

# From the Desk of Fr. Geek.

## A Report on Technological Stuff

### Annual Meeting 2021

Daunting as it may be, in addition to an old and bald priest, you also received an old and bald geek. From the age of 12, I have seldom been far from radio and computer technology and while I may not be honestly that good at anything, I have had “moments of brilliance” as I was told once years ago.

Blowing things up, dropping things, falling off things, or basically breaking things never seemed to disturb my desire to see what I could get into. In my youth I managed to broadcast from my bedroom, and 50 years ago I took my first test and became a licensed amateur radio operator.

Here is a list, without the hindrance of logic, of technological advancements at Holy Trinity in the last few months.

#### **WIFI**

We increased our bandwidth or speed by which data travels on the Internet by quite a bit (from 6-50Mbps). This is about as fast as we can go as AT&T and Comcast are the only companies that provide Internet to this address. Comcast charges business fees which are more than 2-fold mark-up from residence fees, and they are not terribly interested in extending coaxial line to our building.

A new router and WIFI was installed as well as the older one was inconsistent.

The passwords for both our Secure and Guest connections have not changed.

#### **DOMAIN**

Our parish domain ‘[holytrinitywyoming.org](http://holytrinitywyoming.org)’ was joined by a second domain ‘[htwmi.org](http://htwmi.org)’ which while not as explicit is easier to type. The domains are interchangeable. Any email address or web address for one works with the other. Our website is equally accessible with [www.holytrinitywyoming.org](http://www.holytrinitywyoming.org) as it is with [www.htwmi.org](http://www.htwmi.org).

We also have a couple of sub-domains in use: [calendar.htwmi.org](http://calendar.htwmi.org) which goes directly to our new on-line master calendar and [give.htwmi.org](http://give.htwmi.org) which makes it possible for you to donate on-line.

## **REALM**

My thanks to Troy Nelson who has kept-up our use of REALM a cloud-based database and accounting software from ACS Technologies. One of the older names in computer management software for churches, Realm allows each member to have their own account, and to manage their own information on-line. During 2021, we hope to make REALM our master database and accounting service. Transferring all the information to REALM is a sizeable job, especially when it comes to creating a new chart of accounts and entering all the transactions of an accounting year.

## **WEBSITE**

Holy Trinity has an active website in that information changes regularly and news is posted if not daily close to it. If you want information about anything going on at Holy Trinity, check the website ([www.htwmi.org](http://www.htwmi.org) or [www.holytrinitywyoming.org](http://www.holytrinitywyoming.org)) first. The scrolling pictures on the home page will also change from time-to-time and clicking on a picture will take you to the story or post concerning the happening.

Our New Master Calendar is part of our website as is all the information and documentation about this Annual Meeting.

## **FACEBOOK**

Maggie Gonzalez keeps our Facebook page up to date with timely posts that echo what is posted on the website. Our services from past weeks are also posted on the page for those of you who might want to tune-in and watch last Sunday's service at 10 PM on Thursday evening. Facebook is a powerful social media source that can bring people together. Like the web itself, Facebook is also like being downtown in a major city. Please be careful what you see and particularly careful where you click. Guard your privacy and make use of the security measures available to you. Do not believe what you read unless you are very sure of the source, and then it may be wise to contact the source via email, text or telephone and make sure that they sent the post. The amount of scamming and deceitful operations on-line, email, and social media is extensive. Please be cautious. If it looks too good to be true, it is.

## **ZOOM**

Zoom is a video and audio service that follows some of the technology used by Skype and a host of a videotelephony and chat peer-to-peer service. ZOOM, based in California developed stronger back-up switching and security thus making it a better alternative to Skype. Other companies such as Google and Facetime from Facebook are challenging ZOOM's top status. Holy Trinity owns a two-host license allowing us to hold two simultaneous events for unlimited time with 100 people or less. During the pandemic we will have conducted our Vestry and Worship Committee meetings via ZOOM.

ZOOM allows us to limit who attends a meeting after several church meetings were violated by porn producers when the meeting invitation information was made public. Anyone with an Internet ready smart phone, tablet, laptop, or desktop (with a microphone and camera) can join and participate in a ZOOM meeting. People can check-in no matter where they are (I once ZOOMED in to a meeting while waiting on a flight in Istanbul). Generally, the quality is good, however that is up to your cellular or WIFI connection (just think how it was when we all had television antennas or rabbit-ears). ZOOM is not live streaming as it allows two-way communication. There is a whole new set of ZOOM courtesy directives (such as leaving your microphone on mute when not speaking to a group) and remembering that we can see you not just hear you. (Please feel free to tell or share a funny ZOOM story here)

If you would like to use our ZOOM account for your church meeting, please contact Maggie at the church office. She will be happy to set-up the meeting and give you information on how to log-in, start your meeting and stay connected.

### **LIVE-STREAMING**

For several months, live net-casts of services at HT was made available with a MEVO camera which connected either through our WIFI or via a cellular connection. Due to the inconsistency of our old router/WIFI, cellular was used most of the time. Sadly, most often Maggie's minutes were the only way to make the service available.

In discussing this with the Worship Committee and Vestry the decision was made to purchase the equipment necessary for High Density Live-Streaming. Two new cameras, a switcher/streamer, IPAD (needed to run the controller software), wiring and a small FM Transmitter to cover the parking-lot were purchased. After working-out the major glitches, the new equipment is up and running.

As with any project such as this, I am including a list of things that need attention before our building is open and our people return. I present this as a wish-list of sorts. Our nave currently looks like a badly organized television studio with wires everywhere. This may prove unsightly and unsafe when our doors reopen.

### **UNDERCROFT or BASEMENT**

Our current WIFI does not carry well to the basement. Most folks who use our building use the basement and need to have some contact with the outside world. With the phone disconnected, and cellular service minimal, a good WIFI signal is a must. I would recommend the installation of a WIFI AP (Access Point) in the basement.

## **COPIER**

Our copier needs to be replaced. This is a lease situation and thankfully copier lease prices have stayed the same or in some cases have fallen in the last few years. The reason is obvious, people are using less paper and doing less copying. My recommendation is that we investigate a new lease for a copier and consider what bells and whistles would assist our administrative assistant.

## **ETHERNET WIRING**

While WIFI is a reasonable way to connect when using a phone, tablet, or laptop, it is not the best when using a desktop computer. I would recommend that the work be done to make wired ethernet connections available in the Rector's Office, Conference Room, Nave (a must for Live streaming) Parish Hall and the Undercroft Library.

## **LIVE-STREAMING WISH LIST**

- Ethernet wired connection from Router to Switcher/Streamer (currently wire is going under rug).
- HDMI Wiring in Nave from Switcher to general placement of cameras.
- New Microphone wire to Lectern to eliminate buzz.
- Dedicated grounded electrical circuit to area where PA system and Switcher/Streamer are located. (Currently none of the electrical circuits are grounded. With delicate electronic equipment it takes tiny fluctuations in current to cause major and unrepairable damage. The lack of a ground also can cause unwanted noise.)
- Currently our live-streaming effort is utilizing the Rector's Laptop as the dedicated laptop. The laptop allows us to connect with Facebook and establish the connection necessary for the live stream; play videos created by our members (such as the Commons Video today), and if needed make use of the MEVO camera as a stationary camera. It would be a good idea to purchase a new Laptop for your next Rector/Priest and have it ready by the arrival date.

Most of the work above can be accomplished with local talent (a.k.a. sweat equity), but some (electrical work) will need to meet standards for insurance purposes. Coming up with a total amount is difficult.

My sincere appreciation is extended to:

**Owen Smith** is an accomplished technician who has given his time for the church over many years of work as the IT guy for the parish in year's past. My sincere thanks for his willingness to allow me to get to work during the quietness of the pandemic.

**Magnus Smith** who recently has begun helping us on Sunday with the technological stuff.

**Willis "Bill" Atwell** know the parish's sound system and has been a true gentle guide and friend as I have worked through some challenges.

**Troy Nelson** is an accomplished "geek" in his own right and has worked hard to establish the parish's use of REALM. My sincere thanks Troy and my hope that all your work will pay off as we transition to the new single platform for our database and accounting.

**Genia LaNore** for her assistance in running the system on Sunday mornings for many weeks.

**Maggie Gonzalez** who has had to put up with many changes, learn many new things, and has patiently listened to the accurate complaints of those both listening and watching as well as a perturbed priest who cannot always figure out why things do not work. Maggie you are a gem. Thank you so much.

From my days with a morse code key and a wire across our backyard clothesline to the amazing reality of a world made smaller through the wonder and the danger of electronic connection; the church evolves. Sometimes kicking and screaming as it moves and lunges into the next newest and greatest thing, the church recognizes that it must find ways to keep the story of Christ, the love of Christ, the Reality of Christ alive.

From the old gospel song made famous by Alison Krauss in the movie "Brother Where Art Thou:"

"As I went down in the river to pray  
Studying about that good ol' way  
And who shall wear the starry crown  
Good Lord, show me the way

O sisters (brothers), let's go down  
Let's go down, come on down  
O sisters, let's go down  
Down in the river to pray"

Fr. Geek