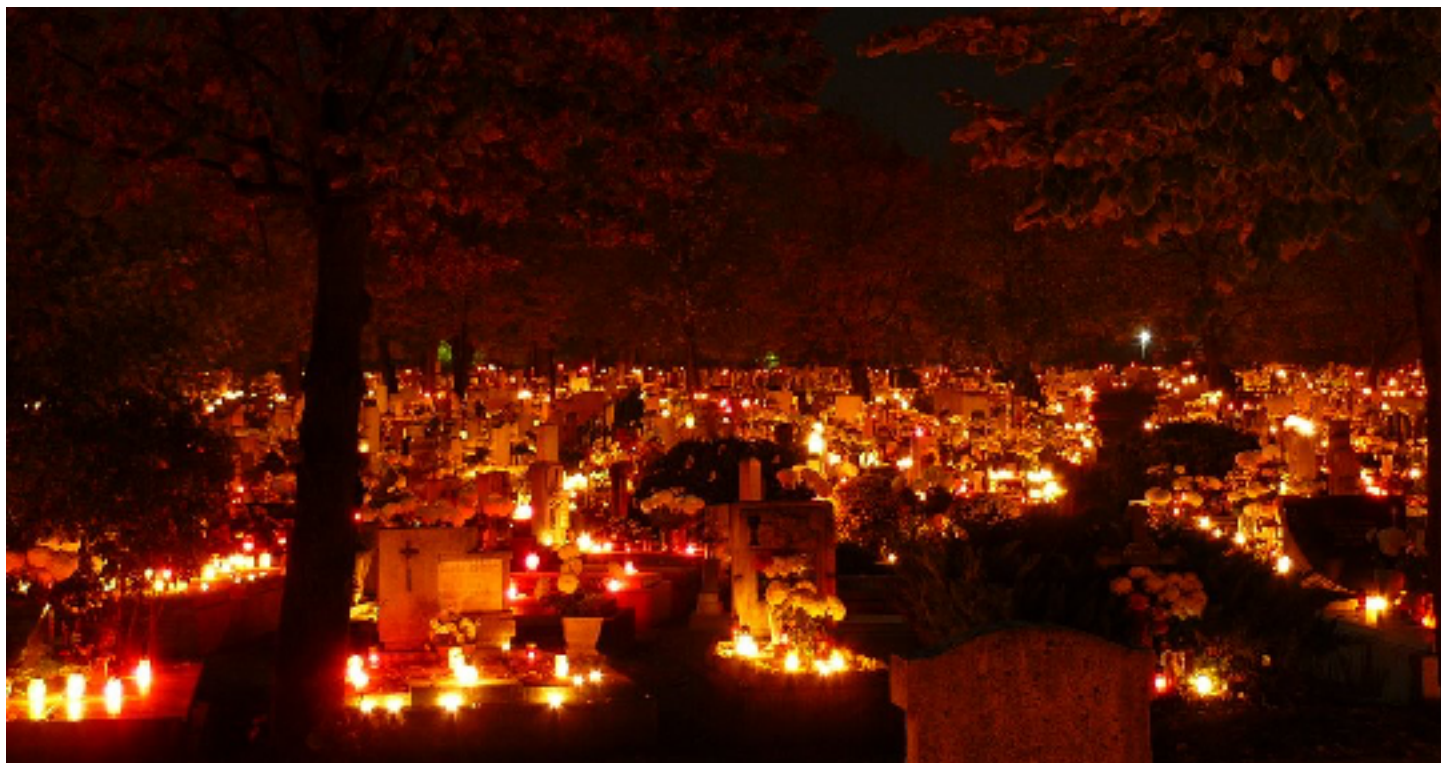


Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Newsletter

November 2017
104 West Main Street, Stafford Springs, Connecticut 06076



Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The three autumn days of Halloween, All Saints Day, and All Souls Day (October 31, November 1, and November 2), uniquely mirror the Great Three Days that the church celebrates in the spring during which we celebrate the mystery of our Lord's death and resurrection. These days are kept in the church with reflection on our own death and life in the world to come. In the popular culture, Halloween (the Eve of All Hallows) clearly obscures the days of thanksgiving that in the church it is meant to prepare us for.

Halloween has perhaps never been more popular. In 2016 Americans spent \$8.4 billion on the holiday. But the secular traditions we are familiar with are surprisingly recent developments. Trick-or-treating first sprouted up in North America in the 1920s and 1930s, but quickly fell by the wayside as sugar became scarce during the Depression and World War II. Only after sugar rationing came to an end in 1947 did candy companies begin advertising for Halloween candy, and Halloween-themed cartoons featuring Charlie Brown (1951) and Donald Duck (1952) gave a popular boost to the practice. In Europe, Halloween decorations and costumes have been

found in stores only for the last 10-15 years, and trick-or-treating is still largely unknown. But the cemeteries are ablaze in light.

Christians in Europe and Latin America mark the holiday by visiting the graves of their loved ones and leaving flowers and lighting lamps. Both Protestants and Catholics remember their loved ones and celebrate their life in heaven with these devotions. The cemetery engulfed in light witnesses to Christ the Light of the World who shines in the darkness. In the decline of the year when the foliage drops and life slows down, the flickering flames remind of another eve—that of Easter, when the increasing darkness is broken by the light of Christ ignited and carried by the faithful. Candlelight likewise features at Christmas, when we think on Christ coming into the gloomy world to enlighten us, and at Evening Prayer when at the close of day we think of sleep as a little death, and a little Good Friday, trusting in the resurrection of the morn.

Last year I was able to travel to my great-grandparents' grave in Slovakia at this time of year and put flowers there for my grandmother and mother who couldn't make the trip. As I looked at the lights flickering around, it reminded me immensely of the Easter Vigil. The similar view of a sea of lights being held in the dark, waiting eagerly because those who bear them know what brilliance God brings in the morning. In truth what I see on these two eves is the same—the dead carry a votive, hold the light of Christ, the same as we do. The saints are remembered because of their witness. Their memory is sacred because they glorify God, and through that memory they carry a torch the same as we do, by which the world can see. Their dust and bones are blessed because they bear witness to the promise God has given that they shall one day rise. Tradition, to quote the Czech composer Gustav Mahler, “is not the worship of ashes, but the handing down of fire.”

Why does it matter, how we remember the dead, one might ask. Well, let's return to the popular celebration of Halloween to see how much it matters to a unchurched society—a culture with a celebration divorced from faith.

For every playful and fun Scooby Doo and Bumble Bee trick-or-treating one does not have to travel far to find two grotesque and macabre alternatives. Popular costumes spoofing celebrities or movie characters are their own matter, but for our reflection I want to draw attention to how death is portrayed. In recent years I've been surprised how easy it is for merchandizers and consumers to cross the line from grotesque to tasteless. How does a Christian respond in their life to such portrayals of death? In the Early Church Christians were characterized by their respect and affection for the dead. Because they believed in the resurrection, bodies were treated with affection and care. While the Romans (the same who gladly watched vicious bloodsport in the coliseums and circuses) abhorred dead bodies, Christians met in the catacombs and cemeteries, in the pre-dawn hours by candlelight, to celebrate the Eucharist on the graves of the martyrs. Christians buried their dead in and around churches, visited graves frequently, and even in the Victorian period picnicked among headstones.

And yet these were not macabre or morbid practices, but a peaceful disposition towards death and trust that those who have died are alive with Christ in heaven, and still share a mystical fellowship with us. Death is not scary.

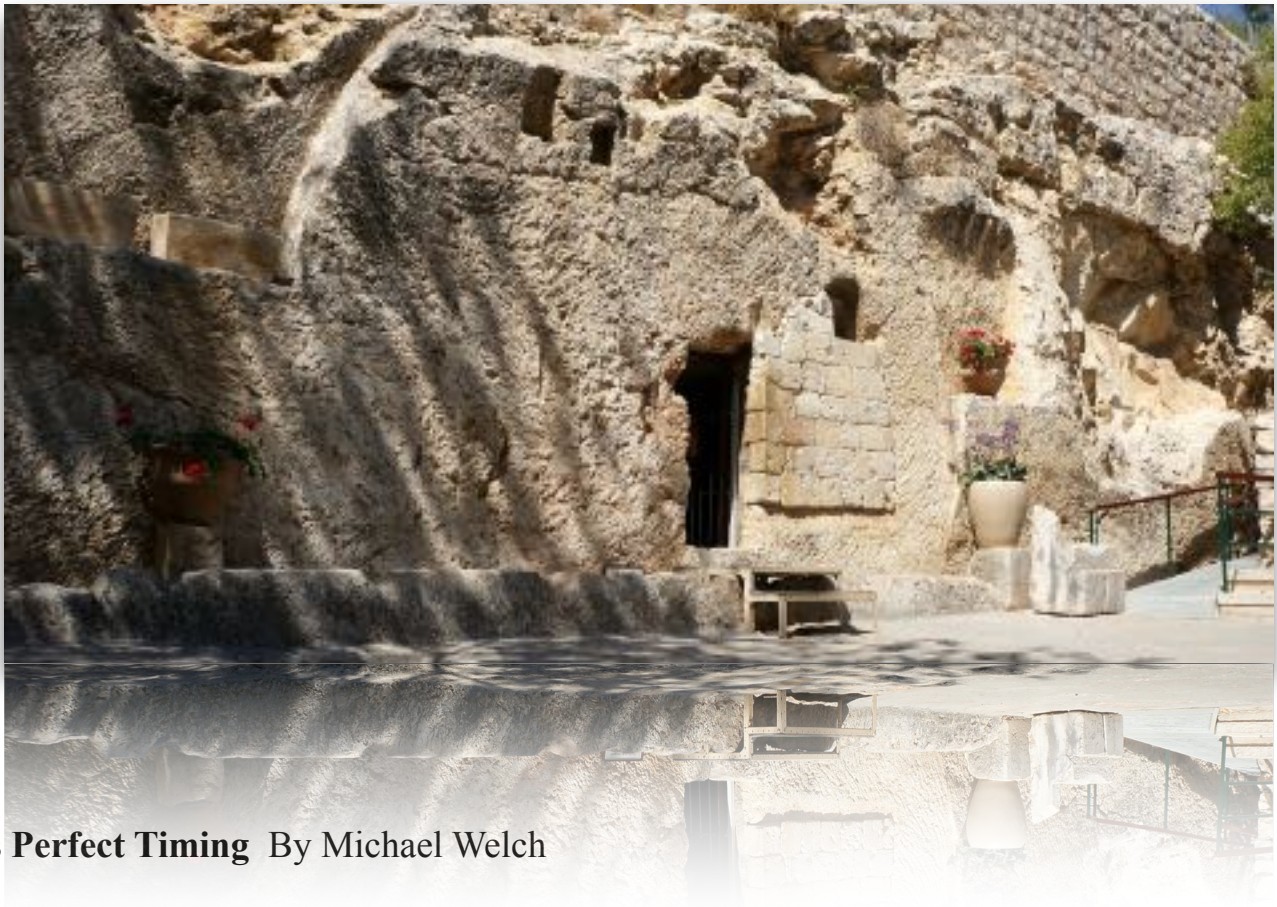
Today we live in a culture that does not know how to relate to death. It fluctuates between denial of its reality and inevitability, and macabre celebration of its spectacle. I would suggest that among the vampires, ghosts, zombies, and mummies on doorsteps and TV screens is evidence that people are genuinely fascinated with what happens after we die. People struggle with the relationship between life and death, but whether they have faith or not, they long for there to be something more.

On Halloween people dress up as monsters and play violence and death. And then when tragedy strikes they are numb to it or shocked by it because they have thought of it as make-believe. But this is not a rant about how Halloween is bad. This is an appeal that we might take our faith in Christ and in the resurrection so seriously that we can say to a culture that speculates about what happens after we die that we are in fact sure what happens. Not one day or season a year, but always, we are called to challenge a world that devalues human lives, that is amused by the macabre, and to treat with reverence that which God has made holy. Death is a sleep from which we will awake, and because Christ is the first fruits of the dead, he has made holy the resting places of all his saints. Let us celebrate God's sure promise in such a way that a light that glorifies God in both life and death will shine through the darkness.

Peace and joy,
Pastor Tom

I am often asked why should I go to the Holy Land? I made this short video in the hope of answering that question. Click the link below and enjoy.

<https://youtu.be/8z kf0P5c048>



Gods Perfect Timing By Michael Welch

One Sunday, as I sat in church I began to glance around to see who was there and as I did I began to meditate on why we were all here. These are the people who always come no matter what. Cold, snow, ice, heat, rain or shine. Old and young alike. They are willing to battle the elements and physical infirmities to come to worship. I thought about what brought me here. This was a trying week for me. I attended two funerals. One for Ellen Lichanec whom the Lord called home at 83 and the other, the son of dear friends who lost his battle at 35 to drug addiction.

While attending these services I began observing the different reactions of the mourners. Many were sorrowful, yet at the same time were able to be joyful. They would laugh and tell stories and recount what their friend and loved one had meant to them and how they would be missed, yet they were consoled by the fact that they were at peace and in the loving arms of Jesus. These were the Believers, confident in the saving Grace of our Lord and the promise of the resurrection and the life to come. Others were terrified of death and forced to come to terms with their own mortality. These, were having a very difficult time coming to terms with the death of their loved one. The finality of the event was overwhelming. Now I am not saying that the loss of a loved one is not difficult for a believer, but we have a more healthy outlook and are consoled by Christ and seek solace in Him, and the resurrection, where as those who don't are most fearful. *"He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.(1 John 5:12)"*. We all know we are going to die. The unbeliever will tend to think about the here and now: you only live once; make the best of it; watch out for yourself.

They are in effect the walking dead. They do not have the promise. *"He will swallow up death forever; And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; He will swallow up death forever, For the Lord has spoken.(Isa. 25:8). "but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," (2 Tim. 1:10). I wonder if that is why there are so many zombi and vampire movies. How terrible to be separated from God. "but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation (Mark 3.:29)". I must note that this is our LORD'S decision and no man nor priest may make this judgement.*

In scripture we read that even before our birth the Lord numbered our days. *"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. (Psalm 139)". "The Lord knows the days of the upright,s And their inheritance shall be forever. (Psalm 37:18)." "Since his days are determined, The number of his months is with You; You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass (Job 14:5-7)." All this indicates to me is that our Lord knows exactly when we will be called home to His loving arms and whenever this occurs and in whatever manner it happens it is according to Gods perfect timing, and at that time we shall be free from all our earthly hurts and fears for we will be praising our Lord and Savior for the unmerited grace he has shown us. We will be celebrating at that great and notable feast to come. Basking in the light of His presence in our eternal home. *"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death. O Death, I will be your plagues! O Grave, I will be your destruction! (Hosea 13:14)". "O Death, where is your sting. O Hades, where is your victory? (1 Cor. 15:55-56)"**

I look around the sanctuary again and I see the widow and the widower, and those who have suffered loss and those who are dealing with all the frailties of life, each with their own very special relationship with our Lord, being renewed by the promises of Christ and moving forward with the confidence that only the indwelling of the Holy Spirit can bring. The promise of eternal life was purchased on the cross for us 2000 years ago, when God on earth in the personage of Jesus Christ according to His own perfect timing (*"my time has come"*), offered Himself up upon the cross as the perfect and final sacrifice, that we might have life more abundantly and to rise again on the third day, as the scriptures had foretold, loosing the bonds of death once and forever. All that we need do, is to accept this free gift. We are here to offer our gratitude praise and worship for all that He has done and all that He will do. ***"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God (1 Corinthians 1:18)"***

Pastoral Care

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
7 Green St. Stafford Springs, CT 06076-1334
Office Phone-860-684-7571
Church – htlc-church@att.net
Website – htlcstafford.org

Pastor Tom will be on sabbatical.
During this time, he will return messages left to his phone (860-806-2440) and email as quickly as possible.

In the event of an immediate need or emergency, you may contact Pastor Ryan or Pastor Kathleen Mills (Holy Trinity Trumbull) at (203) 903-8352, or the synod office at (860) 482-6100.

If you'd like to write Pastor Tom via snail mail,

his address during this time is:

Revd. Thomas S. Drobena
Selwyn College, Cambridge University
Grange Rd
Cambridge CB3 9DQ
United Kingdom

Members of the Council are:

Rev. Thomas S. Drobena
President – Andrew Fisher
Vice-President – Walter Kovaciny
Treasurer – Catherine Lichanec
Secretary – Amelia Hinchliffe
Melissa Fisher
Leonard Lichanec
Michael Marvonek
Patricia Marvonek

(Non-Council position)

Financial Secretary – Leigh Maxa

Service Teams

† Worship & Music Team: Leigh Maxa

† Property Team: Andrew Fisher,

Michael Marvonek, Adam Tremblay and Michael Welch

† Learning & Youth Group Team:

Rev. Thomas Drobena, Melissa Fisher, Walter Kovaciny, Cathy & Leonard Lichanec

Shut-in Members of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Attn: Mr. Harold Barton
Fox Hill Center
1253 Hartford Tpke. Room #49A
Vernon, CT 06066-4560

Attn: Mrs. Barbara Bulick
Brookdale
1715 Ellington Rd. Room # 212
South Windsor, CT 06074-2702

Ms. Shirley Kaba
7 High St.
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-1215

Attn: Ms. Barbara Kovaciny
Evergreen Health Care Center
205 Chestnut Hill Rd., Room # 1101
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-4005

Mr. Paul C. Kovaciny
242 East St.
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-3923

Ms. Anna Mandak
21 Old Monson Rd.
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-3343

Mrs. Tonia Marvonek
Evergreen Health Care Center
201 Chestnut Hill Rd., Rm. # 2107
Stafford Springs, CT 06076-4005

Community Thanksgiving Service

As noted in the calendar and upcoming events this service will be Tuesday, November 21, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. The service will be at First United Methodist Church.

Harvest Sale Thankyou / Report

I would like to take a moment to offer a heartfelt thank you to everyone that helped in any way to make this year's Harvest Sale a success. Many hands working together made this year's sale possible. I am happy to report, after expenses, we had a total profit of \$1,519.66.

We truly appreciate all your help. Thank you and God bless.

Leigh Maxa

The Winners of the Harvest Sale Raffles are:

Afghan winners:

Jeremy and Leslie Cote

Darlene Jenkins

Cathy Ford

Bruce Marvonek

Candle centerpiece with globe:

Debbie Hockla Kaba

Breakfast Basket:

Karen Satkowski

Kitchen Basket:

Lenny Lichanec

Bath Basket:

Anna Mae Hockla

Floral Wall Hanging:

Cathy Lichanec

Candle Basket:

Janet Desloge

† Father, a positive attitude is one of the greatest spiritual gifts. Help me to remember: Praise! Praise! Praise!

November

Birthdays

04 – Kim Valery-Pickar

05 – Shirley Kaba

06 – Diane Bulick

09 – Judy Howlett

10 – Charlie Bauer

15 – Walter Kovaciny

15 – Leigh Maxa

18 – Jean Palacko

19 – Jenny Baarck

20 – Barbara Kovaciny

22 – Ryan Cooley

27 – Shirley Molitoris

Anniversaries

None for November

Thoughts for Thanksgiving

Dear God,

We give thanks for all the amazing gifts you have blessed us with in this life. Thank you for the clouds in the sky and the grass beneath our feet. Thank you for the roof over our head that shelters us from the cold and the food in our stomach that nourishes our body. Thank you for the clothes on our back and the knowledge in our head. Most of all God thank you for your everlasting love, guidance, and understanding. Thank you dear God, thank you.

This prayer was taken from the Internet. Some of the words were changes from singular to all people.

What are you Thankful for this year?

November – December Service Schedule

These readings are from Series A and can be found in the front of the Evangelical Lutheran Worship hymnal. As noted for The First Sunday in Advent, we start using Series B.

Tellers

Ushers

Worship Assistants Reader

November 5, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – All Saints Sunday – White

Revelation 7: 9 – 17; Psalm 34: 1 – 10, 22; 1 John 3: 1 – 3; Matthew 5: 1 – 12

Amelia Hinchliffe

Walter Kovaciny

Leigh Maxa

Daniel Lichanec

Mike Marvonek

Pat Marvonek

November 12, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – The Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost – Green

Amos 5: 18 – 24; Psalm 70; 1 Thessalonians 4: 13 – 18; Matthew 25: 1 – 13

Michael Welch

Walter Kovaciny

Sheila Welch

Daniel Lichanec

Sheila Welch

Cathy Lichanec

November 19, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – The Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost – Green

Zephaniah 1: 7, 12 – 18; Psalm 90: 1 – 12; 1 Thessalonians 5: 1 – 11; Matthew 25: 14 – 30

Cathy Lichanec

Daniel Lichanec

Cathy Lichanec

Daniel Lichanec

Leonard Lichanec

Leonard Lichanec

November 26, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – Christ the King Sunday – Green

Ezekiel 34: 11 – 16, 20 – 24; Psalm 95: 1 – 7a; Ephesians 1: 15 – 23; Matthew 25: 31 – 46

Melissa Fisher

Rick Bednar

Cathy Lichanec

Daniel Lichanec

Walter Kovaciny

Walter Kovaciny

(This is the start of Year B for picking the proper lessons.)

December 3, 2017 – 10:00 a.m. – The First Sunday in Advent – Blue

Isaiah 64: 1 – 9; Psalm 80: 1 – 7, 17 – 19; 1 Corinthians 1:3 – 9; Mark 13: 24 – 37

Amelia Hinchliffe

Walter Kovaciny

Leigh Maxa

Daniel Lichanec

Mike Marvonek

Pat Marvonek

Attention all Lay Assistants and Volunteers that help with services

This includes Council Members, (Tellers), Ushers, Worship Assistants and Readers.

Please let me know dates and days of when you aren't available to serve in your position.

You can hand me a piece of paper when we see each other at church; or send me an email at walterkovaciny@cox.net or send me the information via snail mail..

November *Holy Trinity Lutheran Church* 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5 All Saint's Sunday 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion 11:15 a.m. Learning & Youth Committee meeting 11:20 a.m. Social Hour	6	7	8 Johann von Staupitz, Priest	9 Martin Chemnitz, Reformer	10 <i>Pastor returns from sabbatical</i>	11 9 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Safe Net Distribution
12 The 23rd Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion 11:15 a.m. Church Council meeting	13 Deadline for submitting articles / information for the December newsletter	14 <i>Pastor's Day off</i>	15	16	17 Elizabeth, Princess of Hungary & Confessor	18
19 The 24th Sunday after Pentecost 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion	20	21 Community Thanksgiving Service at FUMC 6 p.m.	22	23 Clement, Bishop Thanksgiving Day	24	25 9 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Safe Net Distribution
26 Christ the King Sunday 10:00 a.m. Holy Communion This is the last Sunday of the Church year.	27	28 <i>Pastor's Day off</i>	29	30 Andrew, Apostle 7:00 p.m. <i>Vespers</i>		

*** Coming Events ***

November

- 1, 8, 22 & 29 – Troop 81 Cub Scouts – 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.
- 5 - Social Hour – 11:20 a.m.
- 10 – Pastor Tom returns from Sabbatical
- 11 & 25 – Safe Net Distribution – 9 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.
- 12 – Church Council meeting – 11:15 a.m.
- 21 – Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service at FUMC – 6:00 p.m.
- 30 – Vespers – 7:00 p.m.

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church 104 West Main St. Stafford Springs, CT 06076

Web site address www.holytrinitystafford.org

Address Correction Requested Slovak Zion Synod – ELCA

