

# Trinity

## Matters



WINTER 2025

Photo: Michele Grupe





# Our Father's HEART

*"For to us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." - Isaiah 9:6*

You are a child of God. This is who you are and will always be. Christmas proclaims this truth over you and me. Our Father sent His Son Jesus so that you and I would walk in this truth. Jesus said it loud and clear, "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father." His birth, life, death, and resurrection loudly proclaim, "Let Me show you how much He loves you."

This Christmas Our Father is inviting us to lay our heads on His chest and listen to His heart beat. In the songs, in the Nativity, in the candle lighting, when we serve, and when we gather in His name, will you hear it? Will you slow down and listen? His heart is beating, and it is beating not just for you and me, but for all mankind.

As I continue to train in South Carolina, I miss my four children (and yes, Chloe is still my favorite daughter.) Each day as I am away from them, I continue to pray for them and text them. What I know, and I pray they know this: they have a perfect Father that loves them so much more than I do. He is aware of everything in their hearts and minds, and He has a special plan for them. He is always there to listen to them, and He continues to speak to them through His word. This is what Christmas is about. The everlasting Father, revealed in Christmas, in Jesus. To you, to me, to my children, and to the world.

His heart is beating, and it is beating for you.  
You matter!

I will be home for Christmas!



REV. JUSTIN KRUPSKY | SENIOR PASTOR



## Advent and Christmas WORSHIP

### ADVENT I

Wednesday, December 3

11 am Worship\* | 12 pm Lunch | 7 pm Worship

### ADVENT II

Wednesday, December 10

11 am Worship\* | 12 pm Lunch | 7 pm Worship

### ADVENT III

Wednesday, December 17

11 am Worship\* | 12 pm Lunch  
7 pm Trinity School Christmas Musical

### CHRISTMAS EVE

Wednesday, December 24

1:00 pm Worship\*+ (gym)

3:00 pm Worship+ (gym)

4:00 pm Worship\*

6:00 pm Worship\*+

11:00 pm Worship+

### CHRISTMAS DAY

Thursday, December 25

10:00 am Worship+

Saturday, December 27

5:30 pm Worship+

Sunday, December 28

9:00 am Worship\*+

11:15 am Worship\*

Monday, December 29

No Monday Night Worship

### NEW YEAR'S EVE

Wednesday, December 31

5:30 pm Worship\*+

### NEW YEAR'S DAY

Thursday, January 1

No Worship Services

\*Denotes Live Stream

+Denotes Communion



# ADVENT



REV. JOSH BRITTON  
**ASSOCIATE PASTOR  
OF WORSHIP**

To say I joyfully look forward to worshipping with my Trinity family during the Advent and Christmas season would be a severe understatement. I don't know about you, but I LOVE this time of the year. This season is the perfect combination of both preparing with great anticipation for the second coming of Christ as we also look back to celebrate His first coming at Christmas.

I want to share some truths that I pray help serve as a blessing to us all so we can remember why the family of God has certain rhythms or worship habits throughout our church year.

*Advent focuses on preparation, not just celebration.* Do we get to celebrate and sing some of the best songs ever during this season? Yes! More than that, Advent is a season of waiting and preparation, not just a countdown to Christmas. This is why we have more mid-week worship opportunities. These extra chances to gather and worship Jesus help to shift the focus from the commercial and secular aspects of the season to prayerful reflection and repentance so we remember why we need the greatest gift that took on flesh for you and for me.

*Advent unites us into a rich historic Christian tradition.* It is great to be reminded of the truth that we aren't the only

denomination that observes Advent. Advent helps to unite us to other brothers and sisters in Christ who celebrate the same way through this season. Christ followers have long observed additional worship services during penitential seasons like Advent and Lent. These mid-week services reflect a long-standing liturgical practice in the church that helps bless us with the bigger realization that we are part of a globally wide body of Christ!

*Advent has a beautiful thematic emphasis.* Each mid-week service often focuses on a particular theme (like hope, peace, joy and love,) or a character in the Advent story (like Isaiah, John the Baptist, Mary, etc.). In our case this year at Trinity, we will be focusing on the idea of Maranatha: Come, Lord Jesus. During our three mid-week services, we will look closely at Jesus' incarnation, Jesus' return, and Jesus' presence within the Church. These services help to deepen our understanding of the Biblical narrative leading up to Christ's birth and how this applies to our lives today.

*Advent gives us time for extra devotion.* As followers of Jesus, we have an opportunity to pause during a busy season, reflect on God's Word, and gather in community. Many people appreciate the quiet, contemplative

tone of these services, which contrasts with the frenzy of holiday activity. We pray that God continually opens our eyes during these times to the needs we find around us so we can respond to be a blessing.

*Advent blesses us through God's Word and worship.* There is something calming and soothing about walking into a dimly lit room where familiar faces greet us, songs of worship lift our souls, and the truth of God's Word fills and transforms us. These services are meant to teach and reinforce our faith. Not only are we blessed to hear and receive the gift of God's Word, but we have more chances to sing Advent hymns, which are Biblically rich in theology and only sung a few times a year.

We hope these extra opportunities to come and worship will help you and your family to intentionally live in rhythm with the rest of your church family as we all seek to keep Jesus at the center of the season.

Please see the worship schedule for all the upcoming opportunities to gather together as the body of Christ. We can't wait to gather and sing with you this Advent and Christmas season at Trinity!





# SAFE AND SECURE



STEVE POWELL  
SAFETY TEAM MANAGER

Dear Trinity Family, I'd like to take a moment to formally introduce myself — my name is Steve Powell, and I'm honored to serve as your new Safety Team Manager for Trinity's Safety Ministry! I'm both humbled and grateful that the leadership of Trinity has entrusted me with this important role and opportunity. I look forward to working together to help keep our church family safe and secure.

**What is my background?** I am married to Linda Powell, whom most of you already know because of her work as our church receptionist. We will be married for 20 years in June of 2026. We have a wonderful son, Steven, who is a sophomore at Lutheran Northwest and attended Trinity from preschool through eighth grade. We have been members of Trinity since 2015, and I became an elder in July of this year. Before stepping into my role as Safety Team Manager, I served 10 years in the United States Marine Corps, where I held several positions that helped prepare me for this ministry. In addition to my military service, I worked for a private security company providing security for the corporate headquarters of American Axle. I now serve as the Director of Recruiting for a privately held staffing company in Troy, Michigan.

**What is my role at Trinity?** I am responsible, in coordination with leadership, to take a proactive role in ensuring the safety and security of our students, staff, and all guests who attend Trinity Lutheran Church and School. One component of this role is building our Safety Ministry Team with volunteers from our congregation. Trinity, this is where I need your help! I would like to get to know those of you in our community who are former/current: first responders (law enforcement or fire fighters), military, doctors, nurses, security professionals, and those who have a passion for safety and security. Please reach out to me at 586.731.4490 ext. 206 or [spowell@trinityutica.com](mailto:spowell@trinityutica.com) so we can schedule a time to talk.



**What excites me about this ministry?** I look forward to getting to know our church and school family while we work together to keep Trinity Lutheran Church and School safe. While a lot has been done before my arrival in this role, I am excited to share my ideas and vision for the things that we can continue to do to increase both our prevention and response to emergencies.

## LIGHTNING ROUND

**PETS?** A 5-YEAR-OLD CHOCOLATE LAB NAMED SAMSON

**HOBBIES?** CAMPING, ATV TRAIL RIDING, AND HUNTING

**TV SHOW?** *THE OFFICE* FOR COMEDY AND *LANDMAN* FOR DRAMA

**FAVORITE HOLIDAY?** FOURTH OF JULY

**COFFEE OR TEA?** COFFEE, YES, PLEASE!

**FAVORITE FOOD?** CHEESEBURGERS

**FAVORITE BIBLE VERSE?** PSALM 91:1-16



# TRINITY FOUNDATION STONE MEMORIAL



MICHELE GRUPE  
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR



Photos: Josh Weyhing



Years ago, while planting trees along Van Dyke, John Ruggirello encountered the original stone foundation of Trinity's first brick church constructed in 1905. Inspired by that find, he envisioned using seven of the original foundation stones to create a memorial that would connect the seven churches referenced in the book of Revelation to the life and history of Trinity. Thanks to the generous support of the Trinity Foundation, Trinity Ladies Aid, and Trinity B2BK for the memorial and the surrounding landscape—that vision became a reality. On September 28, 2025, we were blessed to dedicate this historic memorial near the site where the 1905 church once stood.

Set into the curved stone wall are seven original foundation stones from that first brick church building. Each stone is engraved with the name of one of the seven churches of Revelation, serving as a visible reminder that Trinity's story—now spanning more than 140 years—is part of a much greater story: the story of Christ's Church from the apostles to today.

Why the seven churches? In Revelation 2–3, Jesus speaks to seven real congregations in Asia Minor. Their names on our stones invite us to remember His counsel, encouragement, and warning—timeless words for every generation:

- **Ephesus** | Strong in doctrine but warned: “You have abandoned the love you had at first.” Christ calls them (and us) to remember, repent, and do the works we did at first (2:4–5).
- **Smyrna** | Poor and persecuted, yet rich in Christ. Jesus says, “Do not fear... Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.” (2:10–11).
- **Pergamum** | Faithful under pressure, yet tempted by false teaching. The Lord urges truth and repentance (2:13–17).
- **Thyatira** | Noted for love, faith, service, and patient endurance, yet told to reject what is false and hold fast to what is true (2:19–29).
- **Sardis** | A reputation for life, but spiritually drowsy. Christ says, “Wake up... remember... and repent.” (3:1–6).
- **Philadelphia** | “Little power,” yet kept Christ's word. Jesus sets before them an open door and promises to keep them (3:7–13).
- **Laodicea** | Lukewarm and self-satisfied. Jesus lovingly rebukes and invites: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock.” (3:14–22).

Taken together, these messages paint a picture every Christian recognizes: seasons of strength and struggle, clarity and confusion, bold witness and needed course-corrections. Above all, they assure us that Jesus knows His churches, speaks to them, and sustains them. For many of our long-time members, these stones are more than symbols; they are pieces of our first foundation—echoes of baptisms, confirmations, weddings, funerals, and countless services of Word and Sacrament. For newer members, they are a welcome into a family rooted deeply in Christ. Whether you have been here for decades or days, this wall says what Scripture says: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” (Hebrews 13:8)



AS A CHILD OF GOD  
YOU HAVE A

# Church Family

THAT CARES:

## Deaconess Ministry



REV. CHAD WRIGHT  
ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF  
CHRISTIAN CARE & COUNSELING

**Family. How do you define it? In sociology, "family" is defined by various structures beyond the traditional nuclear family, including matrifocal, patrifocal, and extended families, all united by kinship ties like blood, marriage, or adoption. Family isn't only defined socially by biological or legal ties; it isn't uncommon to hear people talk about their "family of choice." You hear many different descriptions of family and ways of interpreting what family is in our culture today.**

What about "church family?" This is a concept that flows from God's Word. As children of God (1 John 3:1), we are brothers and sisters of Christ in the family, bound for the same eternal home (John 14:1-3). Much like the children of Israel in the wilderness, waiting to enter the Promised Land, we are sojourning together through the wilderness of this sin-sick world until we get to the promised land of the new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 21-22).

While we travel, we are called by God to use our spiritual gifts to build each other up in the faith – to encourage one another until we make it home. Christ calls some to be pastors and teachers in the church (Eph. 4:11) The visible church has developed other vocations to carry out congregational ministry, including deacons (Acts 6) and deaconesses (Rom. 16:2).



It is this last ministry, the vocation of deaconess, that I want to consider in this article, especially since we had deaconess intern Janis in previous years, and now have deaconess intern Jenny Jaroneski. Early church writers have something to say about this office. Origen (c. 185–254) interpreted Paul's statement in Romans 16 to teach "that there were women ordained in the church's ministry." John Chrysostom (c. 347–407) wrote: "You see that these were noble women, hindered in no way by their sex in the course of virtue; and this is as might be expected for in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female." The ordination rite for a deaconess is included in the earliest extant service books of Christianity. She was ordained by the bishop (pastor) during the liturgy at the altar, and at the same place in the service that a male deacon was ordained. In addition, she was presented with the stole and chalice and received communion with the other clergy.



In the LCMS, deaconesses wear patches to identify themselves in their service. The light blue patch indicates that the person is an intern. The gold cross indicates the deaconess has completed all training and is called to serve as a deaconess.



Much recorded history of this office was lost during the wars with the Muslims in that region in the Middle Ages. The ministry continued among Christians in the East, even after the Great Schism of 1054 AD. In both the East and the West, the monastic movement of monks and nuns replaced much of the work done by deacons and deaconesses. It was not until after the Reformation of the late 1500s, that the renewal of the office of deaconess began to sprout once more in the West among Protestants, including Lutheranism.

Currently, the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS), has multiple pathways available for studying for this specific ministry ([lcms.org/how-we-serve/mercy/deaconess-ministry](https://lcms.org/how-we-serve/mercy/deaconess-ministry)). In 1980, the LCMS established its own deaconess-training program at Concordia University Chicago, River Forest, Ill. Additional deaconess programs were added at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 2002 and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, in 2003. The Synod's Deaf Institute of Theology, Center for Hispanic Studies and Ethnic Immigrant Institute of Theology also offer specialized courses for deaconess certification.

Christ has gifted the Church with the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit enriches us with spiritual gifts so that we can build each other up in the faith. The office of deaconess is one of the various ways that the church continues to provide Christ-centered care. Read about our deaconess intern Jenny and pray for the ministry of deaconesses to be a blessing here and throughout the visible church. If you have questions or would like to talk more about this ministry, please reach out to me via email: [cwright@trinityutica.com](mailto:cwright@trinityutica.com) or call (586) 731-4490, ext. 102

### **Interview with Jenny Jaroneski, Trinity's Deaconess Intern**

What piqued your interest in the deaconess ministry?

J: It came on my radar about four years ago that a deaconess would be qualified to carry out certain roles in a congregation. I attended the specialist ministry conference in Fall of 2024. Pastor Leninger, the campus pastor at Concordia University Chicago, presented on his book on vocation. It made me

realize that I was letting things hold me back. I met deaconesses at the conference and learned more about the training and resources. I prayed about it and asked for God's guidance. I called (my husband) Aaron and discussed it with him. We prayed about it and talked about logistics. I learned about the different programs available through Concordia Seminary, St Louis, and Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. The Fort Wayne program offered a better fit for my time and situation. I talked to Pastor Justin and Pastor Jones. I have received support from LWML from Wheaton, Kansas, through student adoption program through Fort Wayne, a congregation from Apex, North Carolina, the LWML Michigan District, the Council of Lutheran Women, the LCMS Michigan District grant, and continuing education tuition reimbursement at Trinity. Through all of these, the Lord has covered most of the cost of my education.

What has your experience been like as deaconess intern?

J: I have had the opportunity to continue to serve in my current position at Trinity. All the mercy and care ministry has been reinforced by my studies in the Bible. I better understand the theological basis for the mercy and care we provide. I have learned more about the historical context of the creeds and the church. Being able to dig into the doctrine and its application at the congregational level. I have been able to be on campus for two weeks, intensive 40 hours in the classroom and the rest in the library. I have been able to meet awesome professors and amazing women who are also studying to be deaconesses. I was able to go chapel every day, which was great.

What do expect this deaconess training will lead to?

J: I have no idea what God has planned for me. I am listening. Ideally, if there were to be a position where the deaconess would be able to float between all the various ministries of the congregation and support all of them as best she could, I would like to do something like that. I see the use of a deaconess in the various ways congregations have done as being very flexible in the LCMS. They serve in congregations, as chaplains, and with Recognized Service Organizations.

# Trinity's Partnership

WITH CHILDREN'S HOPE CHEST



REV. CHRISTIAN JONES  
ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF OUTREACH

**As followers of Jesus Christ, we know that faith is not only confessed with our lips, but lived out in love. The Apostle John writes, "By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers" (1 John 3:16).**

At Trinity Lutheran Church & School, we have always strived to embody this love in both word and deed - within our congregation, our community, and the world.

Partnering with Children's HopeChest in Pueblo Modelo, Guatemala, is a beautiful opportunity to extend Christ's mercy beyond our walls and participate in His mission to bring hope to the nations. Children's HopeChest builds long-term, Christ-centered relationships between congregations and communities in need. Rather than a one-time act of charity, this partnership creates a relationship of mutual transformation. Families at Trinity will have the privilege of sponsoring children and families in Pueblo Modelo, supporting their education, health, and spiritual growth.

But even more, both communities - ours and theirs - will be encouraged in faith as we pray for one another, share letters and stories, and witness how God knits hearts together across cultures and miles.

This partnership also aligns with our Lutheran understanding of vocation. God calls each of us - parents, teachers, students, and congregation members - to serve our neighbor in love. Sponsoring a child through HopeChest allows families at Trinity to live out that calling in a tangible way. It's a reflection of Christ's compassion: giving not out of abundance, but out of gratitude for His boundless grace.

Imagine a child in Pueblo Modelo attending school because of your prayers and support, hearing about Jesus through faithful Christian mentors, and growing up to share that same love within their own community.



This is not merely charity - it is Gospel partnership.

Together, as Trinity, we can be a visible expression of the body of Christ - hands that serve, hearts that love, and voices that proclaim hope. Through Children's HopeChest, we have the privilege to join in God's ongoing story of redemption, bringing light to lives in Guatemala and renewal to our own faith as we walk together sharing Christ's story with love.



Photos: Pastor Jones



# Our Father's Heart:

## GIVING WITH GRATITUDE & PURPOSE



CYNDI CARPENTER  
DIRECTOR OF HR & FINANCE



*"As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear Him." — Psalm 103:13*

As we enter this holy season of Advent and Christmas, we reflect on Our Father's Heart — one that gives freely, loves deeply, and provides faithfully. Our Heavenly Father's greatest gift was His Son, given for us all. Out of that same love and gratitude, we are called to give generously, so that His work continues here at Trinity.

Each year, your faithful giving helps Trinity fulfill its mission to share Christ's love through worship, education, and service. As we approach the end of 2025, we give thanks for your continued support that has sustained our ministries and allowed us to meet our daily needs. Yet, as we look ahead, we are also mindful of the challenges and opportunities before us.

Beyond our general fund — which supports our staff, programs, and ongoing ministry operations,

we are facing new and essential needs to help us maintain safety, care for our facilities, and plan wisely for the future.

**Campus Safety Enhancements** | This year, we have increased investments in security through the hiring of a Safety Team Manager, training volunteers, and adding new emergency response equipment. **Public Panic Devices** will be installed in the Sanctuary and gymnasium to allow immediate police dispatch in the event of a life-threatening situation. We also plan to install **Vehicular Traffic Barriers** around our campus to protect our students and worshipers from vehicle-related accidents — a costly, but vital, preventive measure. And we are looking to hire a security company to help monitor our campus on Sundays.

**Long-Term Maintenance and Special Gifts** | Many of our building's heating and cooling units are now approaching 40 years old. Replacement parts are no longer available, and each

new unit costs approximately \$35,000–\$40,000. With nearly 30 units throughout our building, we know this will require intentional, long-term planning and faithful generosity. We are also expecting to replace our aging Food Delivery Van and Plow Truck. Gifts to Trinity's Special Gifts Fund (given through estate planning or undesignated donations) help us prepare for these non budget significant future expenses.

In all these efforts, we trust in God's provision through His people — through you. Every gift, whether one-time or recurring, helps Trinity remain strong and continue to serve families for generations to come. **To make a special gift for Safety and Long Term Maintenance, you may give online through Planning Center and pick the Long Term Maintenance account or mail in check or use one of the church envelopes and write Long Term Maintenance in the memo.**

As you prayerfully consider your year-end giving, above and beyond regular general fund giving, may you be reminded of the heart of our Father — generous, protective, and overflowing with love. When we give from that same heart, God multiplies our gifts to do immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20). Thank you for giving, praying, and believing in the ministry of Trinity. Together, let us continue to reflect Our Father's heart in all we do.

## Ways to Give

- Online at [trinityutica.com/give](https://trinityutica.com/give)
- Church Center app
- Send in by mail
- Stock/IRA

### SANCTUARY RENOVATION BUILDING FUND

JULY INCOME

**\$68,643.80**

AUGUST INCOME

**\$20,691.30**

SEPT. INCOME

**\$28,328.65**

PLEDGED

**\$50,000**

TOTAL

**\$2,471,844.01**

## Financial REPORT

The transition to QuickBooks has taken a lot of time. Thank you for your patience and prayers as we build an efficient and accurate system. The goal is to have financial reports by the end of November.

JULY INCOME	\$186,383.86
AUGUST INCOME	\$164,212.03
SEPTEMBER INCOME	\$237,788.31

# YOU'RE INVITED TO

# Join the Book Club



REV. NICK DUERR  
**ASSOCIATE PASTOR  
OF FAITH FORMATION**

For the last year and a half I've been releasing monthly videos in a series titled "Pastor Nick's Book Club." This isn't a traditional book club with regular meetings. Instead, once a month I put out a video where I recommend a book for you to read. With that I share a little bit about the book itself and also my thoughts on why I think it would be beneficial for you to read in your life of faith.

The list of books I've recommended covers many different genres. From Bible Studies to devotions, topical books to kids' Bibles, and even some works by non-Christian authors, there's a little bit of everything. If you want resources that will allow you to dive deeper into a topic that's been on your mind, or a Bible study for your small group, or are simply looking for the next devotional book, I have many different recommendations.

If you'd like to flip through one of these books before you buy it for yourself, we do have an option for that, too! The recommended book will be featured in the church lobby while the rest of the books will have a featured shelf in the Church Library.

I invite you to check out my book club! You can follow this QR code or visit our YouTube channel at [youtube.com/TrinityLutheranUtica](https://youtube.com/TrinityLutheranUtica). Click on "Playlists" and find the one titled "Pastor Nick's Book Club." There you will see all of my videos and book recommendations. I hope that these books are a blessing to you!



## SCAN HERE



# NEW SAFETY

# Improvements



JEFF PIOCH  
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

Trinity has many safety and security measures already in place, but we are always planning for and making improvements. As with many safety and security measures, it is not wise to disclose all of them to the public. However, several new additions will be coming to Trinity in the near future that we do want to disclose to you. Please watch for these:

## PUBLIC PANIC DEVICES

These devices will be installed at strategic locations throughout the Narthex and Sanctuary as well as in the gym lobby and gymnasium. These devices will be clearly marked with instructions on their use. These devices are programmed in such a way that when they are activated they will notify Utica Police of an “Active Shooter or Violent” event. Once activated, Utica Police (and possibly other neighboring police agencies) will arrive anticipating an active shooter or violent event. This is a very serious law enforcement response. These devices ARE NOT intended to be used for any other medical emergencies. They are strictly for active shooter or other violent events.

## VEHICULAR TRAFFIC SAFETY BARRIERS

These barriers will be installed at strategic locations throughout our campus to deter any vehicular intrusions. We hope to get these installed before winter sets in, however there are a few obstacles that need to be overcome first.

## SAFETY MANAGER

As you may have seen in a companion article, we have recently hired Steve Powell as Trinity’s Safety Manager. Steve will be the point of contact for safety and security related matters. Steve is working on establishing a team of volunteers to help with safety and security related matters. Please seek him out if you have an interest in participating in this valuable role. Steve can be reached at (586) 731-4490 ext. 206 or email: [spowell@trinityutica.com](mailto:spowell@trinityutica.com). I’m sure he’d love to hear from you.

# Seniors Matter



SUSAN SHELDON  
TEACHER’S AIDE

After October’s Friday Flock service and luncheon, Linda Powell, our wonderful receptionist, shared that Mabel, someone new to Trinity, really appreciated the Friday Flock experience. She said that she was warmly welcomed, and that the service was very meaningful to her. Also, the luncheon was very delicious. And, you know what? Mabel came back to Trinity for the Sunday service because she felt that she mattered. Of course, at Friday Flock she was welcomed by about 20 Trinity volunteers, who seek to be a blessing to all who come into our spiritual home where “Trinity Matters.” Typically, Friday Flock meets on the first Friday of the month. A church service begins at 11 am with a luncheon following. A big thank you to the Trinity Foundation for supporting our Seniors’ Program at Trinity. Because of their contributions, we are able to have more quality programs and have started our “Christian Grandparenting Today” multi-congregational group.

# Conference Report



REV. NICK DUERR

**ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF FAITH FORMATION**



Every year, the Michigan District hosts conferences for pastors and other ministry staff to provide continuing education and to build relationships. Below are some of the reports about how they have been blessed, and how their ministry can benefit.

I hadn't thought about it much until recently, but I have avoided preaching on the Psalms, mainly because I felt like I could never do them justice. But at the pastors' conference, I was given the tools to dive deep into the Psalms and share the promises of God found there. I'm very excited to use these tools in the near future--and I invite your feedback on what you liked or how I can improve further! **-Pastor Nick**

At the All Pastors' Conference I learned about the skill of narrative preaching from Dr. David Schmitt of Concordia Seminary. Narrative preaching is about including the story of Scripture within the structure of sermon writing. This helps people understand your sermon better through the lens of Biblical storytelling. As an example, the week I returned from the APC, I included the story of Moses and the Israelites being led to freedom out of the land of Egypt by God. As an expository preacher who typically focuses on the grammatical structure of texts, this was a different skill that I tried applying directly to my sermon. **-Pastor Jones**

The All Pastors' Conference is a blessing in so many ways for all who attend. Not only is it a time of refreshment both academically and spiritually with the best speakers and worship time together with other brothers and sisters in Christ, but it is also meant to be a time of relational refreshment. Ministry is demanding in many ways and can take its toll on both the pastor and their families. Our District does a fantastic job of realizing this and seeking to care for its workers by crafting this conference to be a time of rejuvenation for the pastor and their spouses so that they can connect with old friends, colleagues, and classmates. All of this and more was exactly the refreshing recharge that Elizabeth and I were blessed to experience. While we don't get to see these people who are so dear to us and have become like family as much as we want, any chance to reconnect and be strengthened and encouraged in mutual fellowship as believers in our calling and vocation is absolutely precious and life-giving. Thank you for your continued prayerful and financial support that helps to make these opportunities a possibility! **-Pastor Josh**

We live in a culture that often claims there is no absolute truth, where statements like "what's true for you may not be true for me" have become common. As followers of Jesus, we now must learn how to navigate in this world of differentiating ideas. This begins by rooting ourselves in God's Word and understanding that truth is not something we invent but something God has revealed. As a community, we should model what it looks like to love truth and live it out humbly, while creating space for honest questions and thoughtful dialogue. When we live and speak with kindness, our lives become a testimony that truth is not just real, but found fully in Christ. This perspective can deeply benefit family ministry by helping parents and children build their faith on a solid foundation, rather than on shifting cultural opinions. It also empowers families to have meaningful conversations about truth at home, guiding the next generation to stand firm in their beliefs with grace and confidence. **-Stephanie Davis**

I am so thankful for the opportunity to gather with fellow ministry workers at the Specialist Conference in Grand Rapids. Our featured speaker, Dr. Brad Alles, delivered powerful sessions on apologetics that are incredibly relevant for the church today. In a culture of "my truth," who is your authority? (social media, tribalism, celebrities, friends, etc.) His reminder was to lead with gentle curiosity, seeking to understand what anchors others so we can better point them to the unshakable truth: Jesus. Stay immersed in the Word, be ready to give a reason/defend the incredible hope that we have, and do so with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15). Before registration for the Ministry Specialist Conference opened, God placed a desire in my heart to create an apologetics retreat for the women of Trinity. When the conference schedule was released, I saw that the featured speaker, Dr. Brad Alles planned to speak on that exact topic: apologetics. This felt like a clear sign that God was calling me to pause and reflect on the speaker's invaluable insights as I continue to plan the Trinity Women's Apologetics Retreat. Details are coming soon! **-Anna Gauss**



AS WE EMBRACE THE WINTER SEASON, WE'RE EXCITED TO  
CONTINUE OUR JOURNEY WITH OUR YEAR-LONG THEME,

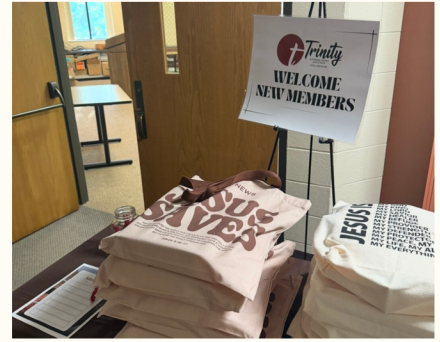
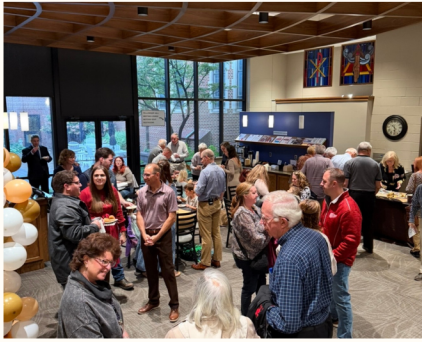
# FAITH-FOCUSED

## *connecting, serving, & learning*



ANNA GAUSS

CHRISTIAN GROWTH ASSOCIATE



dec

**Visual Faith Studies** | Engage your creative side while deepening your faith! The Visual Faith Ministries Zoom study connects us with LCMS sisters from across the country. Meetings take place on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 10 am and 8 pm EST. The final session on the Psalms is December 9, and we'll kick off a brand new journey into the Parables on January 13.

jan

**Culinary Night** | An evening of good food and friendly competition at the Mirepoix Cooking School, where we'll create amazing dishes under the guidance of pro chefs!

**Marriage Retreat** | Invest in your marriage with this powerful 5-week session. We will dive into John Gottman's "7 Principles for Making a Marriage Work" and discover tools to strengthen your bond.

**Women's Wellness Support Group** | A Christ-centered space for encouraging fellowship and open discussion on health and wellness.

feb

**Love Box Packing Party** | Come together to serve and bless women in the community by crafting and packing special "love boxes." More details coming soon!

## HEART TO SERVE?

**Heart of a Hostess** | We would love to see more women's groups form! A hostess simply sets a time and place that works for them (it could be your home or even a cozy coffee shop!) and guides a group of women through a study. We have plenty of resources to help you get started!

**Heart of a Mentor** | Do you have a heart for inspiring and encouraging your younger sisters in Christ? Let us know if you're interested in hosting a Discipleship Group.

**Event Setup and Teardown** | We welcome volunteers to help with events. Your support makes a difference!

**Share Your Gifts and Ideas** | Do you have a talent for crafting, a love for pickleball/kickball, or a new idea for an event? I'd love to hear from you! Your unique passions are a gift.

We were thrilled to welcome 13 new members at the New Member Welcome Reception! If you see a new face, please be sure to extend a warm welcome to help them feel at home. If you're interested in joining the next New Member Class, please let me know!

Photos: Anna Gauss



# CHILDREN OF GOD

So We Are!



BRUCE VOLKERT  
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

**There is a good chance that you have heard our theme for this year. It is “Children of God, So We Are” inspired by I John 3:1a, “See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.”**

Our God is the greatest teacher and provides methods to help us understand His Word. Jesus used parables to teach us divine concepts. Our God uses the metaphor of children and father to deepen our comprehension of His relationship with us.

It is a blessing to look to His example at school as we look to understand just how much God loves each of us. One example is when a student is receiving correction at school. This can lead to times in which a student shares faulty conclusions that their misstep will erode their parents' love for them. We can share that nothing is further from the truth. Parental dismay is because of their deep love for their child. They have a profound desire for their children to learn and grow from experiences. I tell kids that disappointment from parents is because they care so very much. A parent who doesn't care would not be too disappointed. “Your mom and dad still love you ever so deeply!”

In the same way (but even greater!) our sin does not cause God's love for us to decrease. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans chapter 8: “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Children of God - so we are!

We can carry the image of a father and his children into other aspects of our school. We have established “Faith Families” during the past few years at Trinity. We are all part of a family with God at the head. The entire school body is broken down into smaller family-like units. Each Faith Family has about 20 members.



Photo: Bruce Volkert



Individual Faith Families have several representatives from each grade level. Each family is led by at least two faculty and staff members from our church and school. We periodically sit in chapel with our families. Our families do an activity together about once a month. The Faith Family activity at the end of October was a full campus clean up. Our kids pitch in at home to help to keep their actual house neat and tidy. At Trinity we had nearly 400 students participating in cleaning up “their house” here at school. They picked up trash outdoors, on the playgrounds, in the Children’s Garden and in grassy areas. Stairwells, hallways, and entrance areas all received attention. Kids cleaned the youth rooms, the computer room, the Music Room, the Art Room, the Board Room and the Latchkey Room. Several families were busy in the Sanctuary, the balcony and the gymnasium. They hit the library, the science lab, the Meeting Lounge and the Fellowship Hall. It is rewarding to observe our students taking active ownership in the school house that God has given to us. Our Faith Family faculty committee did a wonderful job in organizing our campus clean up.

You cannot help but notice that Christmas is approaching! It is with JOY that each of our students participate in some way to celebrate in worship the coming of the Baby Jesus. Our students' engagement in services culminates with our 3rd and 4th grade students presenting the Christmas musical, “Hotel Noel.” You’re invited to this musical presentation at the 7:00 pm Advent worship service on Wednesday, December 19.

# CHILDREN’S MINISTRY NEWS



STEPHANIE DAVIS  
CHILDREN’S MINISTRY ASSOCIATE

In October, we held our annual Trunk or Treat, and it was a fantastic evening filled with joy and connection, allowing us to engage with our wider community beyond Trinity. Over 500 people joined us for a night of fun! One of our goals in Children's and Family Ministry at Trinity is to connect our ministry with other ministries within the church and serve as a bridge for outreach within the community. One way we do that is through our canned food drive, which we have every year at Trunk or Treat. This year, we collected more than 400 canned goods! Thanks to your generous donations, our Food Ministry Coordinator, Beth, shared that the pantry shelves are now well-stocked and ready for the upcoming open pantry days. By pairing fun events with meaningful needs, we embody our church's mission: to love God and serve our neighbors.

As the fall season wraps up and we transition into Christmas and winter, there is even more to look forward to in Children's and Family Ministry. We are busy preparing our annual Christmas Boxes, designed to bring families together as they engage with the Advent season. This year's boxes will include an Advent devotional booklet, featuring a short reflection for each day leading up to Christmas. Families will also find hands-on activities, crafts, and conversation starters that help to bring the Christmas story to life at home. We hope these resources will enable families to slow down amidst the hustle and bustle of the busy holiday season and connect with the true meaning of Christmas. We are excited to see how God continues to use our ministry to strengthen families, deepen faith, and share His love with our community this Christmas season and the upcoming year.

# Delivering DISCIPLES



PETER RYNEARSON  
**DELIVERING DISCIPLES**



Our Father's heart is always full of grace and mercy to those in need. Matthew 25:35 says, *"For I was hungry and you gave Me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave Me something to drink, I was a stranger and you took Me in."*

In June 2020, at the height of the COVID pandemic, Delivering Disciples was born. Trinity was seeing food still coming in from Forgotten Harvest and others, but with no place for people to gather and eat it. What was Trinity to do with all that food? Pastor Lew Stier and John Bullaro, who led the Food Van ministry, came up with the idea to cook up the food, put it into takeout containers, freeze it and then deliver those frozen meals to low-income senior housing facilities in our area.

That ministry continued on with 50-100 meals a week for a couple of years. Delivering Disciples was then blessed by Stephen Harris who led the ministry to new levels by recruiting volunteers and establishing standard processes. He led the effort in working through barriers

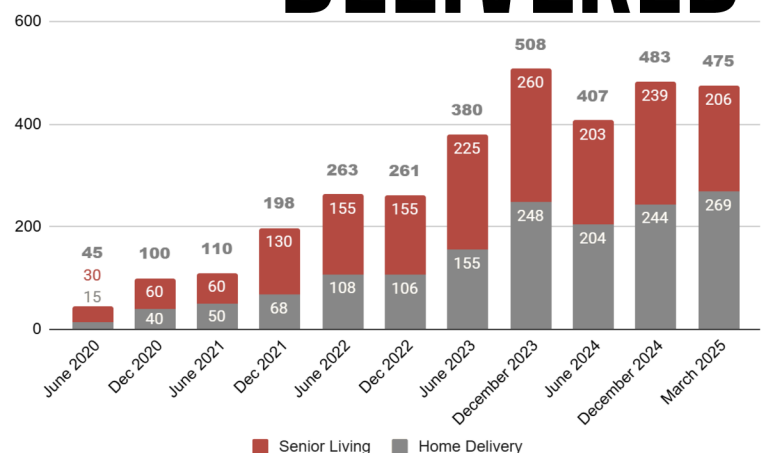
to expand the ministry to not only help those in senior housing, but to also do home delivery to seniors and families in transition. Many seniors enjoy not only having to cook one more meal, but also having someone stop by and visit each week.

The ministry now serves 500 meals a week. A small army of 30-40 volunteers assist in cooking, packaging, putting meals in freezer, and then delivering those meals. A very beneficial help to the ministry is all the prepared food donated by catering companies in the area.

A special shout out to the small team that makes homemade soups to also send along with the meals. This is a real blessing! Our clients LOVE the soups!

And then we do it again the next week, and the next week....52 weeks a year.

## Meals DELIVERED



### CONTACT INFORMATION

If you know of a senior or family (within a 10 mile radius of Trinity) that could use some help with meals please call 586-731-4490 x 231 or email [deliveringdisciples@trinityutica.com](mailto:deliveringdisciples@trinityutica.com)

If you are interested in helping to pack meals (Mondays 8-11 am) or cook (various days/times), contact coordinator Dawn Janicki at [djanicki@trinityutica.com](mailto:djanicki@trinityutica.com).

If you are interested in delivering meals, contact Peter Rynearson at [peter.rynearson@gmail.com](mailto:peter.rynearson@gmail.com).



# Trinity FOUNDATION



PETER RYNEARSON  
TRINITY FOUNDATION

Our Heavenly Father's heart is one of pure love toward His creation. He took on the role of a servant in Jesus to save us despite our sinful nature. To emulate that love is beyond our sinful nature. To aspire to that level of love is our joy. Many people have been servants to God with a heart of service to His church and those around us. To recognize the positive influence of some of His servants that have led the Trinity Foundation for many years, the Board of Trustees has established two designated grants each year from those submitted.



*Wes Rearick*  
**BUILT ON THE WORD**  
Grant to a program to  
engage Trinity members  
in Bible studies

Wes Rearick was a long-time member of Trinity and held various offices for the congregation. He was a member of the Trinity Foundation Board of Trustees from the late 1980s until 2018 and served as Secretary of the Foundation for close to 40 years. Wes was a devoted student of the Bible and used that knowledge in regularly teaching adult Bible classes at Trinity. Wes now abides in heaven with Jesus since his passing in March 2024.



*Terry Measel*  
**BUILT ON THE ROCK**  
Grant to a project to  
increase the design and  
functionality of the  
Trinity buildings

Terry Measel was baptized at Trinity in 1938 and was a lifetime member of Trinity involved in many areas. He was the architect for a major expansion and renovation at Trinity in 1987. His favorite Bible verse was Psalm 31:3 – “For You are my Rock and my Fortress; for Your Name’s sake lead me and guide me.” He joined the Trinity Foundation Board of Trustees in Nov. 1994 and served for over 30 years until his transition to heaven to be with Jesus in April 2025.

Over the past 51 years, gifts from our Trinity family members have totaled \$1.2 million. Market appreciation, along with those gifts, has brought the Foundation’s balance invested to \$2.5 million at the end of 2024. These investments generate interest and dividend income which is all used in support of grants to Trinity’s ministries today and in the years ahead. Trinity Foundation has given back \$667,000 in grants to support Trinity’s ministries.

Trinity congregation elects Trustees to oversee the Foundation’s ministry. Glenn Ross and Gary Vandeputte serve as Chairman and Treasurer, respectively. They, along with Pastor Justin Krupsky, Peter Rynearson, Pam Rank and our newest appointee of Mindy Pioch, look forward to guiding this ministry into the future.

Please remember Trinity Foundation as part of your year-end tax planning. We would be happy to discuss how the Foundation could work into those plans. Please feel free to email us at [trinityfoundation@trinityutica.com](mailto:trinityfoundation@trinityutica.com), and we will have one of the Trustees get in touch with you.

# OUR FATHER'S HEART CALLS US TO

# BE PRESENT



**ANDREW BRAZEAL**  
**YOUTH ASSOCIATE**

**Photos: Andrew Brazeal.** LEFT TO RIGHT: Jen Cleland (right) with our Junior High Youth Group putting on the full armor of God. TABS on their annual 'walk and talk' to Erma's Frozen Custard, Small group leader Kelly and high school student Velencia at a worship night.

One thing I know is true about our God is that He has a heart for His children—and that's who we are! That's why I'm so proud that our youth ministry doesn't just teach about God, but helps students truly know Him. When young people realize that their faith isn't just something their parents want them to learn, but a relationship with a Father who loves them immeasurably, lives begin to change.

From Junior High Youth Group to TABS (Trinity's Adultish Bible Study), every gathering gives students a chance to encounter Christ personally and be transformed by His presence. Across our core programs—Junior High, Confirmation, Senior High, and TABS—we've had the joy of connecting with hundreds of students this year.

Our Junior High Youth Group has gone through transitions, reminding us that while things around us may change, our God never does. We thank God for leaders like Kelly Patterson and Jennifer Cleland, who show up week after week to remind kids of God's love. Kelly, who's missed just one youth group in two years, shared this about her experience: "It's deepened my faith and helped me see how important community is. What comes to mind with the Father's heart is love, compassion, and commitment—He loves us unconditionally as His children."

In Confirmation, our goal is to help students form holy habits that last far beyond their confirmation day. We don't read Scripture just to know the story, but to know the One revealed in it.

Our High School Youth Group continues to be a beautiful mix of students from all backgrounds—some who grew up at Trinity, some from other churches, and some discovering faith for the first time. They often tell me what makes our group different is how "real" it feels. We have space for open, honest, and sometimes deep conversations about who God is and who we are to Him.

And then there's TABS, our "technically adult" Bible study for those still figuring it out. This group keeps me on my toes in the best way. No matter how much I prepare, someone always asks the one question I didn't research—and that's where the real learning happens. Their curiosity and hunger to know God better inspire me every week.

As we head into Christmas, I'm reminded that our Father's heart is one of presence—He shows up, draws near, and gives Himself for His children. My prayer is that every student, whether a fifth grader just starting out or a twenty-something searching for direction, would know that same love.

If you want to know more of who God is, consider joining one of our groups—or, like Kelly, step up to serve as a leader and experience how God deepens your faith through community.

Our God is worth knowing. His heart hasn't changed—He still delights in His children, steps into the mess, and loves us enough to show up every time.



# PASTORAL STAFF



**Rev. Justin Krupsky**  
Senior Pastor  
jkrupsky@trinityutica.com



**Rev. Josh Britton**  
Associate Pastor  
jbritton@trinityutica.com



**Rev. Nick Duerr**  
Associate Pastor  
nduerr@trinityutica.com



**Rev. Christian Jones**  
Associate Pastor  
cjones@trinityutica.com



**Rev. Chad Wright**  
Associate Pastor  
jcwright@trinityutica.com

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Andrew Briggs  
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Jacob Roggaw

**WORSHIP TECHNICAL ARTS**  
Chris Winter

## CHURCH & SCHOOL INFORMATION

**CHURCH LOBBY HOURS**  
PHONE: 586-731-4490

**M, W, TH, F**  
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

**TUESDAY**  
8:00 AM - 9:00 PM

**SATURDAY**  
4:30 PM - 7:00 PM

**SUNDAY**  
7:00 AM - 1:00 PM

### WORSHIP SERVICES

**SATURDAY** - 5:30 PM  
**SUNDAY** - 9:00 AM,  
9:45 AM (GYM), 11:15 AM  
**MONDAY** - 7:00 PM  
**FRIDAY FLOCK** - 11:00 AM  
(normally 1st Friday of the month)

**SCHOOL OFFICE HOURS**  
MONDAY - FRIDAY  
7:15 AM - 4:15 PM

(Entrance is located on the east side  
of building along Deshon.  
Please look for the red awning.)

### ONLINE INFORMATION

**WEBSITE**  
[HTTPS://WWW.TRINITYUTICA.COM](https://www.trinityutica.com)

**EMAIL**  
CHURCHOFFICE@TRINITYUTICA.COM  
SCHOOLOFFICE@TRINITYUTICA.COM

**LIVESTREAM**  
[HTTPS://WWW.TRINITYUTICA.COM/LIVE](https://www.trinityutica.com/live)

**WORSHIP INFORMATION**  
[HTTPS://WWW.TRINITYUTICA.COM/INFO](https://www.trinityutica.com/info)



**Trinity Lutheran Church and School**

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**Our Vision Statement**

To be a church family who grows together in our relationships with Christ and one another.

**Our Mission Statement**

Go and Make Disciples who Share Christ's Story with Love

**Core Values**

Love, Learn, Live, Lead

**Discipleship Strategy**

Our community's focus points...

Heart (worship services)

Head (educational opportunities)

Hands (service ministries)

Articles for the next Trinity Matters are due Friday, January 30, 2026.  
Please send to [mgrupe@trinityutica.com](mailto:mgrupe@trinityutica.com). Thank you!