

Pastor's Ponderings

Pastor David Eisenhuth

If you were in church on Sunday, October 6, you would have noted my absence. I had planned to attend a preaching course at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. I had asked Torben Aarsand to fill in for me, but two weeks before my intended absence, I decided to attend another event, this one at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Retired pastors like Torben love to get around the synod, preaching at different congregations, and many depend on the stipend to supplement their income, so it's not nice to cancel someone at the last moment. So I decided to take the Sunday and attend another church, just to see what is going on there. Since I have heard so much about the "movie theater church," I went there with Tom and June Holler. I thought I would report on what I experienced, since this church is one that several members who left Trinity now attend.

The "movie theater church" is aptly named since it worships in theater 2 at the Leitersberg Cinema. It is one of several campuses of the LifeHouse Church here in Hagerstown. There were three services that day. We chose to go the middle service at 10 a.m. When we drove up, several spaces were clearly marked for use by visitors. We parked in one. At the edge of the sidewalk, there was a booth inviting newcomers to sign in. I do not like to stand out in a crowd, so we walked by and entered the theater by the box office. We were greeted several times by people specifically appointed to do so (they were wearing tags). Those who registered as guests were given eight by 10-inch signs indicating that they were VIPs. I was glad we didn't indicate we were visitors. I not sure what wearing a sign would have done for us! However, Tom is a friendly guy and talks to everyone, so he made the acquaintance of a young man who showed us around the lobby.

A light breakfast of cereal, donuts, milk, coffee, and juice was available at one of the theater's concession stands. There was a table with information about a foster

child service agency here in Washington County. That was prominently placed at the entrance to theater 2. Ropes indicated where those who were about to go into the theater should stand. Shortly the doors opened, and those in attendance at the earlier service were leaving. When they were out, we entered. Theater 2 has new seats. They are deeply padded and the backs are very high, making it difficult for even a six-foot guy like me to see over them. We took seats near the middle, and no one sat near us. Most people there, like good Protestants, sat in the back. On the screen was a changing scene, which had in one corner a box counting down to when the next service would begin. Right on cue, the service began 10 minutes after we sat down.

The service started with three musical selections. I am not too knowledgeable about contemporary Christian music, but I think it was "cutting-edge" stuff. The words were projected onto the screen with professional quality graphics illustrating the words we were singing. After each piece, a band member made a brief testimony highlighting what the lyrics had said. There were

five or six band members—guitars, a drum set, and I think a flute, but my memory has faded a bit. Each band member also sang. It was evident to me that all of the band members were professionals, and therefore most likely paid for their services. This must have been true too of the person in charge of the graphics, because there must

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Befriending Neighborhood Folk . . . How?

June Habeck-Holler

WALKING THE WALK

Trinity justs had another free meal for our neighborhood. The past three meals have brought more than 160 neighborhood people to sit to eat with their friends and family, as Trinity volunteers served and watched.

Since Christians relate to all people through loving and caring relationships, just feeding in silence (giving a handout) can be insulting, unless we begin developing a sense of fellowship with those who come to join us for meals. We need our members at these meals, briefly sitting at tables and showing God's love by having nonjudgmental conversations with them . . . but how to do this?!

THE SITUATION

How do we talk with total strangers in a meaningful way? . . . especially people who have so many daily struggles to survive?

Most people with social and economic disadvantages spend most of their time and resources (95% of \$) to secure food and shelter. When these groups were polled about what makes a person "rich" they listed: a job, car/mobility, can shop anytime, electricity, confidence/security and knowledge/education.

Keep in mind that people who are poor struggle with anger, envy, resentment, shame and embarrassment because of their ongoing needs. It's important that we converse with warmth, sympathy, sincerity and humility.

THE PROCESS

After greeting a visitor and introducing yourself, we can sit down and begin by asking, "How are you all doing?" To children: "What are your names?" "We are in your neighborhood and want to partner with you—what do you say your neighborhood or family needs?" Or, "What would you like to see the church do in this neighborhood?"

Strive to understand our guests' issues and needs (feeling ignored, taken for granted, harassed, or marginalized). Since the first step is getting to know them, listen. This next may seem self-evident, but, as a reminder: if someone seems depressed, don't say: "There's always someone worse off than you are," but perhaps say, "You are not alone in this." Don't say, "No one has ever said life is fair," but maybe to say, "You are important to God and to me." Don't say, "Stop feeling sorry for yourself; try harder." Maybe instead say, "This meal is one way of showing that you do matter." Don't say, "Cheer up, being depressed only makes things worse." Instead maybe say, "We are on earth to see one another through the hard times." Don't say: "I know what you mean" or "I know how you feel," because

there's a good chance that we don't understand. Maybe say, "I can't really understand what you are going through, but I care that you are upset." These suggestions are from *health.com*.

THEN WHAT?

Josh Reeves, in *5 Ways Your Church Can Reach Out to the Neighborhood*, recommends: (1) Start a needs awareness network on Facebook, so our neighbors can update their needs as they arise. (2) Throw a neighborhood party on a quarterly basis, which we already are doing. (3) Attend neighborhood meetings and communicate with leaders in our neighborhood. If someone asks for money, offer to take the person to lunch (if hungry) or to a thrift shop (for supplies), once you have a rapport with them or feel comfortable doing so.

Robert D. Lupton in *Compassion, Justice and the Christian Life: Rethinking Ministry to the Poor*, suggests: (1) Change your perspective. Realize that your job is not to cure the poor of their poverty, as if you're a doctor and they're your patients. Understand that you're equals in God's eyes, because He has made you all in His image. Ask God to help you to love poor people as your neighbors and genuinely get to know them. Treat them with respect and dignity. Instead of seeing them as projects to work on, view them as people to love.

(2) Work with (not for) the poor. Don't just set your own agenda for how to help. Instead, listen to what the people actually need and want before deciding how to help them. Rather than doing all the work yourself, invite those who are poor to join in by discovering their God-given talents and putting them to use in community improvement projects. Let poor people help you sometimes as well; let them know that they have something of value to give you in return for your efforts to help them.

(3) Meet needs through relationships instead of programs. Understand that you can often help people more powerfully when you approach them personally instead of through a formal program. Instead of starting an employment program, share job leads with a poor friend and encourage your friend to use his or her new contacts to network and pass on valuable job information to other people who are poor.

Keep in mind that the Lord is the maker of us all, and we all share the same basic concerns, needs, and human rights. And God's Spirit will guide our willingness to engage our neighbors.

Some additional sources for new ideas include: *yahoo!answers*, *moneyhelpforchristians.com*, *WikiHow*.

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Organ Project Update

Pastor Greg Shook

The organ project is still in process, and we are looking toward work beginning after our All Saints service on November 3. The work that is being done will not be visible to the eye, but is crucial for the operation of the instrument. The most work will be done on the inside of the console (where the organist sits and accesses the manuals—the keyboards—the stops, and the foot pedals) and inside each chamber (the groupings of organ pipes on either side of the altar). The wiring and circuit boards will be totally replaced in both the console and the chambers, and a new and improved computer system will be installed to make it all work.



Unlike the system that was installed in 1996 when the organ was rebuilt, the new system will be easily updated as technology evolves. New wiring will be run to each of the organ chambers and to each of the ports in the

floor (where commands from the console are communicated to the organ pipes).

Once the project is completed, we will have a rededication of the instrument and some recitals to celebrate completion of the project. Several people have asked about contributing to this project. If you would like to contribute, please speak with Pastor Greg. Your support is welcome toward the project as well, if you would like to sponsor a concert as part of the rededication.



Parish Choir for Advent and Christmas

The Parish Choir is now beginning to rehearse Advent and Christmas music. If you're not able to commit to sing with the choir for a full year, please consider joining us for these lovely seasons of music-making. Rehearsals are Wednesdays, from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Come and join us! See Pastor Greg if interested.



Advent Vespers: Lessons and Carols for Advent

Our Lutheran Conference musicians and choirs will present Advent Vespers, a service of readings and music, to begin the Advent season, at 4 p.m. Sunday, December 1, 2019, at Saint John's Lutheran Church, 141 South Potomac Street, Hagerstown.

A free-will offering will be received to benefit Saint Mark's, Trinity, and Zion Lutheran Food Banks. Please make checks payable to Saint John's Lutheran Church and designate "Food Bank."

Please help us advertise this event and show your support through attendance, food, and cash contributions.

Neighborhood, Continued

WHAT YOU CAN DO

The Trinity Food Pantry needs: crackers, boxed dessert mixes, and cookies. The Trinity Clothing Bank needs all sizes of bed sheets, towels, washcloths, and men's boxer shorts, all sizes.

PONDER THIS

"The world tells us to seek success, power and money; God tells us to seek humility, service and love."

—Pope Francis

FOOD PANTRY AND CLOTHING BANK STATISTICS

	2019 Jan.-Sept.	2018 Jan.-Sept.	% Increase or decrease
Food Pantry			
Families	1,228	1,250	--
Individuals	3,006	3,024	-0.6
Clothing Bank			
Families	1,645	1,711	-3.9*

* Clothing Bank was closed for three days in January 2019 to move to a new location.

Review of our 150th Anniversary Celebrations and Activities: “Celebrating Our Past and Embracing our Future”

OCTOBER 2018

Our first celebration was held to commemorate the beginning of Trinity Lutheran Church. October was chosen because it was the month our original members began the formation of a new Lutheran church in Hagerstown. In August 1869, the Church Constitution was signed; in October 1869, the first service was held in our original church building on Franklin Street.

The celebration this day focused on the original church, the growth of the church, and the move to our present location in 1911. We planted a tree in our newly landscaped courtyard at the end of the service, with a blessing given outside. Memorabilia was displayed in the sanctuary and Fellowship Hall. A potluck was held and a program was presented using old photos and readings from interviews from past members. These interviews are in our Heritage Room Archives. We also began to put a recipe from the past into the *Trinity Messenger* each month. This continued all year.

DECEMBER 2018

Christmas at Trinity has always been a very special and festive season. We resurrected the candelabras that were attached to the end of the pews for our Christmas Eve services. These were part of our services for many years, but had to be abandoned because of fire regulations. With the advent of flame-free candles, the Christmas Eve services were once again held by candlelight. We shared the memories of members of Christmas Eve at Trinity in a printed pamphlet. Many remembered all three choirs singing, “Oh, Holy Night” and Mrs. Hewitt playing “Silent Night” on the harp. The midnight service was begun by Dr. Ard, and it is believed we were the first church in Hagerstown to hold a late-night Christmas Eve service. A bag of hard candy and an orange were given to all as they exited the service, a tradition that came from the 1930s.

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2019

Our beautiful stained glass windows were the focus of celebration, as we worshiped together at one service in the sanctuary. A brief history of the windows was shared. The highlight was the Te Deum window on the balcony. The Te Deum windows was part of the service, which Pastor David led from the balcony in front of the window. Congregational members were encouraged to study the rich symbolism of the window. A 150th Anniversary banner was hung from the belltower. This was originally part of our 125th celebration and was resurrected and updated to once again adorn the church for the year.

MARCH 2019

We moved the festivities to Fellowship Hall as we worshipped together there and honored the significance of Praise Worship as part of our history. The service was a direct offshoot of having to worship in Fellowship Hall during the renovation of the sanctuary in 1996. Many appreciated worshipping in the less formal space, and Praise Worship was born. Pastor Micki Bond was our guest, as she was the leader who molded this service and brought elements to it that are still an integral part of it today. The Praise Band led us in our favorite music.

APRIL 2019

We celebrated Easter with past pictures and the history of the Easter cross that adorns our sanctuary each Easter season. This cross was quite the attraction, and for many years the church was open on Easter afternoon for members of the community to come and see it. Unfortunately, having real live lilies placed on the cross became cost prohibitive. We remember its beauty with the artificial ones we use now.

We kicked off the ribbon that holds our 150 prayers and praises that hangs from the balcony during Lent. The congregation was asked to fill out a card to be placed on a ribbon to offer our thanks and praise to God as well as to offer names up to God for specific prayers. We celebrated Earth Day as part of our anniversary celebration by handing out small potted herbs to our Food Pantry and Clothing Bank guests. On April 28, 150 bulbs were handed out to Trinity members at both worship services. We had 50 packs of three bulbs, each to be planted at a place of your choice in honor of our anniversary.

MAY 2019

We celebrated our anniversary at the Ladies Night Out event by recreating the first Mother-Daughter Banquet held in May of 1939—80 years ago! Attendees wore something to represent a past decade—apron, gloves, hats, jewelry, and so on, as we celebrated the influence of women at Trinity. Fellowship Hall was adorned with vintage kitchen items and the menu from the first banquet was served by the men of the congregation. The program cover was recreated from the first cover. A skit that was originally part of the first Mother-Daughter Banquet was rewritten to bring it up to date and presented. All in attendance were asked to post the name of a woman who has been instrumental in their faith formation. These names were then added to our Prayers and Praises Banner in the sanctuary. A grand time was had by all.

JUNE 2019

Traditionally, June is the month for weddings, and this was our focus. Memorial Hall was adorned with wedding memorabilia dating back to the early 1900s: gowns, veils, and even shoes, as well as albums, pictures, and cake tops. A beautiful, delicious wedding cake was the focus of our refreshments, and the room was filled with traditional wedding music. The cake was accompanied by things served at early receptions held at the church—punch, nuts, and mints. Past marriage records from 1869 to 1940 from our archives were on display. Marriage was the highlight of our church service, and couples have their vows blessed.

JULY 2019

Christmas in July was our focus. One of the goals of our anniversary was to do an outreach program, and Samaritans Purse/Operation Christmas Child was chosen. Our goal was to fill 150 boxes with the many items requested. The congregation rose to meet this challenge, and all of the boxes were filled. What a blessing!

AUGUST 2019

A festive liturgy celebrating our 150th Anniversary was held August 25, 2019, on the Sunday closest to the actual signing of the charter on August 26, 1869. We welcomed Pastor David Buchenroth back to the pulpit. It was a celebration with an inspirational message and music. A potluck followed in Fellowship Hall. The displays and talk given highlighted our Christian education history. The bulletin boards were filled with pictures from our recent past. There are many familiar faces! It was a wonderful homecoming for Pastor Buchenroth and his influence as pastor—weekly communion, chanting, and our beautiful sanctuary—just a few things that are part of his legacy.

SEPTEMBER 2019

Genealogy was the emphasis of this month. We learned about our church history during the past year. It was time to learn how to trace your own family history! Carol Miller-Schultz, our guest genealogist, gave us knowledge on how to begin your own family research. An enthusiastic group attended and would like for her to follow up with another presentation in the spring.

OCTOBER 2019

The concluding event of our yearlong celebration was on October 13, 2019 with Bishop Gohl as guest preacher. We had a choir reunion, with a choir made up of anyone who sang in one of our past choirs singing that day. All choir members—Cherub, Junior, Young Peoples and Senior Choirs—were invited to come and sing. We had a celebration meal together. Pastor Greg shared information about the extraordinary musical history of Trinity, and the impact our music has had on our community.

November Announcements**THANKSGIVING FOOD BOX DRIVE**

This is the kick-off for our Thanksgiving Food Box Drive! This is our largest drive to benefit the Food Pantry and our holiday meals. This past summer, we took a leap of faith and ordered 70 turkeys and all the fixings for a wonderful Thanksgiving meal. The meals are given to our Micah's Backpack families and our Food Pantry clients. The most wonderful thing about this is the cost: only \$10. per box, and that includes the turkey. Please use the envelopes, at the end of each pew, in the Narthex and on the tables in Fellowship Hall for your donation. We will add additional food and an aluminum turkey pan to each box, so any and all donations are very much needed and very much appreciated. Thank you!

ALL SAINT'S DAY COFFEE HOUR

All Saint's Day is November 3. This day has evolved into a very special memorial for members of Trinity who have entered into the Church Triumphant in the past year. Their family members have been invited to attend.

It has become a time for all in attendance who have lost loved ones to light a candle in their memory. We will add another way to remember those special to us with a coffee hour following both Sunday services. Please bring a coffee-hour type food from the recipe of a loved one or a favorite food of a loved one to share.

A card will be placed by the food to identify the loved one. This type of food includes cookies, dips, cheeseballs, cookie bars, and the like. If you want to share a food item, please sign up on the sheet in Fellowship Hall or in the Narthex. Please bring the food with to church on All Saint's Day. All are invited for fellowship following both services, regardless of whether they have brought something to share. This time is for loving remembrance.

EMBRACING OUR FUTURE

The 150th Anniversary Committee hopes the congregation has enjoyed the many ways we have celebrated our history. One of our goals was to offer a variety of events. Pastor David suggests that we bring out items from our Heritage Room to keep our history alive. He is impressed with what we have from our past compared to other churches where he has served. We will do this, and we are still adding to our Heritage Room; watch for it to be open on a regular basis in 2020.

Our intent to celebrate our past has been accomplished, so now it is time to move to the second part of our celebraion: embracing our future. What better way to move forward than to examine and update our mission statement. It is the perfect ending to this celebration, and a wonderful way to begin our next 150 years. Thanks be to God!

Pastor's Ponderings, Continued

have been 50 or 60 different illustrations and short videos shown during the service.

LifeHouse was doing a series based on the theme "For Our City." The theme of the day when we were there was foster parenting, hence the display in the lobby. The theme was introduced by a Hollywood-quality movie of a woman from the church who, together with her husband (never shown in the video), had made a decision to foster a special needs child. The woman was shown in her home seated on a couch with the kitchen visible. This part of the video lasted about 10 minutes. When it was over, the senior pastor of the church came on the stage.

Pastor Patrick Grauch is one of the two lead pastors; his wife is the other. He used the text from the Gospel of Mark, of the woman with the hemorrhage who worked her way through the crowd to seek healing by touching Jesus's robe. Interspersed with that story is the story of the raising of the daughter of Jarius. This was a Bible study/sermon, which is common in Evangelical churches. The pastor used the text to illustrate how people can become marginalized. He spoke for about 40 minutes. The pastor repeated himself several times, even to the point that he himself said he was repeating himself. Given the comfort of the seats and the darkness of the theater, I have to confess that I dozed off for a minute or two. I thought the theology of the message was very sound. Pastor Grauch spoke the entire time without notes. After he finished, the second half of the movie about the foster family played. It was about five minutes long.

The service continued with an explanation as to how one could financially support the church. There is no formal offering during the service. Envelopes for donations are in the lobby, but an emphasis was on giving via electronic means. It was also explained that the next step for someone interested in the church was to visit a booth in the lobby. There one could also sign up for a house church cell. In large congregations, it is in a house church where you do Bible study, have fellowship, get to know people, and receive pastoral care from each other. The pastor does not know people, as you would expect me to have a personal relationship with you.

The service concluded with another musical selection, and it was made known that prayer teams were available in the front of the theater. We were dismissed, and everyone left just as they might at the end of a movie. There was little interaction with the worshippers. The theater is very big, so it is difficult to estimate how many were there. I guess about 150.

I was left cold because of the omission of something that is huge for me—the celebration of Holy Communion. Since my earliest days as a member of a liturgical church,

when I was in seventh grade, I have come to expect to receive the sacrament of bread and wine every week. I see the service as being two parts, the first is Word and the second is Eucharist. I honestly don't know when the sacrament is celebrated at LifeHouse. I don't know how it is celebrated, that is, do you receive it at your seat or at a communion station? I just know it wasn't available the Sunday I was there, and I missed it. I could not go to a church without weekly Communion.

Critics call churches like LifeHouse entertainment ministry. I found the service uplifting, and if one is looking for professionally done music with accompanying graphics, you find it there. The theology was fine, no hell and damnation! The emphasis on a community service was laudable. I think God has created us as unique individuals with different likes and dislikes. I'm fine with people finding joy in worship, in varied settings from our sanctuary to a movie theater. I'm just glad people are going to church. The worshippers that day were on the young side, and I believe children are in another area altogether.

I have never had aspirations to be the pastor of a mega church. I like the personal relationships that I can have with people in a church the size of Trinity. I daresay that one of the appeals of LifeHouse is anonymity. You can go and worship and not really talk to people. No one is going to corral you and on your second visit ask you to be on church council! Members at LifeHouse are apparently encouraged to dig deeper, as a brochure invites visitors, by becoming a part of a cell group. It would be interesting to know what percentage of the members of the church actually take that next step. However, this kind of anonymity is not unique to a church like LifeHouse. Many people seek it out at liturgical churches. The largest Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregation is Mount Olivet in Minneapolis, with 6,000 each Sunday. Do you think the pastor would know you there? Of course not. A friend of mine went there, and after joining the congregation thought he would volunteer to be on church council. He was told members start as traffic cops in the parking lot and work their way into the building by serving in different jobs!

When I mentioned to some of our members that I had gone to the "movie theater church," they spoke of it as our "competition." I don't think that's true. We might envy their bottom line, but I think diversity in worship styles is healthy. Between our Praise Worship and the more formal service at 11 a.m., I think we offer a sound product. It's just that we don't know how to invite people who might like that to know we are here. We are trying to do this by defining our mission. Once that is done, we can focus on the marketing ideas I raised last year at the annual meeting, and for which a large sum was set aside. God's kingdom is pretty big. There's a place for LifeHouse and Trinity. We are seeking to bring people to a closer relationship with Jesus. May *our* efforts be blessed and enriched.



“Thank You!”

To Trinity Church Family,

Another year slipped by quickly. Many thanks for the lovely flowers and birthday card that made my day special.

Thanks to Barbara Smith for getting them to me.
—Judy Wood

Dear Trinity Lutheran,

Sincere thanks for the cards, beautiful flowers, and the many blessings for my September birthday. Your kindness is truly appreciated. God bless you always.

Love, Donna Alexander

150th Anniversary

Thanks to all who helped with our celebration. It was a festive year! There are displays outside and in Fellowship Hall. One is a table with lots of pictures: feel free to take some. We have many double copies.

There is a table with items from our 100th Anniversary: feel free to take 100th Anniversary bookmarks, found in the Heritage Room, with our church info on one side and the books of the Bible on the other. Take some to hand out to friends and neighbors!

Literacy Council Needs Volunteer Teachers

The Literacy Council of Washington County needs volunteer tutors to teach Adult Basic Literacy and/or English as a Second Language.

The two-day Tutor Training Workshop will be held from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Saturdays, November 2 and November 9, at Benevola United Methodist Church, 19925 Benevola Church Road, in Boonsboro. To register or for more information, see Brenda in Room 106 at Trinity Lutheran Church any Tuesday or Thursday from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Or call (301)739-4208, email office@literacycouncilofwashingtoncounty.com, or register via website: www.literacyofwcmd.org.



Birthdays

** 75 or older*

- 1 Cayla Scheer
Mary Schultz
Charlie Warner, IV
- 2 Barbara Jones
- 3 Sharon Michael*
- 4 Helen Rohrer*
- 7 Frauke Higgins
- 8 Addie Bloomfield*
Clyde Condo III*
Michael Stowell
- 9 Nanette Dagliano
- 10 Judy Purdham
Ayanna Thomas
Satiera Thomas
- 11 Jenna Repp
Benjamin Shuster
- 14 Annie Goble
- 15 Kathy Shrader
- 16 Shane Angles
- 17 Dan McCarthy
Pamela Sherman*
- 18 Susan Kretzer
Erma Leedy*
- 19 Linda Taylor
- 22 Dave Rowe
- 23 Brian Hammond
Downs Hewitt*
- 24 Barbara Brechbiel
- 25 Ruth Sasse
- 27 Andy Wallace
- 28 Bill Griemsmann
- 29 Judy Melby Robinson
Craig Robinson
Catherine Williams*
Rev. David Eisenhuth

Anniversaries

** 40 years or more*

- 5 John & Julie Bentley
- 7 Michael & Diana Markle
- 15 Dan & Jennifer Dopson
- 18 Jerry & Jane Guyton*

Trinity Lutheran Church
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Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

Phone: (301)733-2878 www.tlchag.org

Sunday Worship at 8:45 a.m. and 11 a.m.
Sunday School for All Ages at 9:55 a.m.
Church Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

MAKING DISCIPLES FOR CHRIST

Food Pantry and Clothing Bank: (301)733-5651
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 11 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

Washington County Literacy Council: (301)739-4208
Tuesday and Thursday: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

