



Trinity In Touch

June/July 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
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Behind the Worship: Rituals and Relevance

Happy Mid-Year!

Back at the founding of the United States, Thomas Jefferson suggested that the Constitution should be rewritten every 20 years or so.

He wasn't worried about any particular part of the document. No, he was concerned that any system, no matter how good or well intentioned, can become a relic if we don't revisit it. If we don't ask the hard questions, the future ends up being held hostage by the past.

Now, Jefferson didn't get his way, obviously. But the idea sticks with me, especially in July, when flags are flying and fireworks are booming and we're all a little more aware of the stories that built our country.

I can't help but think the same idea applies to the church.

Not just our church. The Church. Somewhere along the way, we got stuck. We've been tinkering with the same blueprint for decades, sometimes centuries, and now we're shocked when it doesn't quite work for the world we're living in.

Rev. Dr. Jasmine Smothers spoke at our recent Michigan Annual Conference. She pointed out our tendency to let the past block the future. She talked about her approach to church that she calls "the blank slate", a chance to start fresh. Not by throwing everything out, but by asking better questions. Like:

What if we designed a church for our neighborhoods now?

What would it look like?

What would it smell like? (Hopefully not musty hymnals.)

What would you not bring back?

What would be so vital, so Jesus-shaped, you couldn't leave it out?

Rev. Smothers reminded us that people are walking past our buildings every day assuming they're closed, both literally and spiritually. And if we want to be more than just a relic, more than just a Sunday-only crowd that loves the way things used to be, we've got to pick up the pencil.



We've got to ask who's missing.
We've got to remember our why.
We've got to be brave enough to try new things, knowing some of them will flop.
We've got to lean into the Spirit, not nostalgia.

This summer is a good time to ask those questions. We're halfway through the year. The pace is a little slower. And if Jefferson was right, maybe the middle of the calendar is a good place to re-evaluate what we've been building.

So here's your mid-year invitation:

Grab a pencil. Ask the questions. Dream big. Let's sketch the kind of church that our community needs and more accurately reflects the people we are becoming.

Grace and peace,

Mike
Pastor Mike

Ministry Spotlight



Many thanks for the many hands who came to help clean up the Trinity grounds this spring! As you can see, job WELL DONE!



Ministry Spotlight Cont.

On Saturday, May 3rd, members of the Trinity family came together to replace the light bulbs in the sanctuary chandeliers. There were many bulbs that were burned out and needed to be replaced. During this process, each chandelier is lowered to ground level from the attic using boat wenchers. They are dusted off, the globes cleaned, light bulbs replaced and then cranked back up and secured in place.

It was the first time assisting with this task for most of the volunteers. Thank you friends for helping out!



Missions

Thank you to Cynthia Swedish, Steve Murray, Clarice McKenzie, Ellie Bergman, Mary Jo Burpee, and Kip Smalligan who helped with final preparation of a home recently renovated by Inner City Christian Federation (ICCF) Community Homes for a new resident to move in. ICCF does amazing work to grow and maintain the supply of affordable homes in Grand Rapids & Kent County. We'll have more opportunities to support ICCF in the fall.



Trinity to Celebrate UMCOR Sunday on Sunday July 27

When natural and man-made disasters happen, the Body of Christ has the opportunity and the responsibility to reach out with love and hope. For over 75 years United Methodists have done that through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), our humanitarian and development arm. Both at home and abroad, UMCOR is a way of standing with those suffering, providing a compassionate response and a connected way forward.

UMCOR Sunday is a pro-active day of action to equip ourselves to meet those needs. On that Sunday, United Methodists give to fulfill the financial needs of UMCOR administration so that 100% of all other disaster response giving goes toward the response. These gifts ensure UMCOR can respond swiftly to disasters around the world and act as a source of hope and healing for those left most vulnerable. Please give generously as you are able. You may give online via Trinity Gives or the church offering. Thank YOU!

Watch for other learning opportunities about UMCOR throughout July.



Meet Shanquel Askew, US-2 Global Mission Fellow

Some of you may have met Shanquel Askew -- she has assisted with some of Trinity's events, joined us in worship, and attended Family Camp.

Shanquel is a US-2 Global Mission Fellow with the General Board of Global Ministries, engaged in a two-year term of service. The Fellows program takes young adults out of their home environments and places them in new contexts for mission experience and service. It has a strong emphasis on faith and justice.

For the past two years, Shanquel has been serving UM Community House and local churches. She is ending her term at the end of June.

If you would like to support Shanquel and thank her for her service we will take a free will offering for her missionary Advance #3022760 or you can give online at [Trinity Gives](#) (click the Funds field).

Learn more [about Shanquel](#) and the [Global Mission Fellowship](#).

News

[Tent Schools International](#) is a nonprofit organization that provides education to children impacted by displacement, offering hope and opportunity through learning. We're excited to welcome them as tenants in the former music director's office near the nursery. The organization is led by Trinity's very own Emily Klooster—if you see any of their friendly faces around the building, be sure to say hello!

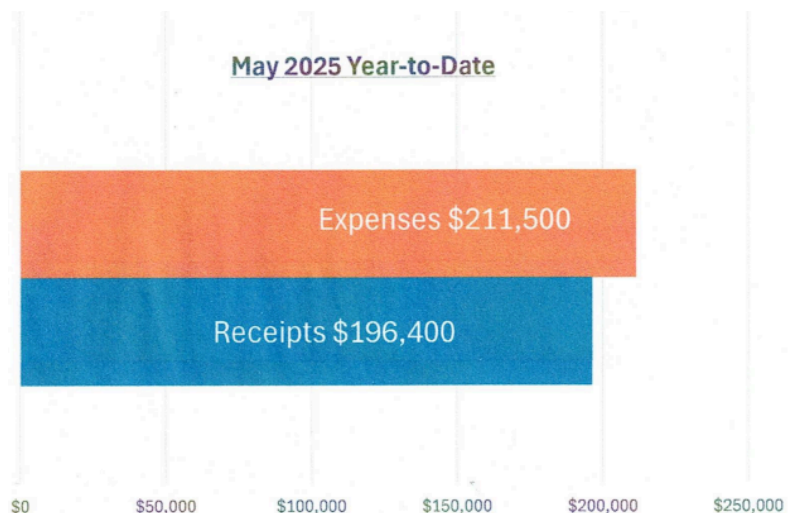


Top: Emily Klooster, executive director / Scott VanderKooy, president
Middle: Angelica Zahrt, bookkeeper / Kathy Fauble, donor services
Bottom Center: Rawan Haddad, development director

Welcome

Finances

Dear Trinity Members and Friends:
Thank you for your faithful support. Your giving, prayer, and participation are vital resources that sustain Trinity's ministry of justice, hope and love to our neighborhood and beyond. We ask for your support so we can keep up with rising expenses. Monthly financial reports are available in the church office and you may contact our treasurer, Joy Murphy, for a copy or if you have questions.
Submitted by: Pros Tumonong, Chair-Finance Committee





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.



Our intention word for June is Stretch and July is Befriend. 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

July 6 - Linda Bond in memory of Kelly Lynn Bond.

July 13 - Laura Slade in memory of Joan Patterson.

July 20 - Available

July 27 - Available

If interested in either of the open July dates, please reach out to Dani at office@grtumc.org.

PRAYERS AND CARE

Prayers of comfort and healing for Donna Phillips as she is dealing with severe back pain.

Donna.Phillips034@gmail.com

A big thank you from Judy Conner for the prayers she received.

A message from Katie Orent - "Dear Trinity friends - thank you for all the meals, emails, cards, visits, and phone calls you blessed me with following my knee replacement surgery. My recovery is progressing well because of your love, support, and prayers."



Opportunities to Engage



GOD'S NATUREHOOD: Sunday Kids Edition

Join us in the Naturehood this summer!
Select Sundays | 10:15am-11:15am
June 15 & 22, July 13 & 20, August 17 & 24



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.

Sunday Kids Edition will be offered June 15 & 22, July 13 & 20, 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 Playgrounds 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.



Acolyte Updates

New Acolyte Training

Sunday, August 17 at 11:30am in Sanctuary

Sign Up for Summer & Fall 2025

SignUpGenius Now Available at:
<https://tinyurl.com/TUMC-AcolyteFall2025>



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

February 3, 2026

[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

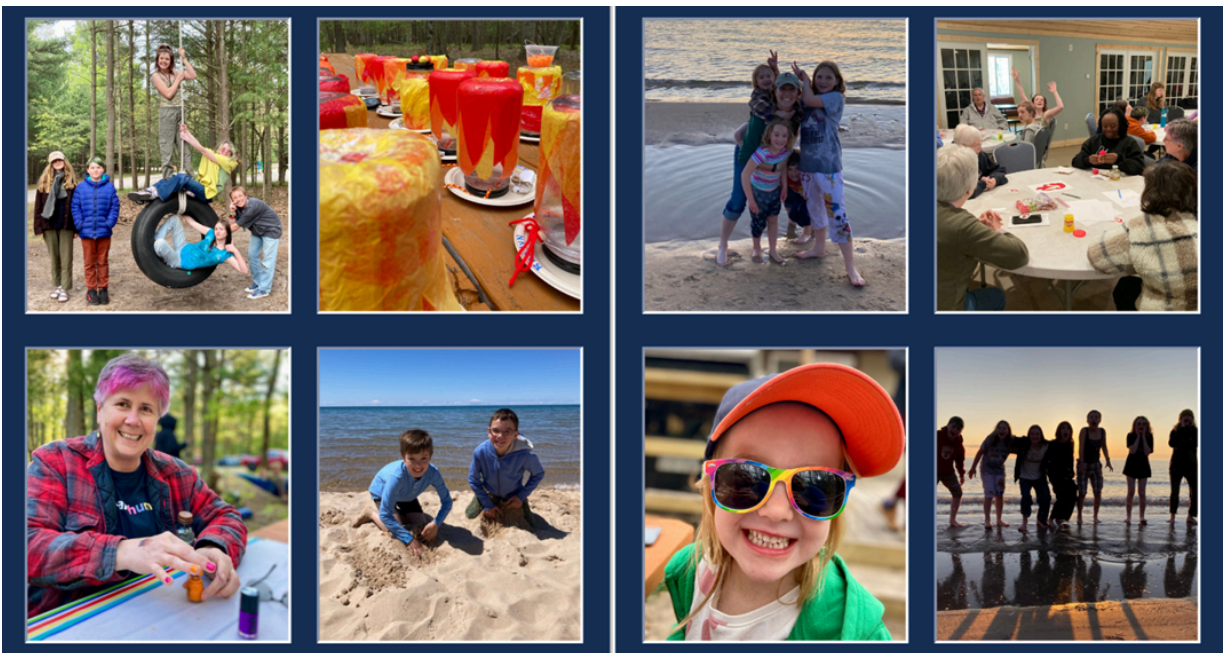
February 3, 2026 | The Story of More by Hope Jahren

May 5, 2026 | Queer & Christian by Brandan Robertson

Questions about Sacred Justice Book Club?

Contact the Library Team: Laura Johns, Hannah Marshall & Dani Patrick

Family Camp Recap



The Trinity Family showed up in a big way for Family Camp 2025! Let's run the numbers...

60 plus: the number of overnight campers.

5: the maximum number of kids/youth observed on a single tire swing at one time.

40 plus: the group for the Finding the Sunset Hike; at least 10 of which ended up in the Lake.

19: the number of Pentecost fire lanterns made.

105: the number of hot dogs & brats eaten Saturday night; total number of marshmallows - unknown.

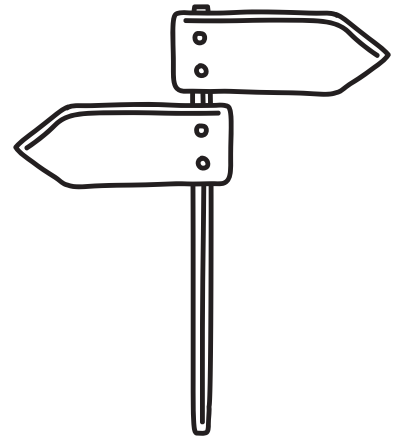
70 plus: the number in worship at camp on Sunday morning.

Countless: the memories made!!

Our Pentecost & fire themed weekend was a wonderful success! And not just by the numbers... new friends were made, relationships were deepened, and we all had a chance to rest our weary souls, feel the spirit move, and let God reignite the fire in our hearts.

Save the dates for Family Camp 2026 (May 22nd - Monday, May 25th) and remember that camp is for everyone! When we say family, we mean the Trinity family. All ages, all family types, all people! Come alone, with a partner, with a friend, or with your kiddos & youth. You are welcome here. Come camping with us!





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, July 18 from 1:00pm-2:00pm

Aman Park at 0 -1859 Lake Michigan Dr, Grand Rapids, MI 49534.

There is a drive on the right (north) side of Lake Michigan Drive after you pass through Standale, but before you get to GVSU or Allendale. Once you turn onto the Aman Park / Indian Trails Camp drive, you'll continue a little way until you get to several small gravel lots on the left side and a larger lot on the right. Park in either and then meet at the north end of the drive near the large gate.

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.



Bring your lawn chair and your furry friend for live music and a blessing of the pets on the Trinity lawn. Cold beverages will be provided. Pack your own snacks or a picnic dinner. In case of rain, the party will move into the Fellowship Hall.





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 l.johns@grtumc.org 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 hiatus. 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.

Contemplative Walk - Wednesday, June 25 at 7:00pm

Join us for a Contemplative Walk at the St. Francis Sculpture Garden at Dominican Sisters Marywood Campus. We'll gather at 7:00pm near the gazebo, have time to explore on our own, and then meet up for a short time of sharing over cold beverages (provided). We'll walk rain or shine. The Sculpture Garden is located at 2023 Fulton St E, 49503. Contact Laura Johns with questions at L.johns@grtumc.org.

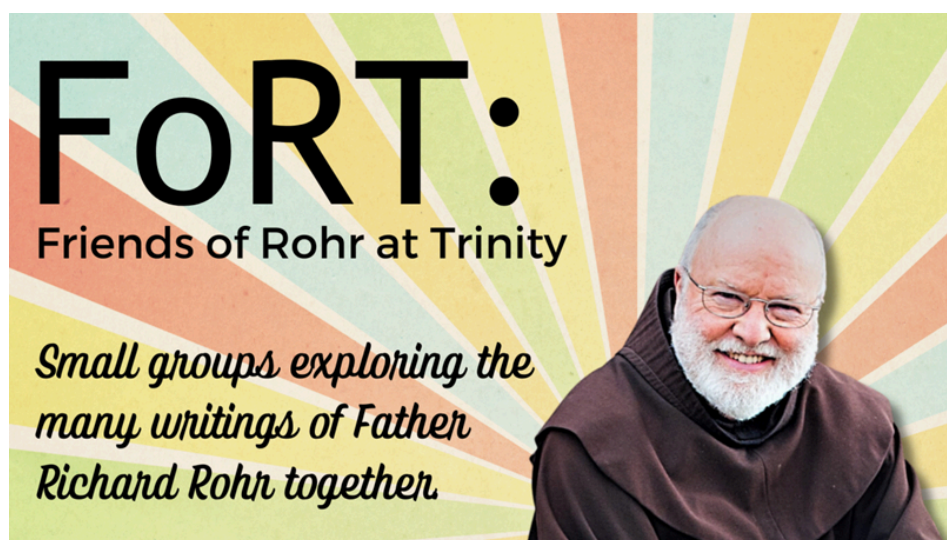
Annual Ice Cream Social -

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 (L.johns@grtumc.org) or Merrita Tumonong (tumonongmsw@gmail.com). They can share your information with the rest of the FoRT leadership team or applicable event organizers.

The Youth Connection Corner

YOUTH EVENTS FOR THE MONTH OF



Hello Friends!

It's summer! Time for sunshine, rest, and some great adventures together! I had such an amazing program year with the youth—and we're not slowing down. While Youth Group takes a break, we've got some exciting events coming up to stay connected!



Mark your Calendars

Youth Lemonade Stand TAKEOVER

Sundays: July 13 & August 3

The youth will be taking over the lemonade stand! We'll prep and serve lemonade for our Trinity family, and after cleanup, the youth will enjoy a special treat. More details to come by email!



Summer Adventure: Mall & Movie Day

Sunday, July 20 | 1:30–5:00 PM

Meet us at Woodland Mall's food court for a fun scavenger hunt through the mall, followed by a movie together. Times may shift slightly depending on showtimes—keep an eye on your inbox for updates and paperwork.

End-of-Semester Survey

Grown-ups, be on the lookout for a quick survey from me. Your feedback will help shape next year's programming—what worked, what didn't, and what we can dream up for 2025/2026!

As we continue into summer, please keep our youth and their families in your prayers—that they find rest, fun, adventure, and continue to grow in faith and joy wherever this season leads them.

With gratitude,
Annie Slabaugh
Youth Director – a.slabaugh@grtumc.org

Community Ministries

2025 “Newbie” Fly Fishing Class Outing

We just had our end of the program guided fly fishing outing on the Muskegon River and we had an amazing time. This group started meeting in January and met monthly, learning different aspects about the basics of fly fishing. They learned about knots, bugs, flies, casting and fighting fish through these meetings and went to a local lake to practice these skills before going on this last guided trip that helps bring their learning to life.

Congrats 2025 “Newbie” Fly Fishers!

Coming Soon: Please check out our Faith on the Fly and/or Community Ministries Program Facebook pages for a video with pictures from this great adventure! Everyone did an amazing job and most of all we enjoyed the adventure of learning together which is what Faith on the Fly is all about!



2025 “Fly Kids” Fly Fishing Classes

During the summer months our programmatic attention turns to Faith on the Fly opportunities to connect with youth and adults both from in the church and in the community. This summer we are working with eight youth and their families to help introduce them to the basics of fly fishing and put those new skills to work while fishing on a local lake. We are very excited to see youth and families connected to outdoor pursuits that help offer youth balance to spending time on screens in the summer. Great job!

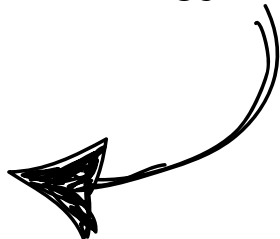
Community Ministries

Upcoming Opportunities...



CM Program Volunteer (2025-26)

What a great 2024-25 program year with the students and families in our program! We had an awesome year building relationships, doing fun projects, eating meals together, and simply spending time together. Our volunteers are amazing and we are so thankful to those who give of their time to help invest in the next generation, the school, and the families in our community. Interested in learning more about volunteering with our program for the 2025-26 program year and joining our team of energetic, dedicated, and caring individuals? Reach out today to Matt Witkowski (Director of the Community Ministries Program) at m.witkowski@grtunc.org or call him at (616) 550-2418.



Easttown Street Fair Volunteer

We are looking for individuals to represent Trinity UMC in our community and who are excited to share about what happens here at Trinity! Not sure about all that is happening at Trinity? We will give you some updates and have very clear talking points that can help as you work our booth at the fair. We are looking for a small group of people who are excited to find ways to connect the church to the community and be visible to our neighbors as a community partner. Does this sound like you? Do want to learn more? Reach out today to Matt Witkowski (Director of the Community Ministries Program) at m.witkowski@grtunc.org or call him at (616) 550-2418.



SAVE THE DATE

"A Night To Remember" Community Ministries Program Dinner: Friday, November 7th from 6:15pm-8:00pm

This evening is something you need to attend at least once and we know that you will be back each year! Stories from the students, parents, and community partners about what the Community Ministries Program and Trinity UMC has meant to them are shared during this inspiring evening. We celebrate these stories and those who tell them, as for some, getting in front of a crowd is overcoming an obstacle and it is ministry happening in the moment. We also have amazing youth performers from the GR String camp (hosted here at Trinity), and performers from StageGR (formally housed here at Trinity), and a wonderful meal. We encourage participants to bring a friend so that more people can learn about the fantastic ministry happening here at Trinity UMC. Questions? Reach out today to Matt Witkowski (Director of the Community Ministries Program) at m.witkowski@grtunc.org or call him at (616) 550-2418.

