

TRINITYTODAY!

Because God first loved us, we live as Jesus in the world
SEPTEMBER 2025 | volume 47, issue 9

Letter from the Pastor Page 2

Trinity Fest Page 7

Fall Programming Info Page 8



PHOTO: CAMP WOW



INTERIM PASTOR JEN HACKBARTH

When I begin a new interim position, I often get asked questions about why I choose to serve in this type of ministry as well as what it involves. Here's a little peek into my history and my role as an interim pastor.

My very first experience as a pastor was in an interim role. After my husband Tim and I graduated from Luther Seminary in St. Paul in 2003, we moved to Dawson, MN for Tim's first call as pastor at Providence Lutheran Church. I was still waiting for my first call to a congregation, so the SW MN Synod arranged for me to fill in at a three-point parish in the nearby town of Clarkfield. Each Sunday I drove 60 miles roundtrip to lead worship at each congregation (the 8am worship service had an average attendance of 5 people!). I served there only a few months, but I still remember the warmth of the people and the sadness I felt when I ended my time with them. It was my first introduction to the joys and challenges of interim ministry.

I went on to serve two settled calls with a short interim position between them. In 2022, as I wrapped up 13 years as a solo pastor at Christ the King in White Bear Lake, I felt drawn to return to interim ministry. I had heard there was a lot of transition in the synod—many pastors were retiring or moving to new positions after two years of walking with congregations through the pandemic. Interim pastors were needed, and I decided it was time to follow the Spirit's call for me to help congregations dealing with changes in leadership.

Since 2022, I've served as an interim pastor at five congregations. My goals are to help congregations address challenges, discover their emerging identities and to prepare the way for new leadership. While it can feel tempting to rush through transition, when congregations embrace the interim time, it has lasting benefits. I followed a wonderful interim pastor at one of my calls, and she and the congregation laid a foundation during the interim time that positively impacted my years of ministry with them. I hope and pray to do the same for congregations I serve and the pastors that follow me.

Interim work is fascinating and fast-paced. I work hard to bond quickly with a congregation and staff and "start with the end," trying to take advantage of this short opportunity. My favorite part of interim ministry is getting to know different congregations and witnessing the work of the larger church. Each congregation has a unique personality and history, yet they all experience similar joys and concerns, no matter the context. Most of all, I've seen each congregation earnestly seek to faithfully share the gospel. Each congregation matters!

I work closely with the St. Paul Area Synod during my interim work. Each month, I write a report for the synod updating them about the transition process. The synod also hosts a monthly gathering of St. Paul interim pastors that includes worship, learning and sharing. This is in addition to many phone calls, emails and conversations over coffee between synod staff and me. The transition process is a joint effort between the interim pastor, the synod and congregational leadership.

I tell people that I will consider moving on from interim ministry once the goodbyes get too difficult. Interim pastors give pieces of our hearts to each congregation we serve. Completing my work with a congregation fills me with mixed emotions. I grieve leaving people I've connected with, and I grieve that I

won't be with them as they embrace their new future. Yet I also rejoice in their steps forward in Christ with new leadership. It's gratifying to know I've been a small part of helping a congregation move forward with hope in a challenging time.

Transition Team Update

As September begins, the Trinity council is working to form the Transition Team, a group of Trinity members who will listen and learn about the congregation. Their work will take anywhere from 6-9 months and will directly impact the formation of the Ministry Site Profile, a document about Trinity that will be shared with the Synod and potential pastoral candidates once the Call Committee is formed (this will happen after the Transition Team's work is completed). Look for more information about ways to participate from the council very soon.

If you would like more information, the St. Paul Area Synod has a wonderful resource on its website called the Call Process Manual. You can find it here: <https://spas-elca.org/call-process/>.

Thank you for the opportunity to walk alongside Trinity during this important time in the life of this congregation. I'm delighted to be among you.

*Interim Pastor
Jen Hackbarth*



PASTOR OF LIFELONG FAITH FORMATION THE REV. PETER WESTON MILLER



New Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry and Trinity's "Skills, Interests, and Ways to Serve"



It was such a blessing to be "in the room where it happened" – electing the first African descent Presiding Bishop of the ELCA. Bishop Curry's gifts for leadership and mission could not be a better fit for the needs of the church right now. He shined through all of the questions, often quoting a scripture passage that informed his own story.

But one of the most compelling elements for me that he embodies and names is how anyone could get caught up in God's grace in our church and find their way to the highest levels of our organization. You can read more of his story in Living Lutheran online, but Bishop Curry didn't expect to be a pastor or bishop, he wasn't part of any traditional pipeline, and he didn't think he was good enough. He started out as someone seeking after God's love in Jesus, in the pews with his family, discerning what was next in his faith. He was restless and wrestling, joining a church that wasn't

quite "official" in the ELCA yet or ready for him but aspiring to be.

I love that in the tradition of a priesthood of all believers/baptized, Bishop Curry reflects the Pentecost promise of the Holy Spirit uplifting quite literally EVERYONE. All of God's people – diverse, equitable, and inclusive. Jesus finds a place for you. And you. And you too.

Bishop Curry also named the progress and investment that our dear ELCA has made to make his election possible. Mission support and mission imagination has allowed new churches to form and the denomination to shift to support demographic changes in our country. Under Presiding Bishop Eaton's leadership, the church has also worked hard to build collaborative connections, youth engagement, BIPOC, and LGBTQIA2+ language. We are not done yet, but good investments have been made to listen to the cries of historically underrepresented siblings and the voice of the Spirit.

Gifted Abundance in Community and New Survey

While a little different in calling and context, Trinity mirrors much of the work at the very top of the ELCA, seeking to journey with the whole priesthood of God through this season of transition and preparing for the arrival of our next lead pastor. It will certainly be someone who is in the pews like Bishop Curry with a wrestling passion for the Gospel for all of God's people.

As we begin a new program season this Fall 2025, to assist the staff and Ministry Teams and the picture of the congregational life at Trinity, we are inviting you to take time and pray for who we are as a community—for who God is calling us to become. This moment offers a unique opportunity not only to support one another but also to step into leadership, service, and spiritual growth in new ways.

Later this month, we will be sharing a brief survey of "Skills, Interests, and

Ways to Serve"—available in both paper and electronic formats—to help all of us identify where we feel called to contribute and how we might best use our gifts in the life of the church.

When each of us finds ways to connect and serve, we all do better. The whole world does better.

As we are always inviting and adding more seats at Jesus' table, we also want to provide places for folks to stretch their wings, lift their prayers, and offer their presence, playfulness, and peacefulness in community.

This is not about filling holes or checking boxes—it's about building the Body of Christ, both new and renewing. Because God first loved us, we serve.

By identifying where your gifts align with Trinity's needs, we are collectively equipping and shaping the future God is calling each of us to for the sake of the life of the whole world.

We hope you'll take time to reflect, pray, and respond with joy and intention when the survey becomes available. In this sacred in-between space, you are needed. And God is already at work among us.

One of Bishop Curry's and other leaders in the church have been clear that everyone isn't called to be a pastor or a deacon (thanks be to God!), but everyone is called to find their place with Jesus in this holy priesthood.

May we like Bishop Curry, find that place at Trinity and continue to play our part in God's flourishing.

In gratitude for your gifted abundance,

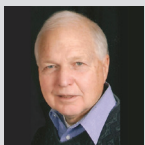
Pastor Peter



Congregational Council

Our congregational governance calls for an elected council and includes the Interim Pastor, Jen Hackbarth and Pastor of Lifelong Faith Formation, Peter Weston Miller. Parish Administrator, Sarah Kinsman is also on council as a non-voting, ex officio member.

Our current congregational council includes the following Trinity members:



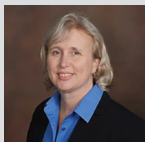
John Hodler
COUNCIL PRESIDENT



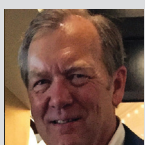
Tina Swanson
COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT



Kirsten Parker
COUNCIL SECRETARY



Jill Longnecker
COUNCIL TREASURER



Bill Bjorum
COUNCIL MEMBER



Shane Brockshus
COUNCIL MEMBER

For more information about your council or to get in touch, please visit: <https://www.trinitylc.org/our-leadership>

"You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God." – **2 Corinthians 9:11**

GREETINGS TRINITY!

WE ARE A GRATEFUL PEOPLE! Last fall, you may remember our stewardship theme was "We Are A Generous People." And you responded and were certainly generous! With the end of our fiscal year (8/31/25) fast approaching, we remain on track to meet our fiscal year budget and have maintained a \$0 balance on our line of credit since January 2025. The Stewardship Team recently met to discuss this year's theme. As we reflected on last year's theme – we decided we would build on the theme. "We Are..." Such an interesting prompt! I invite you to fill in the blank. Who do you say, "We Are _____?" The Stewardship Team unanimously agreed our theme this year would be "We Are A Grateful People." We are grateful for the extraordinary generosity that sustains our ministries, for the dedicated volunteers who give their time and talents, and for the spirit of community that fills this church with love and purpose. We are grateful for each other. This year, as we embrace our theme, we invite you to reflect on what gratitude means in your life. How does it show up in your service, your giving? How does it deepen your faith? Together, let's celebrate the many ways we live out our gratitude – not just in words, but in action. We are a grateful people – and because of that, we are a hopeful people, a joyful people, a faithful people. Together, let us move into the coming year with hearts full of gratitude and purpose.

JULY 2025 INCOME VS. EXPENSE.

- FYTD General Contributions through July were \$1,194,631 (98% of Budget). 2024 YTD Giving was \$1,181,644.
- FYTD Total Income through July – minus Missions – was \$1,604,079 (106% of Budget/\$90 in ERC Funds). 2024 Income was \$1,521,619 (\$60K in Council Designated Funds).
- FYTD Expenses through July – minus Missions – were \$1,439,510 (95% of budget). 2024 Expenses were \$1,519,130.
- As of 8/1/25, the FSB Line of Credit balance was **\$0**.

JULY 2025 STEWARDSHIP UPDATE.

- Total Pledged: \$1,032,125.
- Total Pledge Given: \$710,592.03.
- 69% has been given of the pledged amount.
- Total Contributed (all): \$756,241.69

JULY 2025 COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN UPDATE.

- Total Pledged: \$1,853,458.
- Total Contributed (pledge): \$1,632,350.
- Percent Complete (pledge): 88%.
- Total Contributed (all): \$1,706,395.

MORTGAGE

As of 8/1/25 the Thrivent mortgage balance was **\$1,685,293**. The additional check from the Comprehensive Campaign to principle in July was **\$4,810**. In August, we will make a substantial additional check to principle with the large, non-pledge gift we received in July.

SECURITY TASK FORCE

This team was initiated by the Church Council to develop a security plan to ensure all individuals' access to the building is controlled. With the recent approval from the Church Council, a video doorbell system will be installed to the 4th Street doors so that we can monitor access to the church building during regular office hours. Plans are also currently underway for the Library to move to the Nursery room across from the River Room. We hope this project will be completed by the end of September.

With a grateful heart, thank you for all you do to make Trinity a healthy, vital, and viable community of faith!

Sarah Kinsman | Parish Administrator

TRINITY CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL UPDATE

Pastoral Transition

Interim Pastor Jen Hackbarth will continue to meet with Trinity members and staff to learn about Trinity's activities and culture as we begin the selection of the Transition Team phase of the pastoral transition process. We invite you to meet and visit with Pastor Jen whenever you have the opportunity!



Additional information will be communicated when each phase's implementation details are finalized. If you have any questions, please contact a member of Trinity's Congregational Council.



John Hodler
President



Tina Swanson
Vice President



Kirsten Parker
Secretary



Jill Longnecker
Treasurer



Bill Bjorum
Council Member



Shane Brockshus
Council Member

Dear Trinity family,

Pastor Rich Larson will be stepping away from his position as Trinity's Visitation Pastor in early September. Over the past 2.5 years, Pastor Rich has made many wonderful connections with Trinity members and has served with dedication, care, and joy. He writes, "It is time for me to enter more fully into my retirement, and to focus more intently on my health, my family, and my home. I have made this decision with great hesitation because of the enjoyment of the job, the great, supportive staff, and the friendliness and love of the membership." While we will greatly miss his presence as Visitation Pastor, he will still be involved at Trinity as a member. Please join me in praying for Pastor Rich and his family as he leans more fully into retirement, and for Trinity as we seek God's guidance for our next steps.

Interim Pastor Jen



SUNDAY WORSHIP

9 a.m. Worship—Gathering in the Worship Center and led by choirs, organ and instrumentalists. Here you will participate with robed clergy and worship leaders. You will sing hymns, songs, liturgy and psalms from a worship book and hear a message relevant to our lives today.

11 a.m. Worship—Gathering in the Worship Center and led by a band incorporating a wide variety of contemporary worship music. The congregation engages in a time of praise and worship following the historic pattern of Lutheran worship (Gathering, Word, Message, Meal, and Sending.)



Online Options For Worship

Both services will be available online and livestream from our Worship Center at Trinity. Find worship online on our website at: <https://www.trinitylc.org/online-worship> and livestream on Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/trinitylcstillwater/>

One Worship Service

A few times a year we offer only one worship service on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. to come together as one body of Christ.

- Sept. 7 – TrinityFEST
- Nov. 16 – ALL-IN Fall Worship
- Dec. 14 – Children's Advent Program
- Dec. 28 – Lessons & Carols
- Feb. 15, 2026 – Drive-Indoors
- March 29, 2026 – Palm Sunday
- May 10, 2026 – Youth Musical

Trinity Youth Choir

- Starts Wednesday, September 10th
- 4:30–5:15 pm

Welcome all super singers! We rehearse on Wednesdays from 4:30–5:15 p.m. in the Choir Room (behind the Worship Center).

The Youth Choir sings in church once a month, alternating between the 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. services as worship leaders. Highlights include singing with an Orchestra and the Trinity (Adult) Choir in December, and presenting a musical at church in May!

To sign up or ask questions, contact Sonia Esch at wisokiwi@msn.com



Sunday Faith Forum

- Sundays at 10 a.m.
- River Room
- (between worship services)

September 2025

- **Sept 7:** Stop by the Sunday Faith Forum Table
- **Sept 14:** Stump the Trinity Council This is a great opportunity to ask questions and express your hopes and concerns for Trinity, now and going forward.
- **Sept 21:** Stump the Pastors Bring your burning questions for our pastors. Ask about a sermon, theology, whatever is on your heart or mind. Our pastors love to hear from you and think about and discuss what is important to you. We all get to know each other a little

better and may even get new ideas for living as beloved children of God.



- **Sept 28:** Congregational Transitions and Discernment with Deacon Krista Lind, Assistant to the Bishop for Vocational Formation

Transitions in congregational leadership and ministry can evoke both deep grief and bold anticipation. In this Sunday Forum, Deacon Krista Lind—who has served the Saint Paul Area Synod since 2016 and brings years of experience in guiding pastors, deacons, and congregations through interim calls, calling processes, and vocational discernment—will walk us through the spiritual and practical dimensions of times of change.

What to expect in this gathering:

- Guidance on creating healthy interim and transition Steps for congregational discernment in shaping future calls
- Tools for individuals and congregations to reflect faithfully on vocation and calling
- Space for questions, shared stories, and mutual support

With her background in candidate support, spiritual direction, and boundary/power training, Deacon Lind brings insight into both the emotional and procedural rhythms of transition—but always grounded in prayerful reflection and listening to God's call.

Worship Texts

Below are the scripture texts for worship on the date listed.

Sept. 7..... Luke 14:25–33
 Sept. 14..... Luke 15:1–10
 Sept. 21..... Luke 16:1–13
 Sept. 28..... Luke 16:19–31

step right this way for the 10th annual

TRINITY



FEST

Celebration

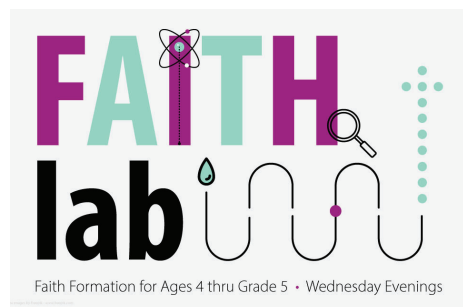
Sunday, Sept. 7

Join us for Festival Worship indoors at 10 AM.

Following the service, the fun continues outdoors with a Ministry Fair, Acapulco food, and games for kids. Adults can test their knowledge with a Ministry Fair Challenge puzzle and explore over 30 ways to get involved. Don't miss our quirky Lutefisk Toss fundraiser for a chance to win prizes!



Children & Family Faith Formation



Faith Lab (Ages 4 – Grade 5): This weekly faith formation meets *Wednesdays, 5:20–6:00 PM* in the Chapel, exploring Bible stories through engaging activities and art. Our full Wednesday evening includes Youth Choir, Community Meal, and Dinner Church.

Faith Lab *costs \$50 per child* and begins **Wednesday, September 10, running through April 29.** Parents/guardians are asked to attend the first night. We are also seeking volunteers for Faith Lab—reach out to Sarah Olson if you're interested!



Scan the QR code to sign up for Faith Lab and more fall offerings designed for spiritual growth and community connection.



Middle School Faith Formation (Confirmation) – Grades 6/7/8

Confirmation is a milestone, not a graduation, that celebrates a student's growth in faith. Also known as the Affirmation of Baptism, it's an opportunity for young people to personally

affirm the faith promises made for them at their baptism. Our program kicks off Wednesday, September 10, with Dinner Church and a Parent/Child Orientation. We gather on Wednesday nights for Dinner Church, a unique worship space that celebrates physical and spiritual nourishment and provides a chance for multiple generations to gather around the table.



Scan the QR code to sign up for Middle School Faith Formation.



9th Grade Faith Formation

Ninth grade is a milestone for Confirmation Day and entry into High School Ministries, culminating in the Affirmation of Baptism on Sunday, October 26, 2025.

Key Dates:

- Wednesday, Sept. 10: 9th Grade Dinner Church/Parent-Confirmand Overview.
- Sunday, Sept. 14: Required meeting with dinner to discuss Confirmation Day (6–8:30 p.m.).
- Sunday, Oct. 5: Required small groups meeting to go over projects and final details (7–8:15 p.m.).
- Sunday, Oct. 26: Confirmation Sunday. Families can attend the 9 a.m. or 11 a.m. service.

Responsibilities for Confirmands:

- Finish a stole.
- Complete the Faith Project packet, including a creative project and faith reflection.
- Have a “what’s next” chat with a pastor or Dana.

We also have opportunities for high schoolers to serve on Wednesday nights. Contact Dana if interested!



Scan the QR code to sign up for 9th Grade Faith Formation.

High School Ministry (Grades 9–12)

High School Ministry at Trinity is about more than just programs—it's about youth doing ministry, both locally and globally.

Wednesday Nights:

Our weekly focus on Wednesdays is ministry and action. High school students will also help chart the course for upcoming events and discussions. Students can volunteer in a variety of roles, from helping in the kitchen to serving as a small group co-leader for middle school Confirmation.

Sunday River Worship:

High school students are invited to a weekly gathering for River Worship on the second and fourth Sundays of the month, from 6:30–7:30 p.m. in the Youth Center. This is a time to build your faith, ask questions, and connect with others.

Sunday Worship & Service:

We invite you to bring your energy and voice to Sunday worship! High schoolers can also serve as worship assistants, greeters, ushers, communion servers, or on the AV and worship band teams.



Wednesday Worship

Join us for a full evening of community and faith formation! Our fall programs kick off on **Wednesday, September 10**, with our first Dinner Church and Fall Preview Night.

Our weekly Wednesday evening includes:

- Youth Choir and Children's Faith Lab (4:30–6:00 p.m.)
- Dinner Church (5:30–6:45 p.m.), a time for all ages to eat and worship together.
- Small Groups and Adult Faith Formation (6:45–7:45 p.m.)

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH EARTH KEEPERs. Leave it better than you found it

Dear Trinity community, here are your September Earth Keeper T.I.P.s (Thoughtfully. Intentionally. Purposefully.)

Climate Corner T.I.P.s

There is no Planet B. Let's all work together to keep it cleaner than we found it for the next generation.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." -Margaret Mead

Community Charging at Trinity Lutheran Church (CC at TLC)–Check out the EV Charging Station Project

We're driving sustainability and a Green Stillwater forward by installing the first public use EV chargers in downtown Stillwater—creating an oasis in downtown Stillwater's charging desert and inviting our community and visitors to power up with us!

- Cleaner air (zero harmful emissions)
- Increased foot traffic to downtown businesses, leading to increased economic growth for Stillwater's small business community
- Enhanced brand image for Stillwater
- A public station for your use when you get your EV!

Check out details of the project on TLC's website by going to the Earth Keepers page under the 'Get Involved' tab.

Consider a donation to the project to help us continue our efforts of promoting a strong local economy and a cleaner and sustainable environment.

Join the Washington County Food Scraps Program–It's FREE to Join!

As you eat more veggies and fruits, you'll have more food scraps. Put them to good use and compost them! Go to www.washingtoncountymn.gov/2969/Food-Scraps-Collection and sign up. The bags come to you for free (if you need a container, that's free too! Just go pick one up). All you need to do is put your food scraps in the bags and place the bag in your garbage each week. It's THAT easy!

Consider participation in No Spend September

You've hopefully already participated in No Mow May. Here is another fun challenge that will help your bank account. No Spend September (<https://www.cnbc.com/2024/09/17/what-no-spend-september-is-and-how-to-know-if-you-should-participate.html>)

September 2025 • Trinity Today

is about spending less on nonessential purchases. Instead of picking up a coffee, make it at home. Skip a night of take out and make a meal at home. Instead of buying that t-shirt that's on sale, throw on the one at the bottom of your drawer that you haven't worn for awhile. If a month seems too long, start small and try it for a week!



Let's Go!

LET'S GO is seeking a few more team members! Enjoy minimal time commitment, a fun group, and help

plan engaging events for all. Interested? Any team member would love to chat! Contact Randy Propp (co-chair, rapropp56@gmail.com), Sandy Wendt (co-chair, sjwendt46@gmail.com), Jill Longnecker (jinlongy@msn.com), Sandy Weber (stillweber@hotmail.com), or Randy Nelson (randy.lynn.nelson@gmail.com).

Future Events

- **Stillwater Trolley Tour.**
Monday, October 13, 11:00 am
- **Rivertown Inn.**
Sunday, October 26, 3:00 – 6:00 pm
- **Watch for additional event details in bulletins and eblasts**



YogaDevotion Chair/Flow Combo Class

Thursdays 9 – 10 am

In-person and on Zoom

9/11 – 10/30 | \$88 for 8 classes

Join Sandy, in person at Trinity Stillwater, or virtually from the comfort of your home, for a mat/chair yoga class that incorporates strengthening poses and balancing poses. All are welcome and encouraged to join us!

If you have a guest, want to try a class or want to take fewer than a full session of classes, you can purchase one or more drop-in-tickets.

Questions? Contact Sue Peterson at todd@sue2@aol.com.

Register at: bit.ly/Trinity-Fall

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

ABIDE READERS

Abide Readers

Accountability Belonging Inclusion

Diversity Equity.

All are welcome to any or all discussions. 4th Monday, 6:30–8:00 pm, via Zoom

This year's ABIDE Reader selections are available in the Trinity Library's ABIDE Collection (in the narthex), at public libraries, or with a discount from Valley Bookseller.

- **Sept 22** *The Color of Compromise: The Truth About the American Church's Complicity in Racism* by Jemar Tisby
- **Oct 27** *God is Red: A Native View of Religion* by Vine Deloria Jr.
- **Nov 24** *What Does Justice Look Like? The Struggle for Liberation in Dakota Homeland* by Waziyatawin
- **Jan 26** *Black AF History: The Un-whitewashed Story of America* By Michael Harriot
- **Feb 23** *I Am Nobody's Slave: How Uncovering My Family's History Set Me Free* by Lee Hawkins
- **Mar 23** *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States* by Daniel Immerwahr
- **Apr 27** *The Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World* by Robin Wall Kimmerer

For more information or the zoom link, contact Ann Wolff wolff701@msn.com

Men's Bible Study

Thursdays at 8:30 a.m., starting Sept. 11
Boutwells Landing, Skyview Conference Room

Studying of the Parables of Jesus.

- 3 weeks on the Parables of the Kingdom
- 3 weeks on the Parables of Grace
- 3 weeks on the Parables of Judgement

Jesus told parables because he wants YOU to figure it out! He and we want to know what YOU think. Come and help figure it out!



Announcing the first (and most likely, last) Trinity Fest

LUTEFISK TOSSING COMPETITION

The Trinity Missions Team is proud (and only slightly embarrassed) to sponsor the inaugural "Lutefisk Tossing Competition" held in conjunction with Trinity Fest. Funds from this quirky event will go towards supporting the Selian Hospital hospice project in Arusha, Tanzania and improvements at Boma' Longombe Secondary School.

To assuage concerns from LAULL (Lutherans Against the Unethical Lobbing of Lutefisk) no cod will be harmed during the competition ... only slimy rubber fish will be tossed. Those able to land a fish in Ole's wide-open mouth (think cornhole) will be entered into a drawing for incredible prizes and gift certificates. There will be both adult and child categories and throwing distances.

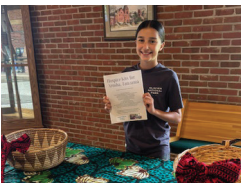
While you're waiting to toss lutefisk, check out the Missions Team tables nearby. On display, will be information on all the great stuff YOU helped make happen through the Missions program this past year; and show some of the great projects on the horizon.

So, come toss some cod. You're sure to have some fun, you might win a prize, but most importantly your donation will bring a smile to the face of some secondary school student, hospice worker or hospice patient hoping for a better life. That's the real prize.



Missions Gathering & More

The Missions Team members and spouses enjoyed a picnic at the home of Sandy Wendt on Thursday, July 24. Pastor Jen met us there and sat in on our informal meeting prior to enjoying a meal, prepared by all.



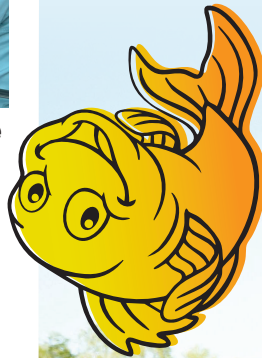
Thank you to confirmand Maren Gossai for her service project! She designed flyers to help the Mission

Team collect items for Hospice Kits, which will be delivered to Selian Hospice in Arusha, Tanzania, this fall.



VALLEY OUTREACH

Want to help sort clothes at Valley Outreach? Trinity members sort the first Monday of each month from 1-3 pm. Contact Sandy Wendt if you're interested in joining us.





Say All the Words, Say Them Out Loud-Learning Together 101

Karen Gieseke,(she/her) Pride Justice Team Chair

On July 15, 2025, for the first time in my life I saw a full, complete, double rainbow in the sky! A sign of God's amazing, humbling, breath-taking, beautiful imagination at work! An opportunity to yet again be amazed-and humbled-by what God the Creator unexpectedly brings to light when least expected!



I wondered if a different word existed for a double rainbow? What I discovered was there are twelve different kinds of single arc rainbows, plus double rainbows, twinned rainbows, and rainbows in space! Different rainbows depend on how much of a certain color is visible and the reflection in the water droplets. I was amazed! I specifically learned that in a double rainbow, the colors of the second rainbow are reversed, with red inside and blue outside. I never knew that God created so many different kinds of rainbows!

I hope the next time you see a rainbow, you look closely to see what God is up to in that unique and colorful creation!

Likewise, when you see a rainbow flag such as the one hanging on Trinity's building exterior, what do you notice?

At first glance, it may look like the other rainbow flags displayed as part of the Pride community since 1978, when creator Gilbert Baker designed the first rainbow flag to represent the LGBTQ community. Baker said,

"I thought of flags in a new light. I discovered the depth of their power, their transcendent, transformational quality. I thought of the emotional connection they hold."

A simple rectangle of colorful fabrics sewn together became a symbol of
September 2025 • Trinity Today

the "rainbow of humanity" and has changed people's lives ever since. LGBTQ people could now see themselves both as individuals and as part of the community through this flag.

Thanks to the effects of bright sunshine, Trinity's exterior Pride flag had become a little less bright. It was time for a new flag. If you look closely, you will notice it looks a bit different than the previous Progressive Pride rainbow flag. The new flag includes a purple circle within a yellow triangle. No, the new colors do not represent the MN Vikings!

At the June 1st Pride worship services, Pr. Peter called us in the sermon to "say all the words, say the words out loud". Pr. Peter was referring to all the words-and the people- included in the LGBTQIA+ community. A new flag design is an opportunity for Trinity to say-or in this case display-more of the LGBTQIA+ words.

Since 1978, additional letters have been added to LGBTQ, thus representing a more diverse understanding of people within this community. One addition is Intersex, represented by the "I", and on the Pride flag represented by yellow and purple.

As Pr. Peter also shared, there is "discomfort in not knowing". To help in our journey as lifelong learners, a brief explanation of Intersex follows:

Intersex is an umbrella term for people who are born with one or more traits in their chromosomes, genitals, hormones, or reproductive organs that don't fit the typical male or female patterns. Some of their traits might not match the sex they were assigned at birth or may combine traditionally understood male and female traits.

While intersex traits are often noticed at birth, the differences aren't always obvious then. People might discover they have intersex traits at puberty or in adulthood, sometimes as a result of medical testing for infertility. In rare instances, such differences are found in autopsies, after people have died.

[WebMD](#)

It is estimated 1 out of 100 Americans are intersex, or 1.7 %, the same percentage as people born having red hair or an identical twin.

The 2021 Intersex-Inclusive Pride flag, now displayed at Trinity, is the most up-to-date flag. The yellow and purple colors are gender neutral, and the unbroken circle symbolizes completeness and the right of intersex



people to be recognized as whole and valid as they are. This new Inclusive-Intersex flag reflects what Gilbert Baker stated in 1978: *flags have power, they are transcendent and transformational, and they create an emotional connection.*



Those same words -transcendent, transformational, power, and emotional connections-capture the experience of seeing a rainbow and then learning there is so much more to rainbows than imagined! I invite you to look closely the next time you see a rainbow and look for differences you may not have previously noticed. And to also be open to this same wonder regarding the diversity of God's children. God is a transformational artist, both on the Earth and in the Sky!



Upcoming Event:

The Pride Justice Team and Sunday Adult Forum are excited to announce that Arnold J. Wooley, Two Spirit Advocacy, and 2025 Twin Cities Pride BIPOC Leader of the Year, will be at Trinity October 5, 10:00am, as the Sunday Adult Forum presenter. Watch for more details to come. You can learn more about Arnold and Two Spirit Advocacy at [Home | Two Spirit Advocacy](#)



A Review of the 2025 Churchwide Assembly from the Viewpoint of Racial Justice

By: Claudia Swendseid, member of Trinity's Racial Justice Ministry Team

The 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly (CWA) opened July 28 at the Phoenix Convention Center. The CWA is the primary decision-making body of the church, and meets every three years. The assembly convened under the theme "For the Life of the World," and took several noteworthy actions in the form of elected leaders, approved memorials (statements of action), and conducted other business relevant to the work of racial justice and equity.

Especially noteworthy was the election of ELCA leaders. For the first time in church history, the CWA elected an African-American presiding bishop, Yehiel Curry; and an African American secretary of the ELCA, Lucille "CeCe" Mills – this by the Whitest denomination in America. Both Curry and Mills participated in the ELCA's Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) program, which prepares individuals for ordain ministry in the ELCA, with a focus on emerging ministry contexts such as ethnic-specific, multicultural, and urban and rural settings.

When speaking at the CWA about his vision for the future of the ELCA, Curry said, "When we're talking about casting a vision, I think people want to be part of a vision because they want to share in the process. But they typically will also share in the burdens as well. So, part of my vision is [about] those things we've lifted up as a church that we said we need to do, we're going to do, and find a way to bring more people to the table so that we might embody that work instead of it just being a written document."



(Newly elected ELCA leadership at the CWA: ELCA Secretary, Lucille "CeCe" Mills and ELCA Presiding Bishop, Yehiel Curry)

The CWA also focused on and advanced several initiatives to engage the church in supporting Indigenous communities. For example:

On Day 2 of the CWA, the assembly was invited by the American Indian and Alaska Native Lutheran Association to wear red to bring awareness to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.



The session continued with an update by the ELCA Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery Task Force. The task force was formed to implement a comprehensive and churchwide repudiation of the doctrine, which allowed European, and later American, nations to claim lands occupied by Indigenous or other non-European, non-Christian people as federal property.

Manuel Retamoza And Amy Odgren, co-chairs of the task force, presented the group's findings. They spoke about the church's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women movement efforts and highlighted the ELCA's Truth & Healing Movement, led by Vance Blackfox, ELCA director for Indigenous ministries and tribal relations, as well as the truth-seeking and truth-telling initiatives revolving around Indian boarding schools.

"Ask your pastor, your deacon, your synod bishop, what is being done to address the ELCA's commitment to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery," Retamoza said, encouraging participants to visit elca.org/indigenous for resources.

Finally on Day 2 of the CWA, a memorial was approved on the *Indian Boarding School Remembrance*: Calls for the church to observe the National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools annually, develop educational programs and materials surrounding the history and ELCA's complicity with Indian boarding schools, and provide ongoing recognition and support for the continued work to locate all known records regarding the ELCA predecessor churches' involvement with Indian boarding and day schools, among other actions.

The National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools is observed on September 30th in both the United States and Canada. It is a day dedicated to acknowledging and remembering the horrific history and ongoing impacts of Indian Boarding Schools on Indigenous communities.

A brief background: Between the late 1800s and the 1960s, the US government and various churches, including Lutheran churches, operated a system of Indian boarding schools aimed at forcibly assimilating Native American children into Euro-American culture.

Minnesota had sixteen boarding schools, which drew children from all eleven of Minnesota's Indian reservations.¹

Children were forcibly removed from their homes, sometimes sent hundreds or thousands of miles away, and forbidden to speak their native languages or practice their cultural traditions. The boarding schools were often overcrowded, understaffed, and underfunded, leading to widespread disease, abuse, neglect, and even death. This policy, often summarized by the phrase "Kill the Indian, Save the Man," inflicted immense trauma on individuals, families, and entire Indigenous communities, a trauma that continues to impact generations today.



(Carlisle Indian Industrial Boarding School in Pennsylvania)

The primary purposes of the National Day of Remembrance:

- To honor the victims and survivors of these schools and acknowledge the intergenerational trauma they continue to experience.
- To raise public awareness about the history of the boarding school system and its devastating consequences, which have often been left out of standard history lessons.
- To support healing and reconciliation efforts for individuals, families, and communities impacted by the boarding school era.
- To advocate for policies and actions that address the ongoing needs of survivors and descendants, including truth-seeking and healing initiatives.

By participating in the Day of Remembrance, individuals and communities, including the Trinity community, can contribute to a more just future and play a role in the ongoing healing process for Indigenous communities affected by the Indian boarding school system.

In the week before September 30, the Racial Justice Ministry Team will be hanging a display to remember and honor the sacred lives of children who were taken to Indian boarding schools. The Team will also provide educational materials and suggestions for how Trinity members can get involved. During our worship on September 28, we will seek to confess our role in the tragic and sinful history of Indian boarding schools so that we can journey towards healing and reconciliation.

Other Upcoming Events:

- **September 22, 7 PM.** Where the Waters Remember: Dakota Life Along the St. Croix. This FREE event will feature a presentation by Dr. Ed Fleming, Curator of Anthropology at the Science Museum of Minnesota and Cheyenne St. John, Director of Dakota Tribal Historic Preservation. Location: Marine Village Hall, 121 Judd Street, Marine on St. Croix, MN. Contact Melissa May for more information at amayz@comcast.net
- **October 12, 10 AM.** Trinity Adult Forum, presentation by Brenda Blackhawk, Director of Communications at Central Lutheran Church and member of the Task Force on the ELCA's Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery. She will speak on the Doctrine, the ELCA's Statement of Repudiation, the work of the task force and how you can engage.
- **October 21, 7 PM.** Location TBD. Minnesota Book Award Winner and Bemidji State University Ojibwe Professor Anton Treuer will keynote Minnesota Council of Church's signature racial justice event. Contact Claudia Swendseid for more information at claudiaswendseid@comcast.net.

¹ For more information on Indian boarding schools in Minnesota, go to <https://www3.mnhs.org/mnopedia/search/index/native-american-boarding-schools>



Worship On TV

Trinity's traditional Sunday worship service is rebroadcast on channel 14 through Valley Access Channels (VAC) on the following days and times:

- Sundays at 11 a.m. & 7 p.m.
- Mondays at 7 a.m. & 1 p.m.

Office Hours

The church office is open the following hours or by appointment.

Monday–Thursday
9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Worship Attendance

Sunday, July 6

In-person 8:30 am 104
Online views/week 8:30 am 392
In-Person Drive In 10 am 200
Cars at the Drive-In 10 am 115

Sunday, July 13

In-person 8:30 am 66
Online views/week 8:30 am 322
In-Person Drive In 10 am 160
Cars at the Drive-In 10 am 90

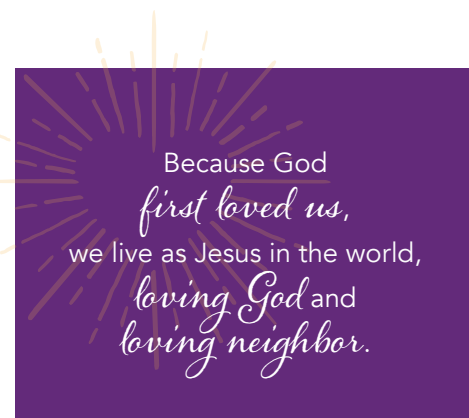
Sunday, July 20

In-person 8:30 am 63
Online views/week 8:30 am 286
In-Person Drive In 10 am 146
Cars at the Drive-In 10 am 85

Sunday, July 27

In-person 8:30 am 79
Online views/week 8:30 am 267
In-Person Drive In 10 am 117
Cars at the Drive-In 10 am 72

NOTE: Online views in one week are one-minute or longer views.



Core Values

Engaging Worship
Radical Hospitality
Authentic Community
Lifelong Faith Formation
Compassionate Action

Welcome Statement

Read our welcome statement at: <https://www.trinitylc.org/our-mission>

VICTORIA ERICKSON JODI GOBLE

THE MILLER'S Daughter

9/12/25, 7:30 PM
URNESS RECITAL HALL
ST. OLAF COLLEGE
NORTHFIELD, MN

9/13/25, 7 PM
TRINITY LUTHERAN
STILLWATER, MN

Victoria Erickson is a FY2025 recipient of a Creative Individuals Grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board. This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund.

OPERA *phera*

MINNESOTA WATER LAND & LEGACY

TRINITY TODAY!

Publication Number: USPS 509650

Published once per month by
Trinity Lutheran Church, 115 4th St. N,
PO Box 339, Stillwater, MN 55082

Editor, Design & Layout: Megan Gaul

Some images from Pixabay or Unsplash

Articles for the next Trinity Today (October issue) are due Monday, September 15, to begin arriving in mailboxes Wednesday, October 1.

Office: 651-439-7400; Fax: 651-430-2935

Email: info@trinitylc.org

Trinity Today is available as a PDF at www.trinitylc.org (Click Media » Newsletter)

Postmaster: Send address changes to Trinity Lutheran Church, PO Box 339, Stillwater, MN 55082. © Copyright 2025 Trinity Lutheran Church, Stillwater, MN



115 4th St. N • Box 339
Stillwater, MN 55082 • 651-439-7400

Periodical
Postage Paid at
Stillwater, MN
55082-0339



Grand Opening: "The River Connects Us" Exhibit Opening!

The Trinity Fine Arts Group cordially invites you to a special evening celebrating art and connection. **Join us Saturday, September 6, from 5-7 pm in the Trinity narthex for the opening of "[The River Connects Us](#)."**

This captivating exhibit features the photography of Winona-based Peter Muschler and the poetry of Stillwater's own Tom Gillaspay (an active member of First Presbyterian Church). It's an "Ekphrasis" (visual art connected with poetry) journey, depicting the environment and culture along the Mississippi River from its source to its mouth.

Special music starting at 6:00 pm. The evening will also include a unique performance of "Shade in a Parched Land" for Organ and Percussion by Aaron David Miller, featuring Tom Gillaspay's poetry. Trinity member and First Presbyterian organist, Dr. Laura Edman, will perform.

Come celebrate the arts at Trinity! Enjoy festive refreshments and a chance to speak with the artist and poet.

