

# Ministry Site Profile Summary for the Congregation



As part of our pastoral call process, Trinity Lutheran Church engaged in a deep season of listening and discernment. A dedicated Transition Team guided this work through a congregation-wide survey, small-group and individual listening sessions, dialogue forums, and prayerful discernment. What follows is a summary of what we heard about who we are, our community and mission, and the leadership we believe God is calling to serve with us in this next chapter.

## Trends in Our Community

Trinity Lutheran Church is in Stillwater, Minnesota, a historic and vibrant St. Croix Valley community marked by strong civic pride, deep local roots, and high levels of education and engagement. Many residents are professionally employed across the East Metro, with a mix of long-established households and newer residents drawn by the area's schools, infrastructure, and natural beauty.

Over the past several years, Stillwater — like much of the region — has experienced significant change. The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted patterns of work, worship, and community life while revealing deeper needs related to housing insecurity, mental health, and economic stress. More recently, immigration enforcement activity in the metro area and rising housing costs have created fear, strain, and new urgency around advocacy and care. At the same time, continued development and growth raise questions about affordability, infrastructure, and preserving Stillwater's character.

These changes present both challenge and opportunity for Trinity. They call us to be a church that is grounded in faith, attentive to neighbor, and courageous in living out Christ's love in public and practical ways.

## Ministry Site Characteristics and Purpose

Trinity understands its purpose as a response to God's grace: "Because God first loved us, we live as Jesus in the world, loving God and loving neighbor."

We are a Christ-centered ELCA congregation shaped by Word and Sacrament, the Lutheran Confessions, and a strong commitment to inclusion, justice, and hospitality. Trinity is a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) congregation that names welcomeness, equity, and anti-racism as core commitments of discipleship.

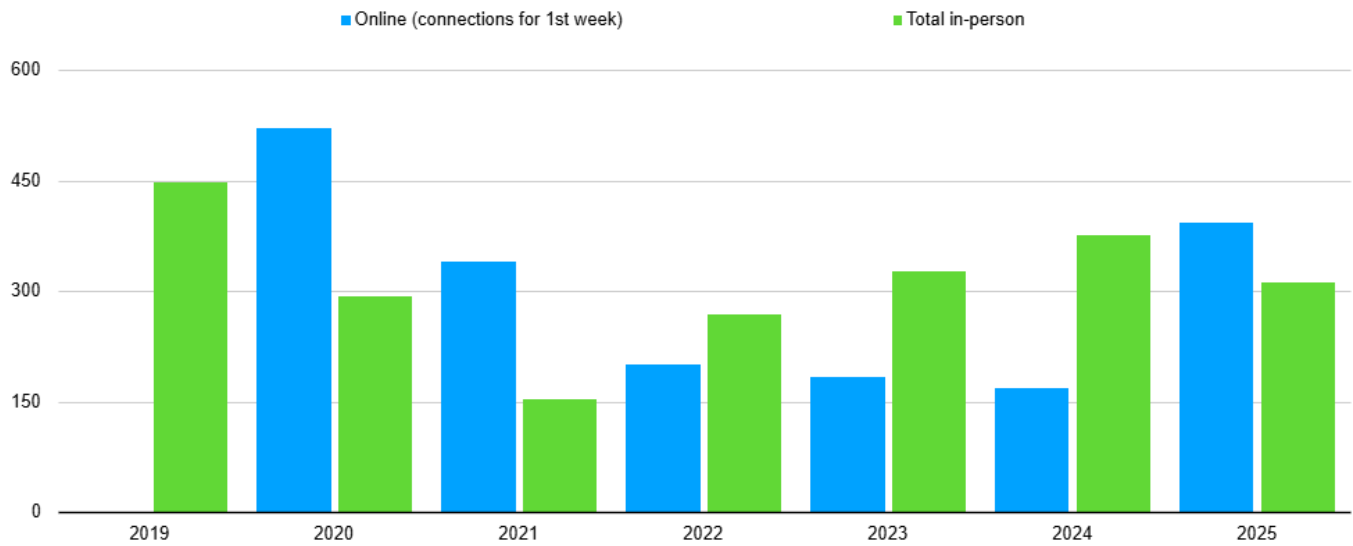
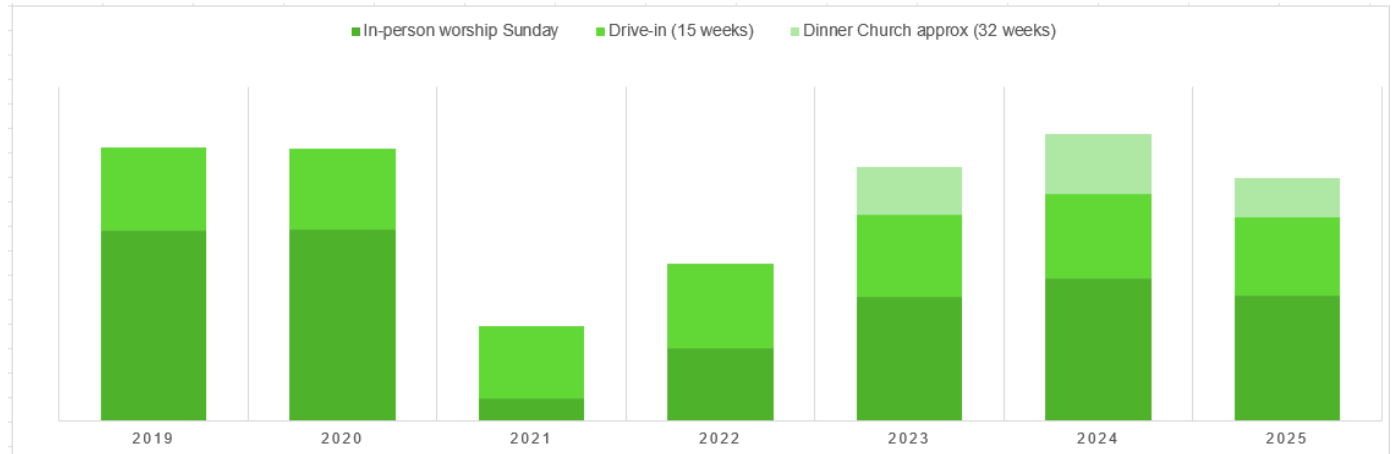
We value worship that is meaningful, biblically grounded, and relevant to daily life. Our congregational life is enriched by strong music leadership, varied worship experiences, and multiple ways to participate — on Sunday mornings, midweek, in person, and online. We are deeply relational and care about people being known, supported, and invited into community.

Trinity does not see itself as needing reinvention, but rather discernment: clarifying how God is calling us to live more fully into who we already are and how we can steward our resources for faithful ministry in a changing world.

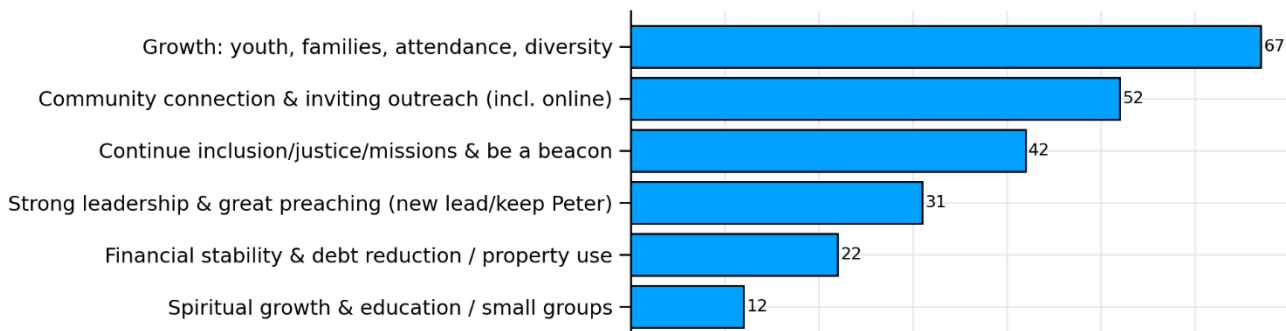
### Top Themes

- Music Excellence & Worship Quality
- Radical Hospitality (RIC) & Social Justice for All
- Youth, Children & Young Families: Grow & Retain
- Preaching: Biblical & Relevant
- Community, Hospitality, Welcome & Connection
- Communications & Digital Experience
- Growth & Attendance
- Mission, Outreach & Community Engagement
- Facilities & Building Improvements
- Budget & Aligning Resources with Values

## Attendance Trends



## Hopes



## Transition Time

Trinity is in a time of profound transition. In the last 18 months, the church has experienced significant staff turnover: the long-time lay youth director resigned, the visitation pastor retired due to health issues, the lead pastor retired, and the pastor of lifelong faith formation was called to a new position. While the church is coping well with these changes, each of them brings a degree of grief and anxiety as we focus on rebuilding.

## Giftedness and Mission

Trinity's worship life is a central gift. Multiple worship styles, excellent music, and a strong digital presence provide meaningful access points for long-time members, newcomers, and online participants alike. Worship is routinely described as spiritually nourishing and foundational to congregational life.

We are also gifted with a clear identity of radical hospitality and justice-seeking faith. Our inclusion work, racial justice ministry, partnership with local and global organizations, and ecumenical and interfaith relationships shape how we live out the gospel beyond our walls.

Financially and structurally, Trinity enters this season with renewed capacity for mission. The completion of the New & Renewing campaign has significantly improved our long-term sustainability and freed energy for ministry planning, staffing, and outreach. Our facilities and partnerships — including early childhood ministries — offer meaningful opportunities for connection with young families and the wider community.

At the same time, we are honest about the realities we face sustaining volunteer energy, strengthening youth and family participation, bridging connections between in-person and online worshippers, and navigating tensions around social issues and worship preferences. These are not obstacles to avoid, but invitations for thoughtful leadership and shared responsibility.

## Leadership Needs and Priorities

In this season, Trinity is calling a full-time Lead Pastor who brings strong relational leadership and spiritual depth. Above all, we seek a pastor who helps people grow in faith, feel known, and discover where God is calling them to serve.

Key leadership priorities include:

- Building authentic community marked by trust, joy, and participation
- Equipping and encouraging strong lay leadership
- Offering courageous, biblically grounded, and relevant preaching
- Strengthening youth, children, and family engagement
- Leading thoughtful stewardship and long-range ministry planning
- Navigating complexity and difference with humility, collaboration, and grace

We value a leader who is authentic, grounded, hopeful, and able to guide Trinity not by arriving with all the answers, but by leading a shared visioning process of discernment rooted in our mission and values.

## Mission Priorities

- **Strengthening pathways into belonging.** Trinity offers many meaningful entry points — worship, music, justice work, learning, service — but we want clearer, more intentional connections that help people move from first visit to deeper engagement, community, and leadership.
- **Living our values of hospitality and compassionate action in visible, relational ways.** We are committed to accompaniment — walking alongside neighbors, partners, and communities with humility, trust, and long-term presence rather than transactional help.
- **Building sustainable ministry for the future.** With renewed financial flexibility, Trinity seeks to cultivate strong lay leadership, healthy stewardship, and aligned staffing and facilities that support a bold, Spirit-led vision.

## Top 10 Gifts Requested for Lead Pastor



## Looking Ahead

Trinity Lutheran Church stands at a hopeful threshold. We are deeply rooted in faith and tradition, strengthened by renewed resources, and energized by a clear sense of who we are called to be. We trust the Holy Spirit is already at work — shaping our future through this season of listening and preparing us for new leadership.

With gratitude for the voices that shaped this Ministry Site Profile and trust in God’s continuing call, we move forward together — loving God, loving neighbor, and seeking healing, justice, and reconciliation in our community and world.

