



# Trinity In Touch

**February 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](mailto:office@grtumc.org)**

## **Mardi Gras**

Hello Friends,

Let the good times roll! Or, as they say in New Orleans, laissez les bons temps rouler! That's right friends, the season of Lent is just around the corner, but before we can begin that time of solemn reflection, repentance, and renewal, we must first go through Mardi Gras.

For many in the modern world, Mardi Gras is an excuse for feasting and frivolities, but its history and significance go back long before the brass bands and the beads on Bourbon Street.

Mardi Gras, or "Fat Tuesday," is a time-honored tradition that dates back centuries. It began as a festive day of feasting before the season of Lent, which was widely observed as a period of fasting, reflection, and spiritual preparation leading up to Easter. In medieval Europe, communities would clear out their pantries, indulging in rich foods like meats, butter, and pastries (so as not to waste food that would spoil over the long days of Lent) before embarking on Lenten disciplines. This tradition found its way to Louisiana via French settlers, evolving into the vibrant, jazz-filled, bead-tossing celebration we know today. But beyond the paczki and parades, Mardi Gras has a deeper theological significance too. Before we enter into Lent, where we focus on repentance and contemplate our own mortality, Mardi Gras is a reminder that joy and celebration are a vital part of our faith journey. As Christians, we embrace the fullness of life, the feasting and the fasting, the laughter and the reflection, the community and the contemplation. Mardi Gras invites us to rejoice in God's abundance before we enter a season of renewed focus on our spiritual walk. In recent years, Trinity's observance of Mardi Gras has taken the form of a celebration we call "Fat Tuesday Jazz and Eats". This year, on Tuesday, March 4, we will gather at 6 p.m. in the fellowship hall to enjoy live music, dancing, delicious gumbo, and other goodies. There is a suggested donation of \$20 per adult for the event (children 12 and under are free).

So bring your appetite and your dancing shoes and join us as we feast before the fast, celebrating both the gift of community and the richness of God's grace.

Laissez les bons temps rouler!

Pastor Mike



P.S. Please let us know if you are planning to attend so we can be sure to have enough food and other goodies ready.

## Ministry Spotlight



This month we are putting the spotlight on Trinity's office/admin volunteers. Volunteers work on a variety of projects and are a vital part of the office here at Trinity. Some volunteers work on intermittent projects (such as filing, organizing, and preparing materials) while others have a set schedule to assist each week. We also have some who cover for our staff retreat and vacations! If you are interested in becoming an office volunteer in some capacity reach out to Dani at [office@grtumc.org](mailto:office@grtumc.org).

## Finance News

Thank you to all of our generous donors!

The 2024 statements have been emailed or mailed! Most were emailed to save postage, but if you need a printed copy please let the office know and we will send it out right away! Email [office@grtumc.org](mailto:office@grtumc.org) or call 616-456-7168 press ext 105. Thanks again for being the wonderful people of God that you are!!

## Big Ten Club



In early January, members of the Big Ten Club were invited to join longtime Trinity member Del Crowe at Clark Home for a luncheon to celebrate Del's 102nd Birthday. Del has been a member of the Big Ten Club here at Trinity for 43 years. Due to health issues, Del has been unable to attend the bi-annual Big Ten luncheon in person for the past two years. He asked his daughter, Kathy, to coordinate the luncheon at Clark and invite his friends in the Big Ten Club.

The Big Ten Club is a men's fellowship group, believed to have been started at Trinity sometime in the 1950's. Through financial donations from this organization, in recent years Trinity has been able to purchase a new storage shed, upgrade areas of the sound system in the sanctuary and install flood lights in all three of the church parking lots.

It was great to see Del and to spend this special time with a very special person.

## Missions Updates

**Advocacy Day** is a day set aside for United Methodists to meet with their state legislators in Lansing to advocate on an important public issue. This year's focus is on the 2019 auto insurance changes which resulted in significant and critical loss of care for those seriously injured and requiring long term care. It seeks legislation that would (1) provide sustainable reimbursement rates for medical providers and (2) increase the number of hours that family caregivers can be reimbursed. Advocacy Day will be held on **Wednesday, March 12**. [Learn how you can be an advocate for important change.](#) Training and guidance are provided. Contact [Kip Smalligan](#) if you would like to coordinate learning and transportation.

### Christmas Holiday Offering

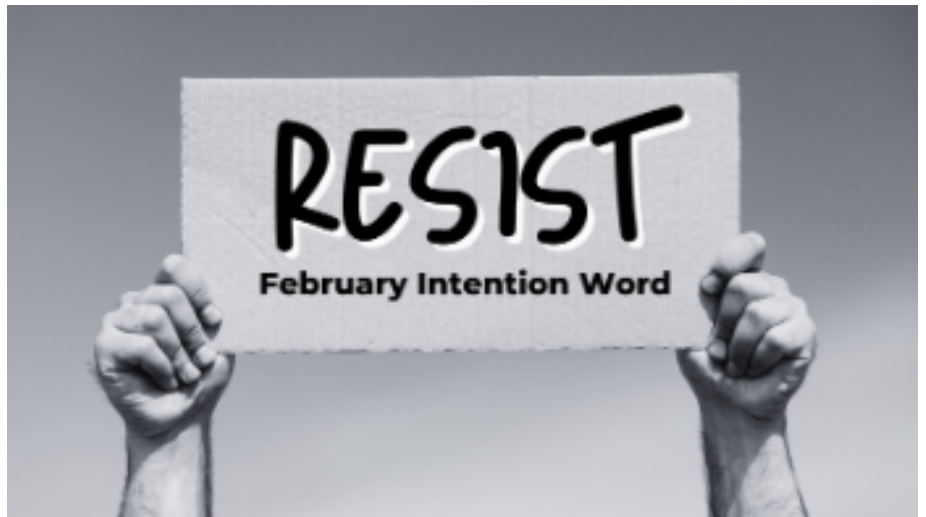
Many thanks to all of you who so generously gave for the Christmas Holiday Offering for UMCOR and Heifer International. \$1,037 was shared. May our gifts be a blessing for all who they impact.



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.

**FEBRUARY**

Intention Word



Our intention word for February is Resist. 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

**February 2:** Sue and Steve Sundheimer in honor of Alicia Sundheimer.

**February 9:** Grayson Troup 331 & Bennett & Jessie Pack 3333 in honor of Scouting Sunday.

**February 16:** Available

**February 23:** Susan Keener and Patrick Foley in honor of their children Rachel, Sam, Nick, and Jenna.

### PRAYERS AND CARE

Prayers for comfort and healing for Judi Ryan as she recovers from a recent heart procedure.

[judiione@gmail.com](mailto:judiione@gmail.com)

5952 Leisure South Dr. SE  
Kentwood, MI 49548



# United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith has had a 155 year history of being an autonomous organization of women in the United Methodist Church.

Its focus had been to advocate for social justice through community action concerning women, children and youth in our world. Through study, influencing governmental public policy and missional organizing UWF had left an incredible legacy of positive change in a conflicted world.

It is the largest organization of religious women in the United States. UWF also coordinates 90 National Mission Institutions that minister to our communities throughout the US.

Through leadership development, global resourcing, and scholarships for young women, UWF has stepped forward to empower the next generation.

UWF has led the UMC in racial Justice work with the creation and living into the Charter for Racial Justice since the 1950's.

Check out the Michigan Conference UWF brochure for more links on this amazing organization that you can choose to be a part of.

Join us at Trinity for these upcoming gatherings:

*"Come to the Table" free evening meal and social justice conversations in March*

*Lenten Breakfast in April*

*"Black Tie and Blue Jeans" event in May*

*Spiritalk Book Group second Tuesday of each month*

*National UWF zoom webinars, author talks and leadership training opportunities sent out through Trinity's office*

Consider choosing to be a part of UWF and continue this amazing legacy of justice.

Contact Nichea VerVeer Guy if you have questions [orangecelt00@aol.com](mailto:orangecelt00@aol.com)

**Save the Date**

- January - virtual Mission u
- July 17-19 - Mission u: Hope as Resurrection People @ Mt. Pleasant 1st UMC
- Oct 17 - Leadership Development Event
- Oct 18 - Conference Annual Celebration w/Sally Vonner @ Clio Bethany UMC
- May 15-17, 2026 - UWFaith Assembly in Indianapolis!

Register for 2025 Conference Annual Celebration

**Invite and Excite**

Set a personal goal to invite 2 new members in 2025! Invite women from nearby UMC's without active units. Invite women from other denominations. Invite others to join us in our mission!

Download Excite and Invite Guide

Watch for a new membership campaign coming in 2025!

**District and Local Dates**

Register to attend virtual Mission u in January or in-person in July 2025

**Michigan Conference UWFaith**

United Women in Faith connects and nurtures women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so that they can inspire, influence and impact local and global communities.

Download UWFaith Resources

Are you receiving response magazine? Subscribe now!

See the following link for the full United Women in Faith Brochure.

<https://bit.ly/UWFBrochure>





## Opportunities to Engage



Popcorn Party Time is back this month and we're excited to be celebrating Valentine's Day together! Who wants to pay for an expensive dinner out on one of the busiest restaurant nights of the year, when you can party with your Trinity friends instead?

Join us Friday, February 14 at 6:30pm for an all-ages movie night featuring *Elemental* (PG | 2023). We'll have special Valentine's snacks and activities for kids & grown-ups alike. This is one you do not want to miss!

Other upcoming Popcorn Party Time nights include:

March 14 – Game Night

April 25 – Game Night

Not sure what Popcorn Party Time is? It's our monthly movie or game nights! We're calling these special all-ages evenings Popcorn Party Time because that's what they'll be. A monthly party with lots and lots of popcorn! Not just for kids, not just for grown-ups – Popcorn Party Time is a chance for the whole Trinity family to get together for fellowship and fun.

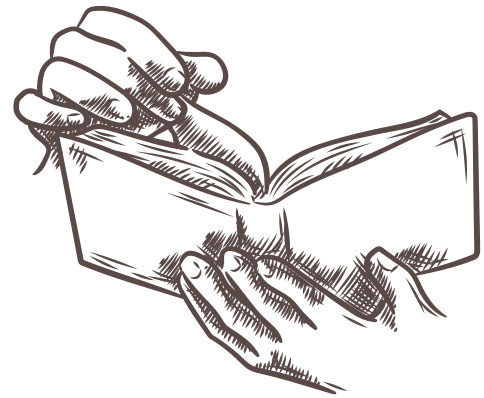
Questions? Contact Laura Johns at [l.johns@grtumc.org](mailto:l.johns@grtumc.org).

### Spiritalk Book Club

**Join us as we discuss & dissect a new book each month!**  
Meetings are the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm at Trinity.  
Contact Joy Murphy for more info at [joymurphy@grtumc.org](mailto:joymurphy@grtumc.org).

<b>January 14</b> <u><i>The Cloisters</i></u> Katy Hays	<b>February 11</b> <u><i>Vanishing Half</i></u> Brit Bennett	<b>March 11</b> <u><i>The Women</i></u> Kristen Hannah	<b>April 22</b> <u><i>Horse</i></u> Geraldine Brooks
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**Spring 2025**



### Winter Update


*Join a small group exploring the many writings of Father Richard Rohr together!*

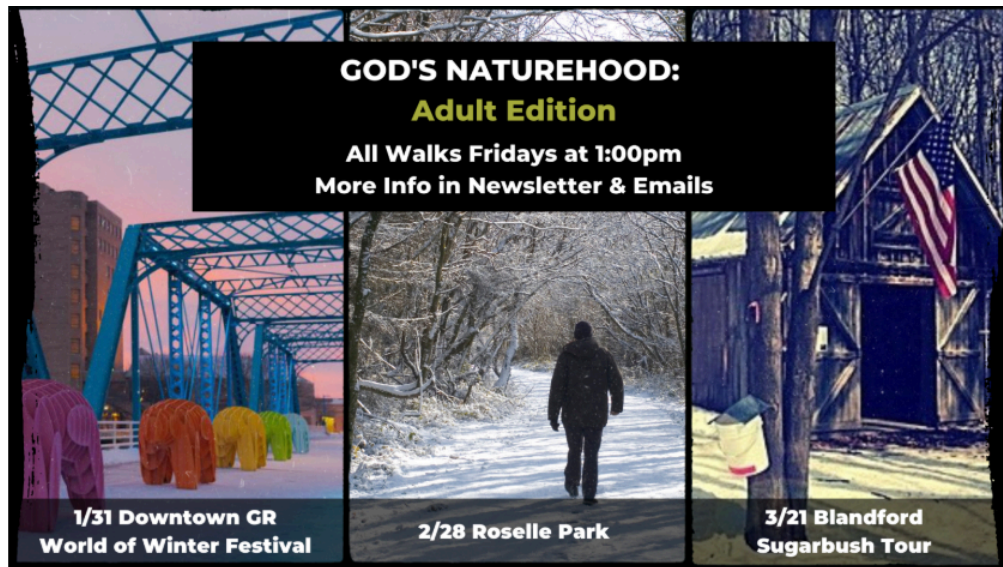
**Deeper, Better, Clearer (DBC)**  
Sundays from 5:00pm-6:30pm  
Fireside Room | Book: *The Divine Dance*

**Everything Belongs (EvB)**  
Thursdays from 6:15pm-7:30pm  
Library | Book: *Breathing Under Water*

### ForT:

Friends of Rohr at Trinity





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 of our February & March meet-ups are below:

**Friday, February 28 from 1:00pm-2:00pm**  
**Roselle Park at 1010 Grand River Dr NE, Ada, 49301**  
 Park in either lot and gather near the eastern side of the silos.

**Friday, March 21 from 1:00pm-2:00pm**  
**Blandford Nature Center at 1715 Hillburn Ave NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504.**

Park in the main lot and gather near the entrance to the Mary Jane Dockeray Visitor Center. Former Sugarbush Master Laura will guide our hike including an opportunity to pop into the Blandford Sugarhouse. This is not a Blandford provided tour. Trinity will cover the \$3 admission fee for anyone who does not have a Blandford membership.

Reservations are requested but not required. Contact Laura Johns at [ljohns@grtumc.org](mailto:ljohns@grtumc.org).



You're invited to join us this winter & spring for Pints with the Pastor. This gathering is an opportunity for all of us to get a drink, get some frites or poutine, and get to know each other better. Meet up on select Sundays between 6:00pm-7:30pm. No RSVP required.

Contact Pastor Mike at [m.desotell@grtumc.org](mailto:m.desotell@grtumc.org) with questions.



Join us Saturday, February 8, 2025 from 10:00am-1:30pm for a three session workshop. Expert speakers will help participants explore topics like physical health, brain health, vehicle safety, and more!

***This experience is designed for everyone - seniors, caregivers, friends & family.  
If you plan to get older or love someone who is, there will be something for you here.***

#### **SCHEDULE:**

9:45am | Registration Opens, Coffee & Snacks, Resource Tables  
10:00am | Greeting & Workshop Introduction  
10:15am-11:00am | Session #1 (Concurrent Sessions)  
11:00am-11:15am | Break  
11:15am-12:00pm | Session #2 (Concurrent Sessions)  
12:00pm-12:45pm | Lunch  
12:45pm-1:30pm | Session #3

#### **SESSIONS:**

Session topics include:  
CarFit: Helping Mature Drivers Find Their Safest Vehicle Options  
Community Resources for Physical Activity & Fall Prevention: Tips & Tricks to Stay on your Feet  
The Six Pillars of Brain Health  
Practical Help at Home  
Advanced Memorial Service Planning

#### **COST:**

There is no cost to participate in the workshop. Lunch & morning refreshments provided; \$10 suggested donation per person helps offset the cost of food. Donations can be made online ahead of time using our form or via cash/check the day of the event. That said, we never want price to prevent participation, so you're welcome to join us for refreshments & lunch regardless of donation.

#### **MORE INFO & RSVP:**

Get more information and RSVP online at: [tinyurl.com/AgingWorkshop2025](https://tinyurl.com/AgingWorkshop2025)

Share our Facebook event with your friends and help get the word out:  
<https://www.facebook.com/events/1809233363154994>

Contact Laura Johns, Director of Discipleship, at [L.johns@grtumc.org](mailto:L.johns@grtumc.org) with questions.





## Adult Faith Formation

Join us the next few months for a variety of engaging Sunday morning Adult Faith Formation offerings...

### **Sundays February 2 & 9 from 11:30am-12:30pm**

Guest speakers from outside organizations and Trinity friends will facilitate conversations that allow us to explore social justice & community issues - focusing on learning, being in dialogue together, and taking action! Full schedule is still being finalized, so watch your email for updates!



## **The Chosen: Season Four**

**Sundays, February 16 - April 13 from 11:30am-12:30pm**

**Adult Faith Formation Class | Discovery Room**

Join us as we continue watching this unique show about the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

### **Sundays February 16 - April 13 from 11:30am-12:30pm**

Join us as we continue watching this unique show about the life of Jesus of Nazareth. The Chosen takes us deeper into the gospel stories by retelling and expounding on the character & intentions of Jesus and those who knew Him.

Want to catch up on past seasons before we start? Watch for free online at <https://watch.thechosen.tv/> or borrow the DVDs from Laura.

Questions about what's upcoming? Contact Laura Johns at [ljohns@grtumc.org](mailto:ljohns@grtumc.org) or check out our updated program flyers online at: <https://tinyurl.com/TUMC-WinterFlyers2025>.



Join your Trinity family in the Fellowship Hall on Fat Tuesday, March 4th at 6:00pm for hot jazz, hot food, and amazing company! Bring the whole family and don't forget your party hat and dancing shoes!

There is a suggested donation of \$20 per adult for this event. Kids 12 & under are FREE! That said, we never want price to prevent participation, so you're welcome to join us regardless of donation or to choose the pay-what-you-can option.

A gluten-free and seafood-free gumbo option will be available.

RSVP and donate online using the form link below or bring cash/check the night of the party! RVSPs can also be communicated to the Trinity office at [office@grtumc.org](mailto:office@grtumc.org) or 616-456-7168.

<https://tinyurl.com/TUMCJazz-Eats2025>





Maybe you have been attending Trinity Family Camp for 40 years? Maybe you've just heard the stories? Either way, this is your year to join us! Come experience the magic of the West Michigan lakeshore with your Trinity family this Memorial Day Weekend.

**Save the Date:**

Friday, May 23 to Monday, May 26, 2025

Lake Michigan Camp & Retreat Center at 5807 Ridge Rd, Pentwater, MI 49449

**Family Camp 101:**

Family camp is an inter-generational overnight opportunity for Trinity family & friends. Each family unit has their own lodging but we gather together for shared meals, activities, fellowship, worship, and more!

The Lake Michigan Camp & Retreat Center is located 90 minutes northwest of Trinity near Pentwater. Situated where the woods meet the sand, the camp features a half mile of pristine Lake Michigan waterfront. Enjoy hiking, biking, mini golfing, volleyball, disc golf, campfires, and so much more! We will provide a full schedule of opportunities available through the camp and through Trinity before you arrive for your stay.

**Registration & Questions:**

Registration form with all the details is coming to your email box soon! Questions in the meantime? Contact Laura Johns, Director of Discipleship, at [ljohns@grtumc.org](mailto:ljohns@grtumc.org).



## Important Dates

With the end of Faith at the Movies, we have a few short weeks before we start Lent. Make sure these key dates are on your calendars:

### **Tuesday, March 4 | Fat Tuesday: Jazz & Eats**

A Mardi Gras celebration for all ages with hot jazz, hot food, and amazing company!

### **Wednesday, March 5 | Ash Wednesday Worship Service**

Join us as we enter into the special journey of Lent with imposition of the ashes, prayers, and readings.

### **TBD – From Hosanna to Hallelujah**

The Holy Week event you do not want to miss! We will follow Jesus through his last week – reading scripture & stories, reflecting through crafts and activities, celebrating communion, walking the labyrinth, and much more! As we work on finalizing plans for year three of this exciting intergenerational event, we're collecting feedback from the congregation on the dates & structure.



**Please take our three minute survey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QFFDK5W>**

### **Thursday, April 17 | Maundy Thursday Worship Service**

Join us for our Maundy Thursday service commemorating Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples, featuring hand washing to remember the servant heart of Christ and Holy Communion to join the saints through the ages in that sacred meal.

### **Friday, April 18 | Good Friday Worship Service at St. Paul's UMC**

Join us at St. Paul's (3334 Breton Rd SE, Grand Rapids) as we reflect on Christ's crucifixion and death, through scripture readings, hymns, and the reproaches of Christ.

### **Saturday, April 19 | United Women in Faith Lenten Breakfast**

A traditional celebration brings good food, warm fellowship, and a delightful message of hope to all guests.

### **Sunday, April 20 | Easter Sunday Worship Service**

Join us Easter Sunday as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ and our own hope of resurrection. Featuring vibrant music, an uplifting message, and a community of love. A special combined Easter class will be offered for children ages Pre-K to 5th grade during worship (after Children's Moment). We will not have after worship Faith Formation offerings this week.

**DON'T FORGET!**

## Signup Links

We know there's a lot going on at Trinity and sometimes it gets tricky to keep all the things straight. So here's a list of important registration and sign-up links for the next few months. Not sure what something is? Check the rest of the newsletter or contact your Trinity Staff. We're happy to answer questions!

### **Acolyte Sign Up (January-May)**

Is your child interested in helping to light the candles at Trinity during worship on Sunday mornings? Here's your chance to sign them up!

[tinyurl.com/TUMC-AcolyteSpring2025](https://tinyurl.com/TUMC-AcolyteSpring2025)

### **TrinityKids Fellowship Leaders (January-May)**

Volunteering with TrinityKids is a great opportunity to build relationships with other adults while facilitating fun activities for our PreK to 5th grade kids. No long term commitments; pick your Sundays!

[tinyurl.com/TrinityKidsSpring2025](https://tinyurl.com/TrinityKidsSpring2025)

### **Second Adults in Youth Group (January-May)**

Volunteering as a second adult in Youth Group is a great opportunity to support our 6th-12th grade friends.

Youth Director Annie leads each week, but she needs a second grown-up to keep us Protection Policy compliant! No long term commitments; pick your Sundays!

<https://tinyurl.com/TUMCSpring2025>

### **Weekly TNT Dinner Reservations (January-May)**

Sign up for Thursday night meals each week using this online form. Can be submitted multiple times!

[tinyurl.com/TNTDinnersSpring2025](https://tinyurl.com/TNTDinnersSpring2025)

### **Aging Workshop (Feb 8)**

Get more info and RSVP for our Aging Worship on February 8th using this website.

[tinyurl.com/AgingWorkshop2025](https://tinyurl.com/AgingWorkshop2025)

### **Fat Tuesday: Jazz & Eats (March 4)**

RSVP for our March 4th Mardi Gras celebration for all ages using this online form.

<https://tinyurl.com/TUMCJazz-Eats2025>





# Community Ministries

## *What is the Altar Fund and why does it matter...*



We often get questions asking about what all the Community Ministries Program does and why many people know about our partnership with Congress Elementary School and our Wednesday night programs. Some of you may even know about our Faith on the Fly Program, but did you know that the Community Ministries Program oversees the Benevolence program here at Trinity United Methodist Church. The Altar Fund is a specific fund that people can donate to that allows money to be given out to help those less fortunate in our community and help address emergency needs. While there are wide ranging requests, we do our best to make the maximum impact we can while practicing a sustainable model to help multiple people throughout the year.

Unfortunately, we cannot help with all requests, especially larger housing needs and multi-month back payment of rent. These requests usually total thousands of dollars. In these cases we spend time giving the person requesting funds a few community resources that are better suited to handle those types of requests. The community members are very thankful that we have spent some time helping, pointing them in a promising direction.

While we don't always publicize when we help someone out and how, we will give a few examples in this article to give you an idea of a few ways we have helped just since the new year started. These are just a few of the many ways we give back to our community throughout the year:

- *We helped a young man in need of money for food and medicine as he is going through cancer treatments.*
- *We put up a woman who was evicted in a hotel for two nights so that she could get a shower and have a safe, warm place to reach out to other organizations to help her find stable temporary housing.*
- *We put up a family in a hotel room for two nights who were trying to avoid sleeping in their car as they were trying to find temporary housing.*
- *We bought a YETI thermos and filled it with coffee for an older gentleman who always watches out for the community children as a crossing guard for Congress Elementary School even on the coldest of days and always he is waving good morning to cars passing by. We simply dropped it off and said "Thank You" from Trinity UMC for watching out for our community kids every day. The look on his face was priceless...a true random act of kindness!*
- *We received a call from our friends at the Pride Center and they reached out as they were raising money to help someone who is transgender that needed to get out of the state immediately because someone was trying to kill them. The Pride Center had raised most of the money needed but still needed \$200 to get them train tickets and needed additional money for when they got to their destination for food, housing etc. We worked with the Executive Director to get them a payment so that they could get the tickets immediately to ensure the person's safety.*
- *We received a note from the Pride Center Emergency Food Pantry that they were running low of food and asked if we could help. We dropped off three huge boxes filled with a variety of microwavable food, canned meats, snacks, and lots of other food that is useful for homeless youth and adults looking for their next meal.*

This is a glimpse at another level of service that Trinity UMC does for our community through our Benevolence program and by generous giving to the Altar Fund. If you have any additional questions please contact Matt Witkowski, Community Ministries Program Director, at [m.witkowski@grtumc.org](mailto:m.witkowski@grtumc.org). Thank you Trinity for your giving hearts!

### **The Holidays Were a Hit!**

The holidays always seem to pass like a blur when you're in the middle of it, but after the dust clears you get the opportunity to truly look back and appreciate all the wonderful blessings that come during the busiest time of the year. We saw beautiful singing, amazing music, we saw friends and families come together, we saw the generosity of the congregation by purchasing gifts from the CM Christmas Tree, we saw the smiling faces as those same kids opened those gifts just a few days later, we saw JOY and LOVE and it filled our hearts. THANK YOU for your part in making those moments happen for our community!

#### **2024 CM Program Annual Christmas Party**

What a great time we had with our Community Ministries Program families as we shared a meal, shared our thanks and appreciation for them being in our program and watched them all open Christmas gifts so generously donated from our Trinity Community! This is always such a great time to connect with families and provide a wonderful holiday opportunity for all involved! Check out our Community Ministries Program Facebook page for more pictures and videos!



#### **Arts in Motion Studios Holiday Show**

Every year Arts in Motion Studios has their annual holiday show in our Fellowship Hall and it is one of the highlights of my year! The singing, the dancing, the holiday stories brought to life on the stage is truly a heartwarming experience. Partnering with organizations like Arts in Motion Studios allows us to bring these types of shows right here in the community where they are located. We have many different ways that we partner with Arts in Motion and they are great neighbors and friends.



#### **Congress Elementary School Winter Concert**

One year, a few years ago, we received a call from then Principal Jennifer Williams wondering if Congress Elementary School could have their concert at Trinity since their other venue was closed down right before a show. We switched our schedules and made it happen and for multiple years now we have been the venue for their Winter and Spring Concerts. The families love having it here and we provide a hospitality gathering after the show in Fellowship Hall where our community comes together to laugh, talk and share a cookie or two with friends. We love having Congress here and it is a great holiday tradition for us too!

