

Trinity In Touch

August 2025

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Mission

Our Mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Vision

We strive to be an inclusive faith community that extends God's love in our neighborhood and world.

Core Values

Diversity & Inclusiveness: Seeking to affirm every person as a child of God.

Scripture, Tradition, Experience and Reason: Searching for truth in our faith community.

Peace & Justice:
Striving for positive social
change in our
neighborhood and world.

Trinity UMC
1100 Lake Drive SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506
616.456.7168
office@grtumc.org

Behind the Worship: Rituals and Relevance

Back to Church, Not Back to Busy

For most of us growing up, summer came with a built-in rhythm: a break. Whether we spent it at the lake, in the backyard, or glued to Saturday morning cartoons, we were trained early on that summer was for slowing down. Less structure, more freedom. A reset.

And then we became adults.

For the non-teachers among us, summer break is mostly a memory. The calendar keeps moving. The emails still come. And yet, somewhere deep in our bones, August still carries that same energy, the season of last breaths before the rush.

Culturally, we've kept summer as a symbol of rest. A slower pace. Time away. And that's good. It's needed. We were never meant to run full speed forever. God didn't just suggest Sabbath, God commanded it.

But if we're honest, we don't always ease back in well. The moment school shopping starts and sports schedules hit our inboxes, we're off to the races. Fall sweeps in like a wave, and too often, we just try not to drown.

So before it hits, before everything ramps up, I want to invite you to something different:



Church isn't just one more thing on the calendar. It's where we come up for air.

In a world that runs at breakneck speed, this is where we slow down enough to breathe.

To listen.

To be.

To remember we are more than what we produce.

Every time we gather, whether in worship, in study, in service, or even just in conversation, we carve out space for what matters. A place to catch your breath. A place to put down your burdens, even if only for a while. A place to grow.

Not perform.

Not impress.

Just grow.

This year, we'll have opportunities to deepen our faith, to connect with others, and to become more fully the people God created us to be. Not because we have to check a box, but because something in us longs for meaning, for grounding, for community. And church, at its best, helps provide that.

So take a breath.

Soak in the last days of summer.

And then, come be part of something that steadies you for the season ahead.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Mike

Ministry Spotlight

At Trinity, some of the most meaningful connections are happening in groups that were dreamed up and led entirely by members of our own congregation. From the monthly Mahjong group to the FoRT Gardening Group—and many more—these gatherings are a beautiful reminder that church is more than Sunday mornings. It's about creating space for relationships, shared passions, and spiritual growth in everyday life.

What makes these groups so special is that they didn't come from a committee or a program—they came from people like you. Someone who loved Mahjong invited others to join in. Gardeners found joy in tending to God's creation and beautifying our shared spaces. And countless other groups have sprung up because someone felt a nudge to create a place of belonging.

Our community thrives when everyone feels empowered to engage, connect, and lead from where their passions lie. You don't need a formal title or permission to start something new—you just need a heart willing to share what you love with others.

Maybe you've been thinking about starting a walking group, a book study, or a weekly coffee meet-up. What's stopping you? Chances are there are others who'd love to join.

Together, we are stronger. Together, we are church.

Want to connect with one of our laity-led groups or start your own? Reach out to the church office—we'd love to help you find your people!

Missions

Thank you to United Women in Faith and other Trinity members who provided \$320 in support to Shanquel Askew, Global Mission Fellow, who completed her service at UM Community House. We wish Shanquel God's blessings as she settles in North Carolina.





UWF (United Women in Faith)

Used Book Sale is coming!!!

Gather up your past reads and bring them in to Trinity and help the United Women in Faith meet their Pledge to Mission and the social justice work so needed in our world.

The Used Book Sale will be Thursday, October 2- Saturday October 4.

Your donations can be brought in to the church beginning in mid-September.

Thank you for your support!



United Women in Faith.... Committed to Justice

Monday, September 29 @ 6pm all are welcome to join our fall "Come to the Table" discussion. Free supper will begin serving at 6pm with viewing and discussion of the book "The Cross and the Lynching Tree" by James H Cone.

These events are designed to enable the Faith community to gather for a meal and discussion of the justice concerns of our community. Our need to continue dialogue on the concerns of racism in the church continues to be a priority for United Women in Faith.

We encourage you to RSVP to the church office at office@grtumc.org and join this vital opportunity.



Finances

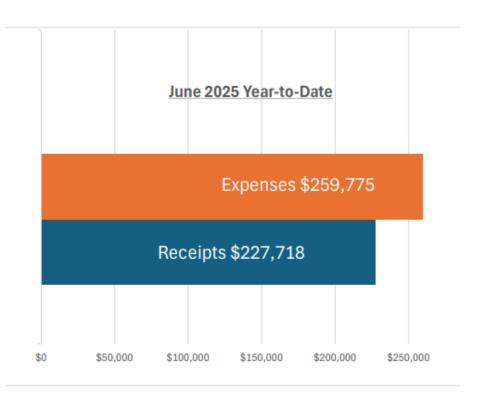
Dear Trinity Members and Friends,

Thank you for your faithful giving. Your generosity, prayer, and participation are vital resources that sustain our ministry of justice, hope and love with our neighbors near and far.

As you are able, your support is needed so that we can recover from this summer slump.

Monthly financial reports are available in the church office and you may contact our treasurer, Joy Murphy for a copy or if you have any questions.

Submitted by: Pros Tumonong, Chair-Finance Committee



Endowment Committee



Everything you always wanted to know about the Trinity Endowment, but you were afraid to ask or did not know who to ask:

The Trinity Endowment was established in 1956 as a way to set aside funds to ensure the continuance of our church and congregation. When it began these funds came from gifts and bequests. In the 1980's it grew because we sold a couple of parsonages.

The Endowment is used for things that are not part of our annual operating expenses and to be on hand if we need to purchase a parsonage in the future. These Capital Expenses consist of building repairs, furniture, kitchen equipment, organ repair, outreach projects, and education enhancements.

We continue to be blessed with very generous gifts and bequests from members of our congregation including those who have pledged portions of their estates to ensure the future of Trinity. These monies are invested in the United Methodist Foundation of Michigan.

The rules for these funds are that we only withdraw 5% from investment earnings out of the Endowment each year. There are 4 general categories – Building, Outreach, General, Music and Education.

A few years ago, the Trustees determined that our building needed very extensive work. Because these Endowment funds are available, we have been able to do this critical maintenance without having to tap into our regular budget or launch an added financial campaign. It has allowed our annual giving and pledges to focus on our excellent staff, community outreach, and generous mission projects including Community Ministries.

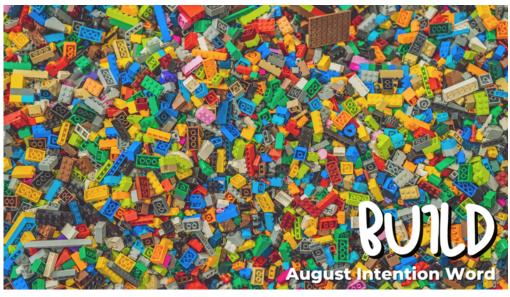
We are grateful for those who loved Trinity into the future with their gifts and bequests.

If you are interested in including the Trinity Endowment in your estate planning, contact Lynn Francis, Chair of the Endowment Committee or Joy Murphy, Treasurer.

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Trinity UMC celebrates the beautiful diversity of the human community. We affirm the sacred worth of each person as a recipient of God's love and grace. As followers of Christ, we are an open and inclusive congregation. We live this out by welcoming into full participation all persons regardless of gender, race, national origin, physical or mental abilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status or economic condition.



ntention Word

Our intention word for August is BUILD. Not sure what an intention word is? Pastor Mike wrote an introduction to this concept in September 2022's Newsletter. Check it out online at: https://bit.ly/Sep2022Newsletter

Church Family

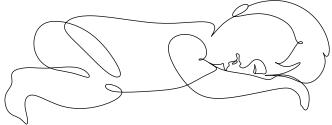
ALTAR FLOWERS

August 3 - Jim Vidro in memory of Gail Vidro. August 10 - Diana Pace in honor of her parents, Nell & Franklin M. Graham.

August 17 - Available

August 24 - Available

August 31 - Bonnie Czuhajewski in memory of her husband, John.



Congrats to Ashley Scott & James Lim

Their daughter Eleanor was born on April 23, 2025. We welcome her to the world and to the Trinity Family!

PRAYERS AND CARE

Prayers of healing for Tonya Murphy as she recently had surgery on her ankle.

murphy.tonya@gmail.com

Prayers for Lois Teed-Gillen as she continues to seek the right treatment and navigate the medical landscape. May she find strength, clarity, and healing during this time.

l<u>a.gillen@outlook.com</u> 3022 Milo St. NW Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Prayers of healing and recovery for Pastor Mike as he had ankle surgery on July 29th, 2025.

m.desotell@grtumc.org 3509 Bromley Dr. SE Grand Rapids, MI 49508

Opportunities to Engage



Calling all Pre-K to 5th Grade kiddos! Come upstairs to the TrinityKids Room after Children's Moment on select Sundays this summer for a class with Ms. Laura, Ms. Annie, and other Protection Policy certified leaders.

We'll learn about what God has made by examining different parts of creation, digging into amazing science facts, and (when weather permits) spending time outside exploring the Naturehood right around our building! There will be crafts, games, science, stories, and more.

Grown-ups: Pick-up will be in the TrinityKids Room upstairs at 11:15am. If the service ends early, please come check-out your kiddo before heading outside for Lemonade Stand.

Sunday Kids Edition is wrapping up August 17 & 24. Weekly programming will return in September.

Questions? Contact Laura Johns at Ljohns@grtumc.org.

Is your child interested in helping to light the candles on Sunday mornings? Attend a 30 minute training together on **Sunday, August 17 from 11:30am-12:00pm!** Kiddos must be at least Pre-K to acolyte. Grown-ups need to attend the training with their children as there are important jobs for them too. Meet Ms. Laura in the Praygrounds after worship to find out more!

Already have a trained acolyte? Sign them up for summer & fall using our SignUpGenius: https://tinyurl.com/TUMC-AcolyteFall2025

Questions? Email Laura Johns at Ljohns@grtumc.org.









Sacred Justice Book Club

Join us as we dive into a variety of different non-fiction justice titles!

Meetings are every three months on Tuesday evenings.

Come for deep conversation, meaningful action, and dessert!

August 5, 2025

Jesus Feminist

Sarah Bessey

November 4, 2025 How to Be an Antiracist Ibram X. Kendi

The Story of More
Hope Jahren

May 5, 2026 Queer & Christian Brandan Robertson After an amazing initial meeting with great conversation, deep discussion about activism, and fun fellowship, the Sacred Justice Book Club is excited to announce the book list for 2025-2026.

August 5, 2025 | Jesus Feminist by Sarah Bessey

November 4, 2025 | How to Be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi

February 3, 2026 | The Story of More by Hope Jahren

May 5, 2026 | Queer & Christian by Brandan Robertson

Questions about Sacred Justice Book Club? Contact the Library Team: Laura Johns, Hannah Marshall & Dani Patrick

Milestone Sundays

SHARING MILESTONE MOMENTS
IN THE LIFE OF OUR CHURCH FAMILY

BACKPACK BLESSING - SUNDAY, AUGUST 24
SHARE MILESTONES AT: TINYURL.COM/TUMCMILESTONE08-2025

STUDENTS & TEACHERS:

BRING YOUR BACKPACK OR SCHOOL BAG FOR BLESSING!



A milestone is a meaningful, memorable moment in the life of an individual, family or community. Here at Trinity, we want to recognize those moments, share them together, and find God's presence in the everyday. We will be lifting up milestones during worship every few months, but we need your help. Let us know if there's a milestone in your life we can celebrate together!



Our third Milestone Sunday of 2025 is August 24 and we will be celebrating any milestones from June to August 2025. Our Milestone Moment will be Blessing Backpacks & Teachers as our children, youth & educators start another school year so bring your backpack or school bag for blessing. We will also post select honorees on the screen and do a group blessing for all honorees.

Share Your Milestone:

Let us know if there's a milestone in your life we can celebrate together! Fill out our online form at https://tinyurl.com/TUMCMilestone08-2025, email Laura at l.johns@grtumc.org, or put a note on your Connection Card.







Trinity continues to update the policies and procedures that protect our children, youth & vulnerable adults! Before our next program year begins in September, we'll be offering a training on all the latest information. We'll discuss everything from Protection Policy (formerly Safe Sanctuary policy) to first aid basics to emergency procedures.



Everyone involved in programming at Trinity is asked to attend...

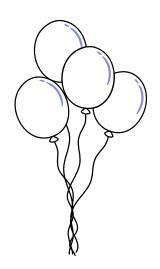
- · Sunday morning Children & Worship, TrinityKids & Youth Fellowship volunteers, this means you!
- · Wednesday evening Community Ministry volunteers, you too!
- · Folks who help with hospitality or who are part of Congregational Care you too!

Even if you do not currently volunteer in any of these areas or other related ones, this is a great training to attend as it will give you the latest information on how we as a congregation work together to protect our most vulnerable members.

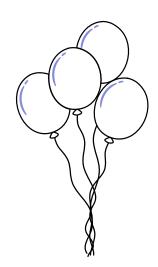
The training is **Sunday, August 24 from 11:30am-1:30pm**. Please save the date and plan on attending! Lunch and childcare will be provided. If you plan to use the childcare, let us know so we can staff accordingly.

An online version of the training is available for those who cannot attend in-person. A make-up class may also be offered.

Please RSVP to Laura Johns, Director of Discipleship, at I.johns@grtumc.org.







Come on out for a Party in the Park on Thursday, August 14 from 4:00pm-8:00pm at Fallasburg Park in Lowell!

Celebrate all things summer with a delicious BBQ dinner, jamming out with the praise band, and then doing all those fun park things like checking out the playgrounds, taking a walk along the Flat River, wading in the cool water of Page Creek, or playing a few yard games.

Trinity has rented the enclosed shelter at Fallasburg again this year so that we have an indoor space for music & our BBQ dinner. Staff will be there from 4:00pm-8:00pm but you can come and go as you please. The approximate schedule is as follows:

4:00pm-5:30pm: Park Activities & Gathering Time

5:30pm-6:30pm: BBQ Dinner in Enclosed Shelter

6:30pm-7:15pm: Worship with Praise Band

7:15pm-8:00pm: Park Activities & Clean-Up



The BBQ dinner will feature hot dogs, brats, and sides. Beverages and tableware will also be provided. Suggested donation of \$7 per person. Pay online ahead of time or bring cash/check to the park.

Haven't been to Fallasburg Park before?

It's located north of downtown Lowell about 30 minutes west of Trinity. We have reserved the large enclosed shelter which is located at: 1114 Fallasburg Park Dr, Lowell 49331.

The shelter does not have air conditioning, so plan to dress for the weather. Modern restrooms including barrier-free stalls are connected to the building.

Lend a Hand:

We're looking for a few folks to help out with this event! Bring a baked good for dessert, help with BBQ set-up or clean-up, serve as grill master, or bring a yard game from home. Check out the SignUpGenius here for info: https://tinyurl.com/TUMC-PITP2025-Volunteers

RSVPs & Questions:

Contact Laura Johns at <u>l.johns@grtumc.org</u> with questions and to RSVP for dinner. An online registration form is also available that allows you to RSVP, communicate any dietary restrictions, and pay for your dinner(s). Find it here: https://tinyurl.com/TUMC-PITP2025

Perhaps you've heard or seen a reference to FoRT (Friends of Rohr at Trinity). We are folks of Trinity who enjoy studying Father Richard Rohr's writings on Sunday & Thursday evenings during the program year. This summer FoRT is finding fun ways to stay connected while our weekly classes are on haitus. You're invited to join us!

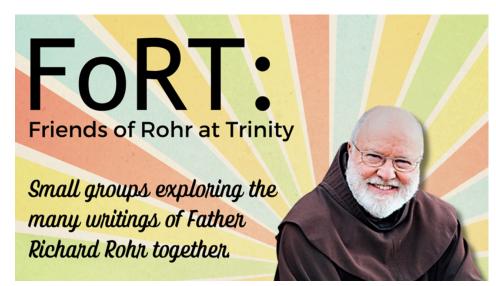
IN-PERSON OPPORTUNITIES:

FoRT Garden Club - Summer Thursdays at 7:00pm

The FoRT Garden Club is meeting Thursdays at 7:00pm this summer for a casual time of fellowship at folks' homes. Enjoy garden & yard spaces, share gardening tips & tricks, eat snacks, and be together. Contact Tricia Ophoff for more info at ophoff23@gmail.com.

Annual Ice Cream Social -Thursday, August 28 at 7:00pm

We will wrap our summer up with the 3rd Annual FoRT Ice Cream Social. This is a great opportunity to learn more about FoRT as we enjoy cold treats, share about summer adventures, and prepare ourselves for another year of amazing small groups! More details will be shared in August.





AT HOME & VIRTUAL OPPORTUNITES:

PT7: Pray Tuesdays at 7

Each Tuesday at 7:00am or 7:00pm, take a moment - at home or work, by the lake or in the car - to pray for our Trinity community, our neighbors, and our world. Commit to being in God's presence and raising up joys, blessings, or concerns that are on your heart. As you pray, remember that your prayers are melding with the prayers of others here at Trinity no matter where the summer days take you.

Wednesday Centering Moments

Each Wednesday morning at 9:00am, folks on the FoRT Summer Email list will get an email from Trinity that offers encouragement and support as you pause for a moment of stillness and silence. Quiet your busy mind and focus on the words of the brief meditation, allowing your heart to soften and open to our Creator and the Universe surrounding you. If you're not already connected with FoRT but want to get these messages, contact the office at office@grtumc.org.

Thankful Thursdays

Each Thursday, we invite you to be mindful of all the ways you are blessed. Gratitude is a natural heart response to beauty, calm, and joy so invite your heart to intentionally go into this delightful space as often as you can. Let your heart sing out to God - and practice offering a grateful "thank you" to family, friends, even strangers.

If you have questions about upcoming events, FoRT offerings in the summer, or opportunities in the fall, please reach out to Laura Johns (<u>l.johns@grtumc.org</u>) or Merrita Tumonong (<u>tumonongmsw@gmail.com</u>). They can share your information with the rest of the FoRT leadership team or applicable event organizers.



Designed for Trinity families & friends ages 18 & up, God's Naturehood: Adult Edition is a great opportunity to visit a new park, get to know members of your Trinity family better, and get your daily steps in. The details on our summer meet-ups are below.

Friday, August 15 from 1:00pm-2:00pm

Ken-O-Sha Park at 1353 Van Auken St SE, 49508.

The park is on the grounds of Ken-O-Sha Elementary School. Park in the northwest corner of the school lot near the nature playscape. You can get to this lot by taking either Kenosha Drive SE or Van Auken Street SE west from Kalamazoo Ave SE.

Both these summer friendly parks offer lots of shade, but you'll probably want to pack/wear bug spray!

RSVPs are requested but not required. Contact Laura Johns at Ljohns@grtumc.org.



Spiritalk Book Club The United Women in Faith Spiritalk Book Club is back this Fall. Join us as we discuss & dissect a new book each month! Meeting are typically the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm at Trinity. Contact Joy Murphy for more info at joymurphy@grtumc.org. Start reading our September book now so you're ready! Yellowface by R.F. Kuang

Exploring the Enneagram:

Understanding Yourself & Others Better



Adult Faith Formation Class

Sundays, September 14 to October 19 11:30am-12:30pm in Discovery Room

Beyond just a personality test, the enneagram is an invitation to self-awareness and personal growth. Join us as we seek to understand our core motivations and recognize patterns of thoughts & behavior. Come away approaching your relationships with self and others with increased compassion, curiosity, and kindness.

Class will be led by Jenna Chisholm.
Contact Laura Johns with questions.
No materials are required to participate.

More information on 2025-2026 Adult Faith Formation offerings will be coming in August, but in the meantime, save the dates for our first class of the program year! We're thrilled to be Exploring the Enneagram with Jenna Chisholm.



Somehow it has happened. Another summer is flying by and we're into August! As we get ready to mourn the loss of the long days, the warm weather, and the extra freedom summer seems to bring; we are thrilled about what is coming this autumn at Trinity!

New this fall, we'll be celebrating <u>Discipleship Sunday!</u> Coming September 7th, this special worship service will highlight the amazing ministries happening here at Trinity and all the wonderful folks involved. You won't want to miss our guest speakers, photo slideshows, and much more!

But that's not all... join us for <u>Fall Kick Off</u> on Sunday, September 14 and then throughout the month as many of our programs that take a summer holiday start up again.

Coming soon to your email box will be all the updated information on what to expect! Paper copies will also be available in the Narthex & Parlor. Watch for...

The Trinity Guide

This update to last year's guide will feature all the basic program year (September-May) information you're looking for on worship, faith formation, TNT, and more.

Program Area Flyers

These detailed area-by-area seasonal sheets will provide extra info on what to expect from Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Adult Ministry, and TNT (Thursday Nights at Trinity). Plus, we're creating a calendar of events so you know the important dates for all the September to December happenings!

Children & Youth Paperwork

Updated registration paperwork will be shared as well as the latest on expectations, drop-off/pick-up procedures, and more. We really need grown-ups to review everything and <u>complete all the attached forms</u>. It is critical that we are all on the same page going into the fall and that your children's latest health, safety, and personal information is on file. A big part of our job is ensuring the safety of all of our children and we can only do that if we know who is here and what their needs are!

Many things will be the same as last year, but we cannot wait to share all the details about some new offerings and new opportunities.

Questions about Discipleship Sunday or Fall Kick Off? Watch your email for updates or contact Laura Johns, Director of Discipleship, at <u>Ljohns@grtumc.org</u>.

The Youth Connection Corner

YOUTH EVENTS FOR THE MONTH OF



Hello Friends! I hope that everyone is having an amazing summer, it feels so surreal that we're into August already! Over the summer, we've been gearing up and making plans for the 2025/2026 program year but we also have one more great opportunity for summer connection! Check it out below.

Mark your calendars for...

Youth Lemonade Stand TAKEOVER!

On Sunday, August 3rd the youth is taking over the lemonade stand! We will prep and serve lemonade for our friends here at Trinity and after clean-up we will have a special treat!





WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

What's YOUR Story Youth Group Series Guest Speakers Needed!

Our Youth Are Shaping the Curriculum This Year! At the end of last year, our youth named the topics and asked the big questions they care about most. Each month, we'll dive into one of these themes together—and we'd love to include your voice! We're looking for people from Trinity to share real-life stories and perspectives that connect faith to everyday life. This is a wonderful opportunity to encourage our youth and show them that what we talk about in church truly matters beyond our walls.

If you're interested and would like to see the topic list, please reach out—I'd love to hear from you!

As we head into August I ask that you keep our youth and their families in your prayers. That they finish their summer strong and start their upcoming school years even stronger! Annie Slabaugh, Youth Director - a.slabaugh@grtumc.org

Community Ministries

November 7th 6-8pm Trinity UMC (Fellowship Hall) Free to attend





Join us for this 3rd annual "A Night to Remember" Dinner. This unique Community Ministries Program evening of great food, inspiring stories, community connection and beautiful music from StageGR Performers. Never been before? You need to check out this experience once and we'll know that you will be back! Been there already? Invite a friend or group of friends for a great evening out of story, music and food that is good for the soul. Questions? Please email...m.witkowski@grtumc.org. Registration will open on Sept 1st.

In a Blink...

How is there only one month left before we go back to school. Literally I felt like I blinked, and it was mid-July. We've been busy this summer with finishing our Wednesday evening programming this spring, a Congress Concert here at Trinity, our Faith on the Fly Annual Newbie Fly Fishing trip down the Muskegon River, and a kids fly fishing camp that we did too! Then grant writing, a staff retreat, a vacation and now back to grant writing and planning for the upcoming year. All of that in a blink.

As we gear up for the next phase in the Community Ministries Program Calendar Year we are excited for all of the new possibilities that the upcoming school year brings. With that said there are some new opportunities for ways to help support our program and the work that we do. If you have any questions about the opportunities below, please reach out to Matt Witkowski, Director of the Community Ministries Program at m.witkowski@grtumc.org or (616) 550-2418. Check it out:

Do you know of a college student at GVSU, Aquinas College, Calvin College or any of the other local schools that might be interested in volunteering with our Wednesday evening programming working with community children? Not only does it look great on a resume, but we have also helped with letters of recommendation, job and other community connections and opportunities to take the lead on certain projects and activities. Many past students continue to reach out to us today for continued support, life and employment advice, etc...

Are you a positive person, have energy and would love to join our team and give back by engaging in the lives of children and youth in our program? We are in need of a few great additions to our team of people willing to give of their time but we guarantee you will get so much more out of the experience than you give. Reach out to Matt Witkowski to learn more. We begin our program in October and meet once a week -April with some breaks included.

Have connections to Foundations or businesses that would be willing to support the Community Ministries Program and/or the Faith on the Fly Program? Donations from businesses like \$2,500, 5,000 and 10,000 make a world of difference to a program like ours and we want to promote those businesses that are investing with us and any help building or finding these relationships are so important to the sustainability of the work we do. Follow and check in with us on Facebook for the Community Ministries Program and Faith on the Program so that you are aware of opportunities that arise to volunteer and help out with for opportunities at Congress Elementary, representing Trinity at community fairs, finding ways to give back when request or needs arise that we can help with. Knowing and being aware of information through these areas makes a huge difference to the good we can do in the community.

Continue or start financially committing on a regular basis to the Community Ministries Program. We so appreciate those who give whatever is a meaningful amount to them because they understand the difference we make at Trinity and in the larger community as well. Interested in learning more please reach out... Pray for the program volunteers, the community members we serve and that the church continues to value being a representative of the church in our community to the children, Individuals and Families we work with every day!

As always, THANK YOU for your support as we continue to create a safe place for children, individuals, and families to learn and grow. It would not be possible without you!

