in, year out we can count on your support since at least 2002. Thank you so much for supporting our Port Mission in New Haven and our dear Port!

Chaplain Ruth Setaro,

Please do contact me if you have any suggestions or questions.

Enjoy the magic of Advent and the Holiday Season, Henryk

Dear Pastor Ryan,

Thank you for spreading Holiday cheer among seafarers and immigrants with your generous gift of \$400.00 for Port Mission with check #011437.

Thank you!

Since 1873, Seafarers International House and its predecessors starting with Pastor Per Johan Swärd have had a fondness for Christmas and the Holiday Season making sure that people in their care experienced the joy of this time of year. Our 4-minute Anniversary Video on the home page at www.sihnyc.org conveys some of that joy and cheerfulness, especially when you hear the "Merry Christmas – thank you for the gifts" shouted by joyful mariners.

Thanks to your support, our port chaplains deliver thousands of Christmas-at-Sea satchels filled with warm clothing and personal greetings to seafarers letting them know that we care for them.

Meanwhile, our guestrooms provide people like "Sofia" and her son "Vitalii" from Ukraine or "Miriam" from Sudan with a place to stay in their new homeland so that they can start their new lives in peace. Seafarers, too, enjoy the welcoming rooms after months on rough seas.

You are a "cheer" leader, spreading the joy of the season among strangers: our seafarers and immigrants, who may need cheering up! Thank you for that.

Wishing you cheerful Holidays and the Joy of the season,



Henryk Behnke
Director of Development & Communications
henryk@sihnyc.org * (212) 677-4800 ext. 7203

PS – As a token of our appreciation, I am mailing you a copy of our anniversary booklet. Thank you for having helped us reach this milestone with your faithful support.

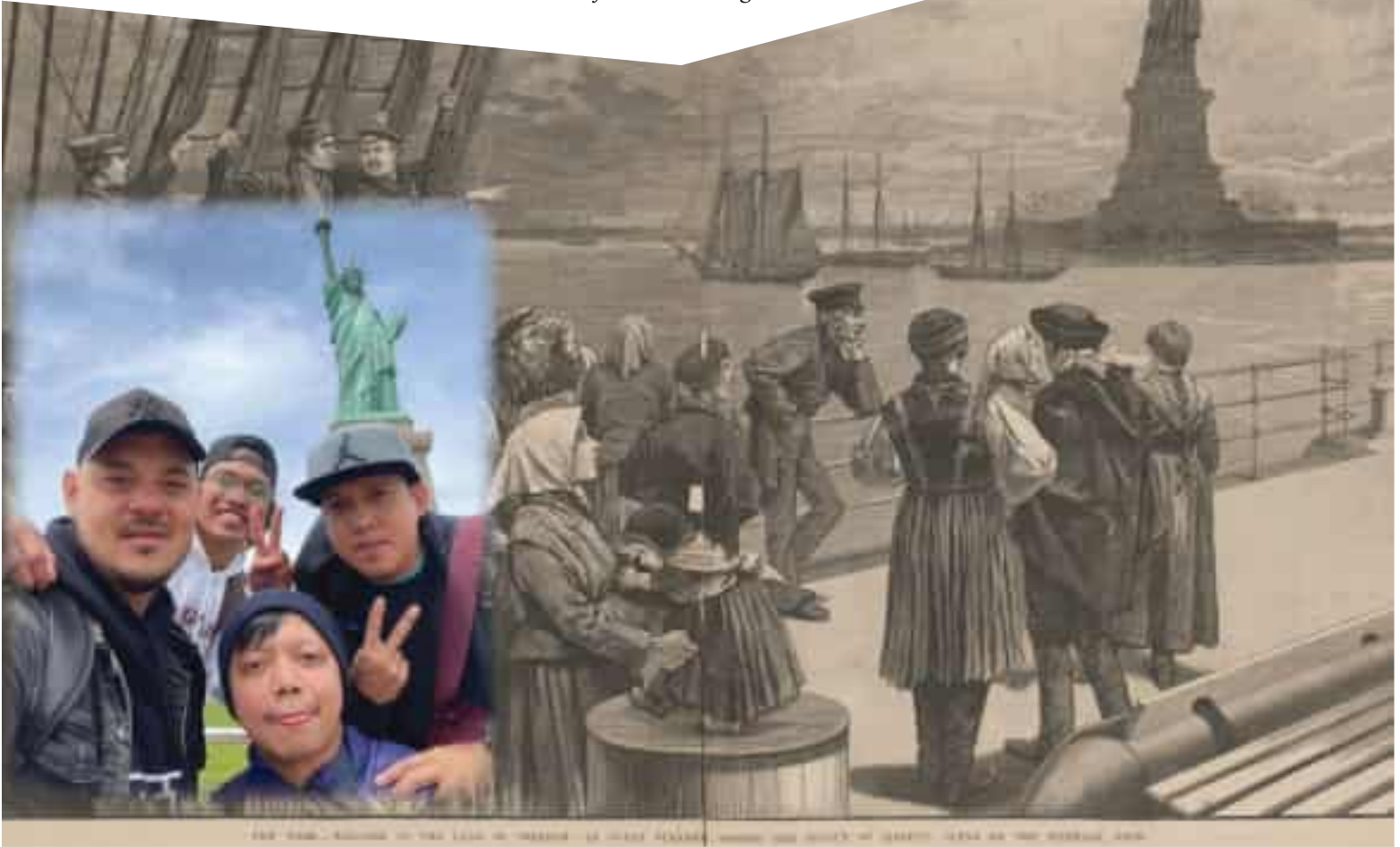
Platinum
Transparency
2023

Candid

Care and Kindness

SEAFARERS INTERNATIONAL HOUSE MARKS 150 YEARS OF SERVICE

By Steve Lundeberg



This year's Seafarers International House holiday card shows two visits to the Statue of Liberty: immigrants on the steamer *Germanic* (*Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, July 2, 1887 - Library of Congress) and a crew (inset) assisted by SIH in 2022.

Winds of change have swirled around the globe in the century and a half since Seafarers International House (SIH) was born. But the ELCA ministry, guided by its core mission of welcoming the stranger, remains a port in the storm for some of the world's most vulnerable people.

The ministry (sihny.org) was founded in 1873 by the Swedish Lutheran Church. Its original purpose was to help Swedish seafarers navigate

the confusion, temptations and overall danger of New York City—including the risk of being swindled or, worse, shanghaied.

Before long the group was also assisting immigrants from Sweden in the New York area, and eventually immigrants and seafarers of any nationality or faith tradition.

During its 150 years of service, SIH has been headquartered at multiple Manhattan locations

and has operated under several different names. The current one went into effect just before the formation of the ELCA in the late 1980s.

“We are the Lutheran response to the urgent needs of vulnerable seafarers and immigrants,” said Henryk Behnke, SIH’s director of development and communications. “We are not a place; we are a service, and we are the only Lutheran organization that takes care of seafarers.”

That service takes many forms, Behnke explained, and the work benefits two distinct populations prone to want, isolation and other forms of hardship. “Often the people we help work on container ships,” he said. “They’re from low-wage countries, and often they don’t have shore leave anymore. They apply for visas in their homeland, but their consulates have backlogs, so they can’t get visas.”

With seven port chaplains spread among four northeastern locations—New Haven, Conn.; Baltimore; Albany, N.Y.; and New York City/New Jersey—SIH offers spiritual care and social advocacy along with simple acts of kindness such as picking up supplies for crew members who are prohibited by law from leaving their vessel.

“The main thing is our people come on board and are present,” said Behnke, an immigrant himself, from Germany. “We counsel people, hear about their troubles, see how they are doing. Our port chaplains will go shopping for the seafarers, bring them essentials—or if they’re really craving a pizza or Burger King, they’ll bring them that. And we’ll bring them Wi-Fi—often they don’t have Wi-Fi connectivity—so they can reach out to their loved ones.”

Behnke notes that in 2022 alone, SIH boarded almost 1,400 vessels and visited 15,135 seafarers, most of them on container ships—cargo vessels that carry their load in truck-sized, intermodal boxes. In addition, more than 1,700 seafarers able to leave their ships were given rides to places such as shopping malls and medical facilities.

That same year the ministry provided 2,301 lodging nights to a total of 169 seafarers, plus 23 immigrants—people seeking asylum from persecution, war and other forms of violence—who receive in-depth assistance from SIH.

From 1964 until the pandemic, the ministry operated an 84-room guesthouse, using about 15 rooms for seafarers and immigrants and renting out the rest to the traveling public. That revenue covered about 75% of its budget. When COVID put the brakes on travel, a new business model



A photo of Per Johan Swärd, who started the ministry of SIH in 1873 at age 28, from *Seamen’s Missions* by Roald Kverndal.

was needed, and SIH opted to lease its building to a nonprofit, Breaking Ground, that provides transitional housing. The lease will continue until at least 2026, Behnke said, so SIH is looking for a new “mission-based place” in New York City, with administrative offices and 16 to 20 guest rooms.

In the interim, seafarers and migrants needing somewhere to stay are being placed in the Markle, a hotel in Greenwich Village, and in various Midtown Manhattan hotels. Seafarers pay a nominal fee, and immigrants stay for free.

“Even the American seafarers are at the lower end of the food chain,” Behnke said. “They’re often recent immigrants who work for big shipping companies, and they can stay with us for \$50 a night in Manhattan.”

Christmas at Sea

In addition to lodging and immigration services, another important SIH program is Christmas at Sea. SIH port chaplains deliver satchels that individual donors and volunteers, as well as congregations, have filled with holiday cheer in the form of sweaters, scarves, hats, T-shirts, sweets, nuts and season’s greetings. Last year the chaplains handed out nearly 3,000 satchels, and SIH is hoping for even more in 2023.

“It’s nice outreach to the stranger, and we’re mindful that this is not only for Christians but also for anyone else who has a need,” Behnke said. “We look at our work as welcoming the stranger, showing them we care. Ninety percent of what we consume comes from container ships and bulk carriers, on the backs of people with low wages who go unrecognized for the sacrifices they make.” †