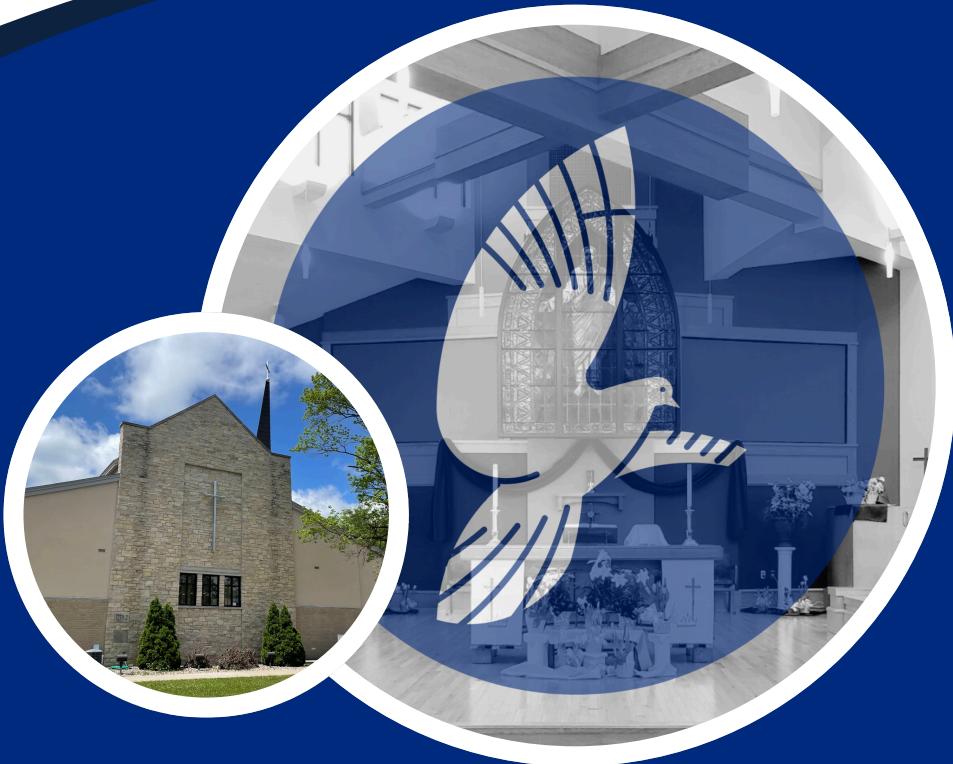




TRINITY
LUTHERAN CHURCH

ANNUAL REPORT

2025



tlcwaupaca.org

A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDING BISHOP YEHIEL CURRY

Dear friends in Christ,

As Lutherans, we are set free to love our neighbors and seek justice. In Colossians 2, we read: "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving" (6-7).

I am abounding in thankfulness for you, church. You are an integral part of this mission as we envision a world experiencing the difference God's grace and love in Christ make for all people and creation. The ministries of congregations including yours, our synods and the ELCA churchwide organization are all working together today and every day so more people may know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love. From providing food to people experiencing hunger, to helping train the next generation of leaders that will lead this church, your support is at work here at home and around the world.

Your generosity to each of the three expressions of the church — your congregation, your synod and the churchwide organization — has made it possible for us to do this work

together. Your financial resources, your time volunteering and accompanying others, and your voices are so valued.

As we look ahead to the coming year, I encourage you to continue to walk in Christ, remembering you are rooted and established in faith, and free to love and serve your neighbors. Thank you, church, for the ways you connect with and support our siblings across the ELCA and in our communities.

In Christ,



The Rev. Yehiel Curry
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America

“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”

—Colossians 2:6-7



ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

February 15, 2026 ■ 10:15 a.m.
In-person and Zoom (tiny.cc/TLCMeeting)

■ AGENDA

- Opening devotions
- Approval of agenda
- Approval of 2025 annual meeting minutes
- Reports
- Budget review and approval
- Call Committee update
- New business
 - Mortgage refinancing and capital projects
 - Roof repairs and HVAC system upgrade
 - Informational
 - Tiny Treasures entrance and Sanctuary A/V needs
- Election
- Recognition of service
- Closing prayer
- Adjournment

Meeting Called to Order: President Heidi Fischer at 10:17 a.m.

Opening Devotions: Pastor Andy Behrendt

Attendees: In-person and online attendance; quorum requirements were met.

Approval of Agenda: Motion by Alan Kjelland; 2nd by Barry Osicka; motion carried.

Approval of 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes: Motion by Char Kuenzi; 2nd by Steve Johnson; motion carried.

Reports:

- Administrator Cassie Pasholk reviewed online giving through Breeze.
- Heidi Fischer discussed Church Council evaluations.
- New staff hires: Administrator Cassie Pasholk; Ministry Coordinator Sue Harrington; Property & Grounds Supervisor Dave Wood. New hires have helped move Trinity forward.
- Still in the call process. Pastor Mark and Pastor Chuck have helped provide pastoral care and will continue in 2025.
- Special recognition of Jean Schwirtz for her 40 years of coordinating Sunday School.

Budget Review and Approval:

- Trinity Lutheran Church's budget presented by Treasurer Pam Gusmer. Cassie Pasholk and the Finance Committee have done a lot of work to get the finances back in order. 2024 ended the year in the positive. Motion to approve 2025 budget made by Nicole Bodenheimer; 2nd by Alan Kjelland; motion carried.

Old Business:

- None

New Business:

- None

Elections:

- Motion made by Don Holtebeck to have a unanimous vote for all names presented, 2nd by Dan Gauerke; motion carried.

Recognition of Service:

- Heidi recognized outgoing Council members Cheryl Sletten, Kerry Lueders, and Nick Barden.

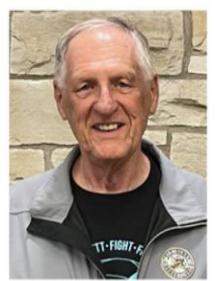
Closing Prayer: Heidi Fischer.

Meeting Adjourned: President Heidi Fischer at 10:51 a.m.

■ CHURCH COUNCIL



Bob Olson
2025 PRESIDENT
Term: 2023-25



Joe Jones
2025 VICE PRESIDENT
Term: 2024-26



Heidi Fischer
2025 SECRETARY
Term: 2024-26



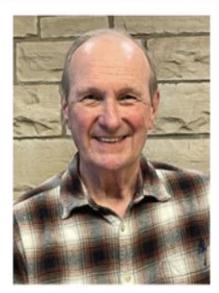
Pam Gusmer
2023-25 TREASURER



Betsy Sachs
Term: 2023-25



Nate Ziemer
Term: 2024-26



Alan Kjelland
Term: 2025-27



Dennise Ross
Term: 2025-27



Ron Wight
Term: 2025-27



Dean Sondrol
Term: 2025



Aubrey Barbeau
YOUTH REP
2025



Rev. Andy Behrendt
LEAD PASTOR

COMMITTEES

Audit Committee

- Tim Clough
- Tina Grenlie
- Nancy Johnson
- Cassie Pasholk (Staff)

Call Committee

- Steve Johnson (Chair)
- Jake Foss
- John Lueders
- Barb Nellis
- Melanie Peterson
- *Maddy Theis
- Pam Gusmer (Alternate)

Endowment Fund Committee

- Kate Gile (Chair)
- Jess Bank
- Erica Danielson
- Beth Mittlesteadt
- Cassie Pasholk (Staff)

Finance Committee

- Pam Gusmer (Treasurer, Chair)
- Maggie Jones
- Mark Rosicky
- Adam Ross
- Jim Stoltenberg
- Pastor Andy Behrendt (Staff)
- Cassie Pasholk (Staff)

Governance Committee

- Steve Johnson (Chair)
- Heidi Fischer
- Tim Gauerke
- Rick Groth
- Hugh Kress
- Diane Opperman
- Pastor Andy Behrendt (Staff)

Mutual Ministry Committee

- Nancy Cummings (Chair)
- Chuck Reynolds
- *Jim Peterson
- Melanie Peterson
- Gail Springsteen
- Bill Storck
- Rita Danielson

Nominating Committee

- Bruce Anderson (Chair)
- Jim Barbeau
- Tim Gauerke
- Jean Schwirtz
- Cheryl Sletten

Personnel Committee

- Laura Colbert (Chair)
- *Penney Frank
- Katy Johnson
- Barry Osicka
- Pastor Andy Behrendt (Staff)
- Cassie Pasholk (Staff)

MINISTRY TEAMS

BeFriends

- Pete Gasper
- Cathy Gauerke
- Tim Gauerke
- Anita Olson
- Diane Opperman
- Ann Rasmussen
- Jeff Siemers
- Sue Harrington (Staff)
- Pastor Mark Ziemer (Staff)

Health Team

- Karen Kress
- Anita Olson
- Alli Reichert
- Chuck Reynolds
- Betsy Sachs
- Paul Sletten

Invite-Welcome-Connect Team

- Sue Heideman
- Sue Nielsen
- Cheryl Sletten
- Sue Harrington (Staff)
- Pastor Mark Ziemer (Staff)

Property & Grounds Team

- Neil Wenberg (Chair)
- Bruce Anderson
- Rich Harris
- Jacki Johnson
- Doug Pohl
- Linda Stoltenberg
- Dan Tischendorf
- Dave Wood (Staff)
- Cassie Pasholk (Staff)

Stewardship Team

- DeAnna Hannigen (Chair)
- Jake Foss (Secretary)
- Shannon Anderson
- Rick Groth
- Ann Rasmussen
- Gail Springsteen
- Pastor Andy Behrendt (Staff)
- Sue Harrington (Staff)
- Cassie Pasholk (Staff)

Worship & Music Team

- Nancy Cummings (Altar Guild)
- Eric Hendrickson
- Jacki Johnson (Divine Designs)
- Charlene Kuenzi (Secretary)
- Pam Lysne (Choir Director)
- Shana Rogney (Choir Director)
- *Nancy Ross
- *Nancy Schanke
- Pastor Andy Behrendt (Staff)
- Wanda Eikenbary (Staff, Chair)

■ VOTING MEMBERS & DELEGATES IN 2025

East Central Synod of Wisconsin Assembly Voting Members

- Jake Foss
- Charlene Kuenzi
- Fred Kuenzi

(Pastor Andy Behrendt, Hugh Kress, Karen Kress, and Nancy Schanke also attended.)

Tomorrow River Conference Annual Meeting Voting Members

- Charlene Kuenzi
- Becky Liegl
- Bob Olson
- Betsy Sachs
- Laurie Tellock

(Pastor Andy Behrendt and Sue Harrington also attended.)

Bethany Annual Meeting Delegates

- Hugh Kress
- Karen Kress

Crossways Camping Ministries Annual Meeting Delegates

- Shannon Anderson
- Gene Nollenberg

■ CHURCH STAFF IN 2025



Rev. Andy Behrendt
LEAD PASTOR



Rev. Dr. Chuck Tews
**INTERIM ASSOCIATE
PASTOR**



Rev. Mark Ziemer
**INTERIM ASSOCIATE
PASTOR**



Wanda Eikenbary
**DIRECTOR OF
MUSIC MINISTRIES**



Jean Schwirtz
**SUNDAY SCHOOL
COORDINATOR**



Delaney Barbeau
YOUTH COORDINATOR



Sue Harrington
**SYNOD AUTHORIZED
MINISTER & MINISTRY
COORDINATOR**



Cassie Pasholk
ADMINISTRATOR



Lori Niemuth
**ADMINISTRATIVE
COORDINATOR**



Dave Wood
**PROPERTY & GROUNDS
SUPERVISOR**

CUSTODIAN: Amy Procino

Dear Trinity Lutheran Church Family,

The past year has been a joyful one for serving on the Trinity Council. While continuing the search for an associate pastor, we have gained a Synod Authorized Minister (SAM) in our own Sue Harrington. This has been a wonderful new position to add to her role as ministry coordinator as she assists Pastor Andy. We have continued to have faithful assistance from Pastor Chuck and Pastor Mark.

Trinity is blessed with committee members, team members, other volunteers, and staff who get the work done! The Council has often had an easy task of approving contracts and policies developed by our volunteers and staff. Some examples include the SAM covenant, contracts with Pastors Chuck and Mark, the wedding policy, and the Facility Use Policy.

The year has seen increased activity among “old” groups and “new” groups, mission trip groups, the quilters, the OWLs, a new youth program called Co-Cre8, Bible study groups, a new veterans’ group, new Trailblazers, and on and on! We have continued with a single worship service on Sunday mornings. Sometimes it is a little crowded, but it is a joy to worship together and to see all the kids, and there are always available seats up front.

The Coffee+Connection area and the Youth Room have been redone. We will have building maintenance issues, such as the roof, in the near future, which will present financial challenges.

The addition of an associate pastor will also present a budget challenge, but Trinity has the ability to meet the needs. Some goals for 2026 include building maintenance, membership connection with a directory, reviewing the strategic plan, and completing a critical incident policy.

Thanks to all the volunteers and staff, and thanks for allowing me to be your president. I will close with the message provided by past president Heidi Fischer last year:

“I pray that the blessings of the past year will overflow into the new one. May Trinity remain your spiritual home, a place where you encounter God in worship, fellowship, and service. I encourage you to keep God at the center of your daily life. May you experience His presence both within and beyond the walls of Trinity, moving and stirring within you as we live out our mission: Together in Christ, we welcome, love, and serve all.”

"He himself granted that some are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ . . ."

– Ephesians 4:11-12

I think that how we're doing as a congregation can be measured largely by how remarkably little work I had to do on this annual report—not only on this particular pastor's page but also on the entire 36-page document. I don't know how many of you regularly read these reports (if you actually do read this and you would take a moment to acknowledge that you did by telling, texting, or emailing me the code word *soffit*, I will be sure to respond gratefully—all the more if you can tell me the other place in this document where that curious word appears), but, for me, proofreading each annual report is generally a major undertaking.

This year—hallelujah and hooray—it wasn't. From the content to the formatting and an astonishing absence of apostrophe catastrophes, this report was an easy and uplifting read that didn't require much added work from the lead pastor. And that isn't thanks to AI—it's thanks to God, with considerable help from you, the body of Christ. I think it's an example of the progress that Trinity has made in becoming less of a pastor-powered church and more of a lay-led, clergy-supported congregation, the likes of which we've been striving to be for years.

Partly, that's been by necessity as our absence of an associate pastor nears the three-year mark. While our Call Committee, with help from our East Central Synod of Wisconsin, has continued the search, we were beyond blessed in 2025 to have Sue Harrington swiftly add the role of Synod Authorized Minister (SAM) to her still-new position as ministry coordinator. President Bob already acknowledged this divine development on the previous page, and the following pages explore its implications, but I'd be remiss if I didn't personally acknowledge this "top story" of 2025. I don't know what we'd do without Sue! As so many of you have gratefully acknowledged, God has gifted us with Sue, her preaching, and her ministry all around. She is a shining example, not only to Trinity but also to our synod and larger church, of the potential for SAMs amid our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's clergy shortage. Sue embodies what newly installed Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry recently acknowledged in *Living Lutheran* upon being elected: "Our lay leaders are being asked to do more. And in many cases, they're saying, 'Yes, I want the education—as long as you're not trying to steer me and tell me I need to be a pastor or a deacon. Tell me how to be a better leader in my community, in my context.' "

What might be most wonderful about Sue's ministry is not just that she has stepped up but also that she has helped *you* to step up as lay leaders. Soon with the assistance of the *worship and volunteer assistant* we're actively looking to hire, Sue is fueling *you* to fuel ministries old and new, and that's a big reason why the Call Committee is now rewriting our congregation profile, as Trinity is now a much more active, vibrant church than it was just a couple of years ago.

We have *you* as lay leaders to thank for so much of what you can joyfully read about in these pages, plus exciting things that went unmentioned—my only editorial critique is that we left out a few of the innumerable good things! Much of what we can thank God for in 2025 took place within the church building: the transformations of the Youth Room and the Coffee+Connection area that has sprung to new life after each bustling Sunday service,

as well as key technology upgrades (not to mention a new phone system), plus a women's Bible study bursting at the seams, a new veterans' group that was big from the start, and thought-provoking *The Chosen* watch parties. Even better, we brought the church into the world in many ways: the 50th-anniversary season of Chapel on the Lakes, a trailblazing outdoor ministry, and another trip to South Africa while our incoming eighth-graders (including my older son) spent an unforgettable week at Confirmation Camp.

Underscoring Trinity's impact in the larger church, our own Nancy Schanke was reelected as our synod's vice president, and Pastor Nate Gauerke stepped up from his humble beginnings growing up at Trinity to become associate to the bishop, director for transitions (including ours). Heidi Fischer, our congregation's secretary, joined the staff at Trinity Lutheran Church in Stevens Point while wonderfully also continuing as our sixth-grade Confirmation teacher here at "Trinity East." We have Heidi in particular to thank for the expansion of Confirmation to include the artistic Co-Cre8 contributions in Wednesday worship, allowing our middle-schoolers to channel God's creativity in one of Trinity's most groundbreaking ministries yet.

As DeAnna Hannigen writes so well in the Stewardship Team's report, you did so much in 2025, including your resounding answer at year's end to our fall appeal's question, "What do you have to give?" Your astounding response through 203 giving intentions, coupled with your exceptional outpouring of offerings in December, put us in a providential position for 2026.

You have made it a blessing beyond words for me to serve at Trinity for the last 15 years. It is a joy to minister not only *to* but also *with* lay people (not to mention some retired pastors) in a vibrant community that wonderfully welcomed precisely 23 people by baptism for the second straight year to keep us growing strong. I thank God in particular for the support of our Mutual Ministry Committee—including Jim Peterson, who served as long as he could until weeks before joining the saints in heaven—and our extraordinary staff. From the legendary longevity of Jean Schwirtz (whose 40th anniversary as Sunday School coordinator we celebrated in 2025) and Wanda Eikenbary (still a marvelous music minister after more than 20 years) to our splendidly savvy building chief, Dave Wood, and tireless administrator, Cassie Pasholk (who both hit full stride since coming aboard in 2024), our staff members are magnificent ministers.

On that note, the person I need to thank the most for this report is Cassie. She might not be as visible as Sue (who started on staff the week before her), but Cassie has masterfully managed the business of our church behind the scenes, with her preparation of this report and the financial figures within it as a microcosm of her multifaceted capabilities. And, like this report, Cassie and our tremendous treasurer, Pam Gusmer, epitomize what has been going so well at Trinity amid transitions that God always gets us through, with help from special people. Fittingly, Cassie's report is next.

There is still surely no small sum of challenges that await our congregation—and our world—in 2026. But, together in Christ, who promises to be present even and especially in the most trying times, and with the persistent propulsion of the Holy Spirit, we know God continues to shape us into a team of saints with an array of abilities to welcome, love, and serve all, in all circumstances!

Hello, Trinity congregation!

It is with deep gratitude and appreciation that I share my 2025 annual report with you. This past year, my first full church year, has been one of steady progress, collaboration, and continued learning. As administrator, my responsibilities continue to span financial oversight, personnel supervision, facilities, and daily operations that keep Trinity running smoothly. Once again, I am continually reminded that there is rarely a quiet day here—and that is a wonderful testament to the life and ministry of our church.

One of our most significant accomplishments in 2025 was a comprehensive set of technology upgrades throughout the church. We strengthened both our wired and wireless network infrastructure, improved security systems, and completed computer upgrades for the entire staff. Everyone is now operating on the Windows 11 system, allowing for better efficiency, reliability, and long-term support. These updates help ensure that our staff can work effectively while protecting church data and communications.

We also made meaningful progress with building updates that enhance the experience of those who gather here each week. Both the Coffee+Connection area and the Youth Room received refreshed looks, creating more welcoming and functional spaces for fellowship and ministry. In addition, we accomplished refinishing the entire linoleum flooring downstairs—an extensive project that has made a noticeable difference in both appearance and much-needed upkeep.

Community events once again proved to be a tremendous blessing in 2025. Strawberry Fest was another incredible success, with total sales reaching an impressive \$7,526.75. The food tent alone generated \$3,960.75, benefiting the Young Adult Mission Trip account, while the silent auction and bake sale contributed \$3,566.00 toward Faith Ventures. Overall, the event achieved a remarkable net income of \$4,672.62. Our Pancake Supper was equally successful, making a net profit of \$2,056.73, which will support the purchase of next year's Bibles and help fund youth activities. These events reflect the generosity, teamwork, and enthusiasm of our congregation and community.

Another highlight of the year was a hugely successful stewardship appeal. We welcomed 78 giving intentions from households that had not pledged the prior year, bringing our total to 203 intentions overall. This extraordinary response secured an incentive of \$25,300 above our regular giving, a powerful testament to the faithfulness and commitment of this congregation. Thank you to everyone who participated and prayerfully supported this effort.

As we look ahead, I am excited about several goals for 2026. One priority will be a thorough cleanup of our member database, ensuring that records are as accurate and up to date as possible so we can better serve and communicate with our congregation. We also hope to hire a new *worship and volunteer assistant*, a role that will support the overall worship experience by helping ensure that our services are warm, welcoming, and attentive to the needs of each member during worship.

■ ADMINISTRATOR'S ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)

Additionally, 2026 will be a year of thoughtful planning and preparation as we begin organizing several large-scale building projects, including the church roof, the HVAC system, the Sanctuary's audio/visual system, and the rebuilding of the Tiny Treasures preschool entrance. You'll also want to be on the lookout for Tiny Treasures' new outdoor sign, just recently installed—a visible sign of growth and renewal for that program.

As always, I am deeply thankful for the staff, volunteers, committees, teams, and members who give their time, talents, and resources so generously. Your support makes all of this possible, and it is truly a privilege to serve alongside you. Thank you for another strong year at Trinity, and I look forward with hope and anticipation to all that God has in store for us in the year ahead.

■ WORSHIP & MUSIC MINISTRIES

BY WANDA EIKENBARY, Director of Music Ministries

Throughout 2025, Trinity's Worship & Music Team members proved what dedication, hard work, and cooperation among subgroups can accomplish. Our "team" consists of several groups, each of which serves an important role in enhancing the worship experience at Trinity. Though it's easy to think immediately of all the musicians we're blessed with, since they are visible and audible at every service, it's important to point out the other team members, 99% of whom are unpaid volunteers working "behind the scenes," who help make worship so meaningful and enjoyable at Trinity. Worship & Music includes the Altar Guild; Trinity's decorating group, Divine Designs; our faithful Banner Team leaders; and Charlene Kuenzi, who has served as secretary for Worship & Music meetings for decades—along with our three choirs and the WOW (Worship on Wednesday) Praise Team. It takes a village!

I'll start by recognizing some of our "behind the scenes" team members. Once again, Nancy Cummings did an outstanding job of leading and organizing our Altar Guild. Every communion service was set up and cleaned up by this group. Every seasonal parament on the altar and pulpit was put in place by the Altar Guild. Utilizing memorial funds, the Altar Guild was able to purchase two additional intinction chalices in 2025, which gave us the ability to serve those with gluten-free needs even more safely.

It's difficult to overstate how blessed and fortunate we are to have Jacki Johnson leading our Divine Designs team. At any given time, it looks like we hired a professional designer to bring life to the seasons of the church year through decorations in the Sanctuary and throughout the church. In fact, we do have a professional designer! However, Jacki and her decorators volunteer their time. After many years of leading Trinity's Banner Team, Linda Holtebeck retired in 2025. Thank you, Linda! Without missing a beat, Sherry Knight and Vickie Abrahamson took over. They, too, bless us with their contributions of time and talents.

Finally, I must recognize the extraordinary contributions of the musicians and choirs that help me lead music and enhance worship with special music. Trinity is truly blessed with so many gifted musicians. Pam Lysne continued to lead the Trinity Choir, presenting both a Good Friday cantata and a Christmas cantata, plus numerous other choir performances throughout the year. Our Handbell Choir, led by Shana Rogney, shared special music throughout the year, participated in the Christmas cantata, and once again gave a half-hour concert at the beginning of Waupaca High School choirs' Christmas concert. Our Children's Choir, which I direct, sang in worship twice in the spring of 2025 and then sang at two big Christmas concerts in December. It was a busy and exciting year for all our choirs.

Besides our choirs, Trinity is indeed blessed with an abundance of gifted soloists and small ensembles, who also help provide special music for every service at Trinity. Special thanks to Shepherd's Quarter for leading the WOW Praise Team (every year since 2010) and for giving another wonderful Christmas concert in December. Triune Voice and 4th Octave provided many enjoyable Sundays of special music in 2025. Once again, we were fortunate to host Matt Buchman's jazz quartet in July and the Ultimate Polka Band in October. What a great year we had making a joyful noise to our Lord with music!

Together in Christ, we welcome, love, and serve ALL! Trinity's Sunday School program is open to all. You do not have to be a member of Trinity to attend. We continue to grow each year and welcome new families. Trinity has a wonderful staff of volunteers who have chosen to serve God by teaching his children.

Our students, families, and congregation helped serve the community by participating in the Souper Bowl of Caring, where food was collected for the area food pantries, and were also extremely generous in donating items for the Lutheran World Relief School Kit drive. This year we assembled 65 kits to be distributed wherever they are needed throughout the world.

As our students grow in their faith, they are given Bibles. Our new 3-year-olds receive a *Spark Story Bible*, our third-graders receive a *Spark Bible*, and our eighth-grade Confirmation students receive the *Lutheran Study Bible*. Extra Bibles are always on hand to welcome new students and help them feel a part of Trinity's Sunday School program. These Bibles are purchased with funds raised at our annual Pancake Supper, which is open to the community.

Our Splash! program is for newly baptized children. Families receive a monthly newsletter to help them stay connected to Trinity for support and encouragement. Families receive this newsletter until their child turns 3 years old and is then invited to attend Sunday School. Trinity's Sunday School curriculum is called Spark. It is a lectionary curriculum, which means it follows the Gospel lessons for our weekly church service. Each week, I send out an email to all the families sharing the family page for the weekly lesson and informing them of Trinity's Sunday school activities. We also have a memory verse program that builds upon itself each year. Students memorize verses, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the books of the Bible, etc. This is to give them a base of knowledge when they begin their confirmation studies.

Jake the Pancake Man, our Palm Sunday parade, the Fall Hayride, Trunk or Treat, and summer Day Camp out at Pine Lake Camp are all activities that invite our Sunday School students, their families, and the community to participate.

One of the highlights of the year is always the Christmas program. "Christmas in Our Jammies" was a repeat of the program from 10 years ago. When I rewatched that program, I saw our current Confirmation and high school students. Those students are now teaching and helping with Sunday School and Worship on Wednesday, playing the piano for Sunday School, singing in the church choir, going on our Faith Ventures trips, and being our worship slideshow volunteers.

Thank you, students, parents, teachers, and Trinity congregation, for all your hard work. You are doing it right!



Our youth programs in 2025 were filled with tons of fun, laughter, and a lot of controlled chaos, as I like to call it. Throughout the year, we spent time in many of our usual spaces, making core memories along the way.

This past year, I have truly seen how our youth embrace the Trinity mission statement and goals, often without even realizing they're doing it. Being welcoming has become a huge part of our Confirmation program, and honestly, it's been one of those "we love to see it" moments. More times than I can count, I walked into our Confirmation classrooms on a Wednesday and saw new faces. These moments of invitation and belonging have become the norm, and that speaks volumes.

I have also seen how our new Co-Cre8 programming has engaged youth in our worship services and given them a sense of ownership. Youth are stepping up and recognizing that sharing the Gospel is not just something adults do up front, it's something they are already a part of. Our young adults have also begun connecting more intentionally with one another.

Our programs continue to thrive. Currently, we have about 90 youth in our building each Wednesday night. This past fall and winter, 76 youth participated in our Confirmation program, including the 22 youth who took a step into their adult faith through our Affirmation of Baptism service in October. Each week, we also welcome close to 20 high-schoolers for our Crossover evenings.

Mission trips were another highlight of the year. In May, seven young adults flew to Seattle, where we spent the week serving in many ways and engaging with the community around us. While there, we served eight different service sites, explored the city each evening, and met new friends from all over the city. Our youth stayed closer to home, loading up and spending the week in the Wisconsin forests. Thirteen youth and three adults participated in the Faith Ventures camping trip, bonding as a group while also exploring and serving the surrounding community, tired, happy, and absolutely worth it.

Lastly, a huge part of our summer was spent remodeling, designing, and putting our Youth Room back together. From the end of the program year in May until we started back up in September, the space received a full floor-to-ceiling makeover. We are incredibly thankful to everyone who helped, supported, and funded this remodel. The youth love the cozy atmosphere and the updated look and feel of their space. It has truly become a place where they want to be.

The relationships being built, the faith being formed, and the laughter echoing through our halls remind us that God is very much at work here. Whether it's on a Wednesday night full of snacks and inside jokes, on a mission trip that changes perspectives, or in a Youth Room that now feels like the place to be, our youth continue to show us what it means to live out faith boldly and authentically.

To everyone who shows up, supports, drives the bus, funds the trips, prays, listens, and says "yes" to the beautiful chaos, thank you! You are helping create a space where youth know they are loved, welcomed, and valued just as they are. If 2025 taught us anything, it's that when youth are given trust, community, and room to grow, they rise to the occasion. We can't wait to see what God has in store next—because honestly, if this year was any indication, it's only going to get better.

■ MINISTRY COORDINATOR & SYNOD AUTHORIZED MINISTER'S REPORT

BY SUE HARRINGTON, Ministry Coordinator & SAM

"My grace is sufficient for you." – 2 Corinthians 12:9

I am so very grateful for the grace that our God shows me every day, which frees me to serve you all! You all have shown me unwavering kindness and support as I continue to grow in ministry here at Trinity Lutheran Church. I have appreciated the room to make mistakes and your kindness while I continue to grow from them. This has definitely been a year of growth and discovery for me—and I believe for our congregation as well.

I have been a staff member at Trinity for about 15 months. I was hired as the ministry coordinator, which was an expansion of the former volunteer coordinator position. After being here for a few months coordinating volunteers and reigniting some of our ministries, I began to feel called to care for God's people in a deeper way, especially in the way of visiting the sick, sharing God's word, and caring for our community.

Considering Trinity's ongoing transition, and with the help and support of Pastor Andy, Pastor Chuck, and Pastor Mark, along with the support of our East Central Synod, I became a Synod Authorized Minister, or SAM, which allows me to do many things that a pastor can do—most importantly: preside at communion, baptisms, weddings, and funerals; preach the gospel; and bring comfort and care to those who are ill. My learning continues as I attend Lay School. What a joy it has been to attend along with Heidi Fischer and Sue Heideman with Pastor Mark as our mentor! If I must wrestle with God's word and what it means for my life, this is the perfect group to do it with! Lay School will continue for me through May of 2027.

Speaking of grace, as I write this report for you, I feel compelled to share with you something I will never forget. Soon after becoming a SAM, I was to preside over communion. Pastor Andy spent at least an hour with me, making sure I had it down! Of course, I had it down when it was just the two of us. When we added 250 congregation members, my nerves got the best of me, and I almost made the congregation say our Lord's Prayer twice! After a few laughs and a couple of tears, communion went on. However, after the service was when I knew I was called to serve in this place. Your kindness, grace, hugs, and jokes made me feel cared for and loved. Many of you jokingly said, *"It wouldn't hurt for some of us to say the Lord's Prayer twice!"* Thank you for the room you have given me to grow and learn in my ministry here—and for your kindness and guidance as well.

God continues to call me daily to care for our congregation and our community, but more importantly, I am amazed at how God is calling each of you. Our lay ministry has grown by leaps and bounds. We currently bring communion to more 30 shut-ins on a monthly basis. We have 12 lay visitors. I am also grateful for the commitment that Pastor Chuck and Pastor Andy have in caring for the sick and homebound of our congregation and community. Please let me know if you or someone you know would like to be added to the list for a monthly visit.

I am thrilled to mention that our small-group ministry at Trinity is growing by leaps and bounds. Many thanks to all of you who have stepped up to lead a small group! We have something for everyone. Our couple's small group is looking to expand and add another group. *The Chosen* season 3 will begin in late January and early February.

■ MINISTRY COORDINATOR & SYNOD AUTHORIZED MINISTER'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

The Trinity Trailblazers are off to a running start! These are just some of our new groups. Thanks to all of you who lead and serve God's people within these small groups and all of Trinity's ministries.

The Older Wiser Lutherans, or OWLs, continue to be active. In the month of November, we visited Rawhide Youth Services in New London. It was a wonderful visit, including a nice meal made for us by the students there who are receiving culinary training. We all agreed that another visit in the spring was in order.

Our Invite-Welcome-Connect Team continues to welcome all who enter our doors and have welcomed many new members to Trinity this year. We are a small group with the most important job! We welcome all who enter our doors and through the power of personal connection fulfill our mission to welcome, love and serve all!

I had the awesome opportunity to travel to South Africa with Terry and Barb Nellis and Heidi Fischer. Because of your support, we were able to bless two local day cares with sleeping mats, food, a refrigerator, clothing, books, and toys. God's grace was surely with us on that trip!

The people in our community hold a very special place in my heart. Our congregation continues to be a blessing to many in Waupaca! This fall, we worked in partnership with the Waupaca Area Food Pantry to provide much-needed food for folks in need. Your contributions also served to keep our Trinity food pantry stocked up. Your donations to the Giving Tree kept ears, hands, and feet warm this winter and filled some tummies. Thanks for helping me provide for those in need! Trinity continues to help the Miracle Tree. Your contributions brought some happy hearts to those in need this holiday season.

Speaking of our community, we have a wonderful community veterans' group that has had a very promising start here at Trinity, with more than 20 veterans in attendance at our first two meetings. Thanks to a few of our veterans here at Trinity for the encouragement to start this group! We meet every third Thursday at Trinity in the Connection area for coffee and donuts, stories, and camaraderie. All veterans and guests are invited.

We often sing "Your Grace Is Enough" at our Wednesday-night worship. Looking back on 2025, I know that is true! Thanks be to God that His grace has freed me to serve alongside all of you!

■ MEMBERSHIP STATISTICS ■ ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2025**BY PASTOR ANDY BEHRENDT**

Baptized Members		2,235
Baptized	23	
New Members	12	
Transferred/Removed	-8	
Member Deaths	-25	
TOTAL	2	2,237

■ BAPTISMS ■ 23

Ansel Dean Anderson	Ellis Scott Niemuth	Rome Henry Sullivan
Brynn Taylor Argall	Fallon Bea Pehlke	Sawyer Craig Ver Kuilen
Wren Leona Bartel	Rory Luca Pehlke	Greyson Daryl Vercellotti
Kaitlyn Maria-Ann Corbin	Ellie Rae Phillipsen	Colton Joshua Writt
Colstyn James Dallman	Layton Michael Portman	Evelyn Anetta-Rose Zaragoza
Isla Jean Deuman	Brooklyn Etta-Wynters Smith	Everett Aniceto Zaragoza
Olivia Rose Hanke	Cooper John Smith	Juan Armando Zaragoza
Owen John Mitchell	Autumn Alexis Subera	

■ NEW MEMBERS (CHILDREN) ■ 12***AWAITING BAPTISM**

Mackenzie & Brandon Bartel	Rhonda Lubinski	David & Karen Stedman
Victoria Justmann	Kari & Marrick Schultz	Tom & Carie Vos
Larry & Pat Krebs	(*Harrison & *Addison)	

■ MEMBERS TRANSFERRED OUT (CHILDREN) ■ 8

Lois Bechard	Daniel Everts	Erin (Montgomery) Magdanz
Kerry Lee Blanke	Mike & Julie Kosobucki (Ruby)	Charlotte Murray

■ MEMORIAL SERVICES/DEATHS ■ 32*** NON-MEMBERS**

Eugene "Gene" Adams	Jack Gunderson	Bob Mittelstaedt
Constance Brummer	*Leslie Hansel	*Thomas Mumbrue
James "JB" Burns	*Robin Jensen	Elmer Peterson
*Susan Collins	Donna Mae Johnson	James "Jim" Peterson
Terri Cook	Karen Johnson	Elizabeth Quimby
Theodore William "Bill" Cook	Shirley Jorgensen	Dale Simpson
*Robert "Bob" Elandt	*Erdwin "Ed" Krause	Edward Smith
Darlene Engbretson	Betty Lacey	William Stearns
*Jeanne Alyce Falke	Barbara LaRue	Alice Szewczuga
Doris Galleske	Phyllis McSherry	Yvonne Wedell
Peggy Goggins	Ronald Metty	

The Trinity Finance Committee was established in 2020. The committee is led by Treasurer Pam Gusmer. Members of the Finance Committee include the treasurer and elected members of the congregation. Committee Members in 2025 included Pam Gusmer, Jim Stoltenberg, Mark Rosicky, Maggie Jones, and Adam Ross. The lead pastor and church administrator are advisory members of the committee.

Our committee is primarily focused internally on the work of the church and how to use wisely the funds provided by our generous donors. We have put together a good group, enjoy working together, and are always open to others who wish to join our crew as we delve into the finances of our organization and determine how best to fund our ministries. This year, we got together with Personnel Committee and Stewardship Team representatives, particularly as we planned for 2026, to ensure we are all aligned on how to best utilize our resources.

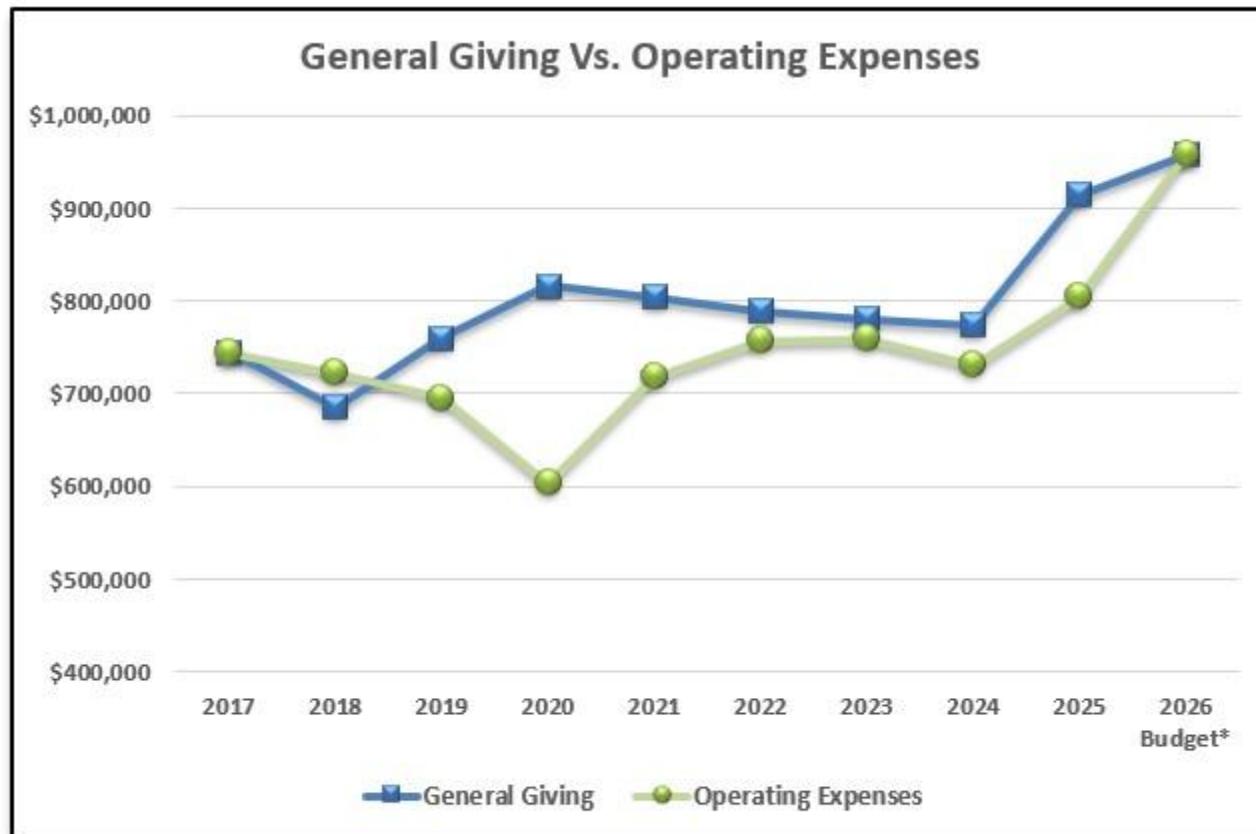
After perhaps a little too much excitement in 2024 with personnel changes and major transition and learning, 2025 was a much smoother year for our Finance Committee, with consistency and experience from our treasurer and church administrator. Our highlights include:

- **Account Management:** We completed a thorough 2024 account review with adjustments, providing a fresh start for 2025. We established new accounts for Facilities Use and Worship A/V Technology, and we consolidated Memorial and Gift savings balances into our six main donation categories: Community Outreach, Family & Youth, Parish Education, Property & Grounds, Worship & Music, and Special Projects.
- **Income and Investments:** We received a significant \$52,180 payout from Thrivent Bank, with most of the funds deposited into the General Account Reserve Savings after a 10% tithe allocated by the Stewardship Team for extra benevolence. We renewed our CD at Bank First with an improved interest rate.
- **Mortgage and Expenses:** We proactively managed mortgage debt, making two substantial mortgage principal payments totaling \$118,476 using funds from savings accounts and interest accruals. Due to an upcoming rate increase, refinancing options are being explored for 2026.
- **Policies and Planning:** We covered expenses for several large projects (Property & Grounds, Youth Room, Connection area, and technology) along with planning for future expenses. The Money Handling Policy was updated for staff and team leaders.

Trinity continues to be blessed with many members who give faithfully and allow our many ministries and activities to occur, covering the annual expenses of the church, including maintenance on our aging building. We are ending the year 2025 again in a very stable financial condition. 2025 giving was **UP**, reversing a declining giving trend we had seen since 2021, and this is wonderful to see! We have big plans for 2026 for Trinity and the ministries we provide, and we will continue to require the generous support of our congregation to continue to thrive and best serve our Lord.

Trinity Lutheran Church
Budget Planning 2025
General Fund Giving & Operating Expenses

Year	General Giving Fund	Year over Year % Change	General Expenses	Year over Year % Change	Annual Income/ Loss
2017	\$744,633.00		\$743,662.00		\$971.00
2018	\$685,540.00	-7.9%	\$721,734.00	-2.9%	-\$36,194.00
2019	\$759,954.00	10.9%	\$695,108.00	-3.7%	\$64,846.00
2020	\$815,750.00	7.3%	\$602,819.00	-13.3%	\$212,931.00
2021	\$804,053.00	-1.4%	\$718,130.00	19.1%	\$85,923.00
2022	\$788,990.00	-1.9%	\$756,960.00	5.4%	\$32,030.00
2023	\$780,715.27	-1.0%	\$758,512.53	0.2%	\$22,202.74
2024	\$773,716.62	-0.9%	\$730,564.57	-3.7%	\$43,152.05
2025	\$914,262.60	18.2%	\$804,380.18	10.1%	\$109,882.42
2026 Budget*	\$957,617.66	4.7%	\$957,617.66	19.1%	\$0.00



NOTE: 2025 giving includes \$52,180 from Thrivent reorganization

FINANCIAL STATEMENT
SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS 2025

Account	Beginning Balance 01/01/25	Income	Expense	Ending Balance 12/31/25
General Clearing account	\$94,776.76	\$914,262.60 \$3,113.76 + \$917,376.36	\$804,380.18 \$2,464.91 - \$806,845.09	= \$205,308.03
Payroll Clearing	\$33,021.13	+ \$393,636.48	- \$410,106.76	= \$16,550.85
Designated Savings	\$467,560.06	+ \$374,559.92	- \$388,266.57	= \$453,853.41
CD Investment	\$53,217.36	+ \$804.82	- \$0.00	= \$54,022.18
Mission Endowment	\$460,639.06	+ \$6,350.98	- \$16,927.00	= \$450,063.04
Education Endowment	\$710,177.38	+ \$104,599.45	- \$49,498.31	= \$765,278.52
Agape	\$10,649.42	+ \$3,289.66	- \$1,847.46	= \$12,091.62
Faith Ventures	\$11,941.97	+ \$13,147.57	- \$14,082.40	= \$11,007.14
TOTALS	\$1,841,983.14	+ \$1,813,765.24	- \$1,687,573.59	= \$1,968,174.79

MORTGAGE :

Principal	\$1,021,061.14	-	\$212,743.36	\$808,317.78
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Trinity Lutheran Church
Designated Savings

		Balance 1/1/2025	Receipts	Expenses	Balance 12/31/2025
1	Abigail Circle	\$59.17	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$59.17
2	Altar Flowers	(\$60.99)	\$3,136.70	\$3,243.50	(\$167.79)
3	Badger/Jefferson St. Entrance	\$15,621.01	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$15,621.01
4	Bethel Circle	\$16,597.28	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$16,797.28
5	Camp/Retreat	\$1,225.00	\$9,700.00	\$4,179.00	\$6,746.00
6	Community Outreach	\$0.00	\$3,138.00	\$1,459.96	\$1,678.04
7	Cont Ed - Assoc. Pastor	\$1,180.48	\$0.00	\$66.95	\$1,113.53
8	Cont Ed - Pastor Andy	\$5,528.38	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,528.38
9	Deer St. Space	\$2,287.26	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,287.26
10	Disaster Relief - Mission Trips	\$675.12	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$675.12
11	Electric Sign	\$948.67	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$948.67
12	Facilities Use	\$0.00	\$12,778.84	\$5,055.00	\$7,723.84
13	Family & Youth	\$0.00	\$7,691.80	\$243.36	\$7,448.44
14	Helping Hands	\$405.21	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$405.21
15	Interest	\$18,475.92	\$7,469.74	\$18,475.92	\$7,469.74
16	Kitchen Appliances	\$8,005.43	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$8,005.43
17	Memorials/Gifts	\$69,176.29	\$2,255.00	\$69,385.30	\$2,045.99
18	Men In Mission	\$724.85	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$724.85
19	Mission Quilters	\$1,857.93	\$2,383.50	\$1,066.48	\$3,174.95
20	Mortgage Donation/Payment	\$38,106.21	\$189,558.41	\$180,280.00	\$47,384.62
21	Music Series	\$10,332.22	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,332.22
22	Other Global Mission	\$11,543.82	\$4,200.00	\$3,300.40	\$12,443.42
23	Pancake Supper	\$12,132.18	\$3,244.00	\$3,883.49	\$11,492.69
24	Parish Education	\$0.00	\$2,827.66	\$0.00	\$2,827.66
25	Pastor Assistance Ministry	\$4,425.42	\$200.00	\$0.00	\$4,625.42
26	Property & Grounds	\$0.00	\$8,750.35	\$244.44	\$8,505.91
27	Sabbatical - Assoc. Pastor	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
28	Sabbatical - Pastor Andy	\$5,655.09	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,655.09
29	SafeGuarding Youth	\$11,820.46	\$0.00	\$1,048.80	\$10,771.66
30	South Africa - Global Mission	\$10,898.12	\$619.47	\$2,000.00	\$9,517.59
31	Special Projects	\$57,956.95	\$27,311.00	\$48,186.53	\$37,081.42
32	TLW-ELCA Income	\$1,298.44	\$381.00	\$867.97	\$811.47
33	Van / Bus	\$3,988.56	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$3,988.56
34	Weddings	\$2,085.72	\$2,175.00	\$850.00	\$3,410.72
35	Worship & Music	\$0.00	\$17,144.81	\$1,676.69	\$15,468.12
36	Worship Technology-A/V	\$44.86	\$11,287.64	\$0.00	\$11,332.50
37	Young Adult Mission Trip	\$0.00	\$15,445.95	\$6,737.18	\$8,708.77
38	General Account Reserve *	\$153,565.00	\$42,661.05	\$36,015.60	\$160,210.45
	TOTAL:	\$467,560.06	\$374,559.92	\$388,266.57	\$453,853.41

■ GENERAL ACCOUNT INCOME

BY PAM GUSMER, Treasurer

Trinity Lutheran Church General Account Income

	2024	2025
1 . Envelope Offering	\$722,165.42	\$861,726.72
2 . Loose Offering	\$7,986.42	\$9,989.63
3 . Sunday School	\$99.00	\$20.00
4 . Special Envelopes	\$22,361.00	\$17,416.00 *
5 . Benevolence	\$4,545.55	\$7,117.52 **
6 . Committees	\$12,049.86	\$1,000.18
7 . Chapel on the Lakes	\$2,696.99	\$2,198.20
8 . Radio	\$1,800.00	\$3,200.00
9 . Other Receipts	\$12.38	\$11,594.35
Total General Offering:	\$773,716.62	\$914,262.60

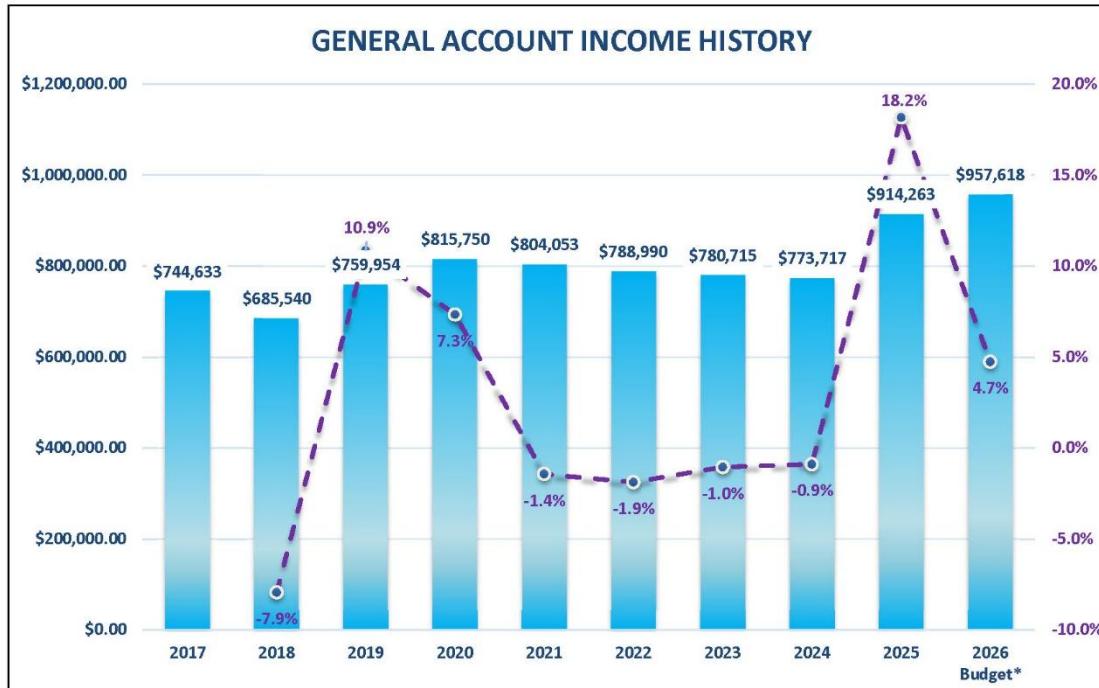
Includes \$52,180 from Thrivent reorganization

* Special Envelopes Detail

	2024	2025
1 . Initial	\$462.00	\$393.00
2 . Lenten	\$870.00	\$1,462.00
3 . Easter	\$4,748.00	\$4,626.00
4 . Good Friday	\$446.00	\$911.00
5 . Ash Wednesday	\$615.00	\$45.00
6 . Maundy Thursday	\$764.00	\$318.00
7 . Thanksgiving	\$228.00	\$785.00
8 . Christmas	\$14,228.00	\$8,876.00
Total Special Envelopes:	\$22,361.00	\$17,416.00

** Benevolence Detail

	2024	2025
1 . ELCA World Hunger	\$932.79	\$1,597.95
2 . Disaster & Lthrn Wrld Relief/Social Services	\$2,713.95	\$5,339.57
3 . Waupaca Area Food Bank/Food Pantry	\$658.81	\$30.00
4 . Mission Churches	\$0.00	\$150.00
5 . Crossways	\$200.00	\$0.00
6 . Other Benevolence	\$40.00	\$0.00
Total Benevolence Income:	\$4,545.55	\$7,117.52



■ GENERAL FUND: 2025 EXPENSES & BUDGET ■ PROPOSED 2026 BUDGET

BY CASSIE PASHOLK, Administrator

Trinity Lutheran Church 2026 Budget

	<u>2025</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>2025</u> <u>Actual</u>	<u>2026</u> <u>Proposed</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>2026 vs</u> <u>2025</u> <u>Budget</u>	<u>%</u> <u>Change</u>
Benevolence - 10% of total giving F/Y 2024					
Bethany	\$1,500	\$1,500	TBD		
Big Brothers/Big Sisters	\$0	\$0	TBD		
Boy Scouts	\$500	\$500	TBD		
Bread Basket	\$1,000	\$2,000	TBD		
Crossways Campership	\$0	\$0	TBD		
Crossways Ministries	\$2,000	\$0	TBD	* \$500 in Other	
ELCA	\$45,000	\$45,000	TBD	Benevolence (remainder	
ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response	\$2,000	\$2,000	TBD	to be paid in 2026)	
Faith Venture - Mission Trips	\$0	\$0	TBD		
FFL Middleton House	\$500	\$0	TBD		
Foundation For Living (FFL)	\$2,000	\$2,500	TBD		
Lutheran Social Service	\$3,500	\$3,387	TBD		
Lutheran World Relief	\$3,000	\$3,000	TBD		
Mission Churches	\$1,000	\$0	TBD		
Mission Projects	\$2,000	\$0	TBD		
Operation School Supply	\$250	\$250	TBD		
Other Benevolence	\$500	\$2,000	TBD		
Project Backpack	\$500	\$500	TBD		
Tomorrow River Conference	\$550	\$559	TBD		
Waupaca Area Food Pantry	\$2,000	\$3,500	TBD		
World Hunger	\$2,200	\$1,000	TBD		
	\$70,000	\$67,696 **	\$78,000	\$8,000	11%
** Remainder to be paid in 2026 ***Breakdowns TBD by Stewardship					
<i>Total Office Expense</i>	\$10,000	\$8,464	\$9,200	-\$800	-8%
<i>Total Other Expense</i>	\$14,000	\$15,507	\$15,100	\$1,100	8%
	\$24,000	\$23,971	\$24,300	\$300	1%

Payroll Expenses	(Without an Assoc. Pastor)				
<i>Pastors and Administrator</i>	\$305,066	\$219,322	\$307,674	\$2,608	1%
<i>Staff and payroll expenses</i>	\$287,149	\$308,243	\$338,204	\$51,054	18%
	\$592,216	\$527,564	\$645,878	\$53,662	9%

Committees & Teams					
Family & Youth	\$9,500	\$8,458	\$12,500	\$3,000	32%
Health	\$500	\$0	\$500	\$0	0%
Invite-Welcome-Connect	\$10,550	\$8,017	\$10,500	-\$50	0%
Parish Education	\$31,600	\$25,079	\$33,300	\$1,700	5%
<i>Property & Grounds</i>					
<i>Bus Expenses</i>	\$2,565	\$2,855	\$2,965	\$400	16%
<i>Capital Equipment/Maintenance</i>	\$20,000	\$17,785	\$20,000	\$0	0%
<i>Elevator, Fire Protection & Inspecti</i>	\$8,150	\$8,381	\$8,400	\$250	3%
<i>Maintenance & Cleaning</i>	\$12,850	\$14,364	\$14,000	\$1,150	9%
<i>Property Insurance</i>	\$16,500	\$16,777	\$23,200	\$6,700	41%
<i>Snow Removal & Yard Care</i>	\$15,000	\$18,982	\$15,000	\$0	0%
<i>Utilities</i>	\$31,900	\$27,702	\$28,775	-\$3,125	-10%
Total Property & Grounds	\$106,965	\$106,846	\$112,340	\$5,375	5%
Stewardship	\$4,000	\$4,987	\$5,500	\$1,500	38%
Technology	\$15,800	\$22,081	\$21,000	\$5,200	33%
Worship & Music	\$13,200	\$9,680	\$13,800	\$600	5%
	\$192,115	\$185,149	\$209,440	\$17,325	9%

	(Without an Assoc. Pastor)				
TOTAL 2026 BUDGET:	\$878,331	\$804,380	\$957,618	\$79,287	9%

■ AGAPE

BY PASTOR ANDY BEHRENDT

Named with a Greek word for sacrificial love—a love that we know from our loving God—Trinity’s Agape ministry continues to serve those in our community who are in need. The Agape fund in 2025 benefited 30 area households with a total of \$1,847.46—\$563.89 in food vouchers, \$296.47 in gas vouchers, and \$987.10 for miscellaneous needs (such as vehicle repairs and utility bills). Trinity also maintains a small, on-site pantry in our offices to help people with immediate food needs.

We thank you, just as we thank God, for your combined contributions of \$3,272.04 in 2025, which, along with \$17.62 in generated interest and funding on hand from previous years, allowed this important ministry to continue. Your ongoing gifts make a difference for folks in our community, and we hope and pray that the assistance also lets them experience personally the generous, sacrificial love of God through Jesus Christ.

■ MUTUAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE

BY NANCY CUMMINGS

The Mutual Ministry Committee works under the premise that not just the ordained are called to minister to the needs of the church and community, but we are all called to work together using our God-given gifts to encourage and provide support to our pastors, staff, congregation and wider community. The ELCA encourages churches to form a mutual ministry committee to serve as an unbiased, open-minded, and confidential group of listeners who are engaged in the congregation and appreciate the larger church.

Members are appointed jointly by the lead pastor and congregation president. Each committee member agrees to serve for two years, and three new members are added each year to provide new perspectives while maintaining carryover from the prior team. When appointing new committee members, consideration is given to create a cross-section of our congregation based on age, gender, and length of church membership. The 2025 Mutual Ministry Committee consisted of Nancy Cummings, Melanie Peterson, Chuck Reynolds, Gail Springsteen, Bill Storck, and Rita Danielson, who completed Jim Peterson’s term.

Our goal is to serve as a supportive and confidential sounding board for our pastors and ministers to help them better maintain the goals of Trinity. We work to address any conflicts and/or concerns that may hinder Trinity’s ministry and reconcile differences in an unbiased manner. We provide support to help balance tasks, share leadership, and encourage continued education.

In 2025, the Mutual Ministry Committee primarily focused on two endeavors. First and foremost, we supported Sue Harrington on her journey to being a Synod Authorized Minister (SAM). Trinity has been understaffed for many years, and since the call process has not provided an associate pastor to date, we entertained an alternative option that would assist Pastor Andy while empowering one of Trinity’s longtime members to Welcome, Connect, and Engage on a different level.

■ MUTUAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE (CONTINUED)

We entered into a SAM covenant with the East Central Synod of Wisconsin and defined Sue's new role as a SAM while maintaining some of her ministry coordinator's duties. We then determined which of the remaining ministry coordinator's tasks would be absorbed by other current staff members. This process revealed the need for an additional part-time staff member. We worked with the Personnel Committee to create a job description for a *worship and volunteer assistant*, a part-time role that will begin in 2026. This role will coordinate volunteers and assist with tasks on Sunday morning to ensure a smooth worship experience for the congregants as well as the officiating pastors and music minister.

The Mutual Ministry Committee recognizes that ministry to others can be emotionally, physically, and spiritually draining. Maintaining sustainability is vital to our leaders, staff, congregation, and community. It is our intent that the new SAM position and the worship and volunteer assistant will promote sustainability as we continue our search for an associate pastor.

■ PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

BY LAURA COLBERT

For the 2025 calendar year, the Trinity Lutheran Church Personnel Committee was comprised of Penney Frank, Laura Colbert, Barry Osicka, Katy Johnson, Cassie Pasholk, and Pastor Andy Behrendt. The committee is responsible for staff oversight, the development and review of personnel policies, and supporting the overall well-being of church employees and volunteers. While the committee does not engage directly in external community outreach, it remains actively committed to serving the needs of the Trinity Lutheran Church community.

During 2025, the Personnel Committee conducted a comprehensive review of the Personnel Policy and submitted recommended updates to the Church Council. The committee also assisted with the development of the Synod Authorized Minister (SAM) covenant and dedicated significant time to researching and evaluating healthcare insurance options for employees for the 2026 benefit year. In addition, the committee explored the feasibility of expanding benefits to all employees to support job satisfaction and long-term employee retention; however, this was determined not to be financially feasible at this time.

Throughout the year, the committee remained focused on employee well-being by addressing concerns related to job satisfaction, work-life balance, and support to employees during times of crisis.

The Personnel Committee also ensures that all employment practices are compliant with applicable state and federal labor laws and adhere to equal employment opportunity standards. Looking ahead to 2026, the committee's primary goals include posting and hiring a *worship and volunteer assistant* to assume some of the responsibilities from our ministry coordinator, Sue Harrington, allowing her to focus more on her SAM duties. Additionally, the committee plans to develop an annual calendar to ensure timely meetings and the fulfillment of expectations and deadlines.

■ PERSONNEL COMMITTEE (CONTINUED)

The Trinity Lutheran Church Personnel Committee looks forward to continuing to serve the church and its employees in the coming year. If interested in joining the Personnel Committee, please contact the church office.

■ STEWARDSHIP TEAM

BY DEANNA HANNIGEN

The 2025 Stewardship Team members are Pastor Andy, Cassie Pasholk, Sue Harrington, Shannon Anderson, Jake Foss, Rick Groth, Gail Springsteen, Ann Rassmussen, and DeAnna Hannigen. Rick Groth and Gail Springsteen were new to the team in 2025. Their engagement brought fresh and exciting ideas to the team. We are grateful for all of our members and the contributions they bring to the overall camaraderie and success of the group.

The concern of the Stewardship team is:

1. How to be sure Trinity has enough funds to keep the many ministries afloat.
2. How to engage the congregation in the work (and play) of the church.

Even though stewardship is happening throughout the year, the Stewardship Team starts to promote a focused Stewardship for All Seasons campaign around the beginning of June. This culminates in the collection of commitment cards from the congregation on the first week of November. This year, the focus for the campaign was “What do you have to give?” We give thanks to Melanie Peterson and Cassie Pasholk for their well-organized and easy-to-understand presentations about additional ways Trinity members can give, such as through IRA donations or remembering Trinity in our wills. A shout-out also goes to Shannon Anderson and Sue Harrington for inspiring us through their powerful presentations about the question “What do we have to give?” We do not take for granted their work in writing, practicing, and presenting these powerful messages.

Some new things the Stewardship Team worked on during 2025 were:

- Development of a Guide to Giving brochure, which is a resource that can be found in the holders on the backs of each pew.
- Initiation of “What Cha Doing?” snapshots, which feature newsletter entries from the ministries of Trinity.
- Designation of a tithe from the Thrivent Bank reorganization bonus to go to food banks (considering the Waupaca area experiencing a greater need this year).
- Facilitating the startup of a new Veterans Social Group.
- Opening a class to watch and discuss the series *The Chosen*. (We give Ann Rasmussen a thank-you for her passion and hard work to help the veterans’ group and study of *The Chosen* get off the ground).
- Clarification of two giving options: the General Fund and the Building Fund. There was a focused reminder that if we do not indicate a designation on our giving envelopes or when we give online, our entire gift goes to the General Fund.

■ STEWARDSHIP TEAM (CONTINUED)

So often, the Stewardship Team meetings feel like festivals of appreciation, and we know that the most important shout-out goes to the people of Trinity. First, we say thank you to the congregation for stepping up with 203 giving intentions, which resulted in the release of an expanded gift of \$25,300 for Trinity. We are very grateful to the family who gave this donation and to all who thoughtfully took the time to prepare their intention card. Second, we appreciate all the ways people give to Trinity. We see you! We know that 15-20 of you steadily volunteer to help worship go smoothly. We know that the coffee does not make itself and the cookies are not delivered by Uber Eats. We know that many ministries do not run themselves. We are grateful for the visible and invisible things you do for your church. We see your stewardship, and it is appreciated.

■ PROPERTY & GROUNDS TEAM

BY DAVE WOOD, Property & Grounds Supervisor

As property & grounds supervisor, I am grateful for the opportunity to share highlights from 2025 and briefly look ahead at work planned for 2026 and beyond. Caring for our church building and grounds is both a practical responsibility and an important act of stewardship, helping ensure that our spaces continue to support worship, fellowship, learning, and outreach for years to come.

2025 accomplishments

In 2025, several significant projects were completed that improved the functionality, safety, and welcoming nature of our church building:

Youth Room remodel

One of the most visible accomplishments of the year was the full remodel of the Youth Room. This project included new furniture, fresh paint, updated flooring, improved lighting, and new décor. The result is a space that is more comfortable, flexible, and inviting for our youth and the many activities that take place there.

Coffee+Connection refresh

Following the installation of new flooring in 2024, the Connection area received a comprehensive refresh in 2025. Updates include new cabinetry, improved lighting, fresh paint, and new furniture. These improvements enhance a key gathering space where members and visitors connect, helping create a warmer and more welcoming first impression.

Fellowship Hall & Kitchen flooring

The Fellowship Hall and Kitchen floors were fully stripped and refinished, followed by fresh wax. This work restored the appearance of the floors, improved safety, and extended their usable life, supporting the many meals, events, and gatherings hosted in these spaces throughout the year.

Roof repair in the Sanctuary

A section of the roof was replaced to address a known leak in the Sanctuary. This targeted repair helped protect the interior of the building and will prevent further damage while buying time as we plan for more extensive roof work in the future.

Fire alarm system overhaul

In 2025, we completed a major overhaul of the fire alarm system, a critical life-safety project. The previous Bosch fire system had become obsolete, making it increasingly difficult to maintain and support. The new system significantly improves reliability, monitoring, and overall functionality, and it ensures that the building meets life-safety requirements for many years to come. This upgrade represents an essential investment in protecting everyone who worships, works, learns, and gathers in our church building.

These projects were completed in addition to the many routine maintenance tasks and ongoing grounds upkeep that occur throughout the year—often quietly and behind the scenes—to keep the building safe, functional, and well cared for.

LOOKING AHEAD: Future priorities

While much was accomplished in 2025, there are important projects on the horizon:

Roof repair and replacement

Much of the church roof is aging and nearing the end of its service life. Additional repairs and phased replacement will be needed in the coming years to prevent leaks and protect the building. Careful planning will be required to balance cost, timing, and long-term durability.

HVAC updates

Several components of the heating and cooling systems are also aging. Future work will focus on modernizing controls and addressing equipment that is reaching the end of its expected lifespan. These updates will help improve reliability, efficiency, and comfort throughout the building.

Preschool entrance improvements

The Preschool entrance is also nearing the end of its service life. Future plans include replacing the entry doors and windows, along with improvements to the entry canopy. These updates will enhance safety, energy efficiency, and the overall appearance of this heavily used entrance.

A Word of thanks

I extend my sincere thanks to all who contribute time, expertise, and financial support toward maintaining our church facilities. A special THANK YOU goes to the members of the Property & Grounds Team, who have dedicated many hours and have played an integral role in the year's accomplishments. Your generosity and involvement make it possible to care for this shared space that serves both our congregation and the wider community.

Questions, ideas, or interest in getting involved are always welcome. Please feel free to reach out to Dave Wood, property & grounds supervisor, with any thoughts, suggestions, or questions.

■ CHAPEL ON THE LAKES

BY JULIE KESLER

2025 marked the 50th year of Chapel on the Lakes!

You won't find wooden pews, stained-glass windows, or even a roof on this "church." Chapel on the Lakes is a weekly, one-hour floating worship service aboard a 60-foot sternwheeler known as the Chief Waupaca, departing from Clear Water Harbor in King.

The ministry was started in 1975 by Shepherd of the Lakes Lutheran Church. Trinity Lutheran Church had the blessing of taking over this in 1977 and has continued every summer since.

Chapel on the Lakes occurs every Wednesday night from 6 to 7 p.m., rain or shine, for 10 weeks from June through mid-August. The boat can hold 80 people. Registration is required. There are rental fees associated with the Chief, so weekly offerings are taken during the cruise to help cover costs. Julie Kesler, along with others, helps to organize the cruises each week.

The 2025 season had a total of 545+ worshipers, even with two canceled dates due to the weather.

A big shout-out to Aarick Danielson, Jo Wetherbee, John Kunzman, and Laurel Leder for helping every week with getting everyone on board; *thank you!* Also, thanks to Clear Water Harbor for letting us continue with this mission for over 50 years. One more thank-you is owed to Captain David Leder for taking us out every week safely.

It is an amazing experience—come aboard and enjoy the wonderful Chain O' Lakes that God created!

■ SOUTH AFRICA PARTNERSHIP

BY TERRY NELLIS

In June, Sue Harrington, Heidi Fischer, and Barb and Terry Nellis made Trinity's sixth visit to our global partners at Saron Parish in Phokeng, South Africa.

We were welcomed by Bishop Mogorosi (of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa's Western Diocese) and his Kgetleng Circuit partnership chairperson for a partnership program exchange of ideas. We enjoyed tea and cookies and then presented him with a Chain O' Lakes T-shirt.

We were guests of honor at the dedication of Masosobane Church and the new doors that some Trinity members paid for. It was quite a celebration.

Our aluminum can money provided Martha's House, a child day care/orphanage that we have supported in the past, with a new refrigerator and approximately four months' worth of food, plus a gift card Heidi supplied for another month that will feed 85 children. Another day care, Brightside Academy, received books, school supplies, toys, and sleeping mats for children ages 1 to 6.

Trinity visitors enjoyed many days and nights of fellowship and hospitality with the women's prayer league, men's league, young adult league, and youth league.

■ **SOUTH AFRICA PARTNERSHIP (CONTINUED)**

One of the main priorities for this visit was to encourage at every chance a visit by them to our side in 2027 as we try to keep on a two-year schedule.

It was a terrific visit that strengthened the longest continuous partnership between the Kgetleng Circuit, Western Diocese, ELCSA, and the East Central Synod of Wisconsin, ELCA.

■ **ADULT MISSION TRIP**

BY MIKE PSENICKA

The week of May 10-18, 2025, 10 members of Trinity drove down to the Asheville, N.C., area to assist with the rebuilding process from Hurricane Helene that hit that area Sept. 27, 2024. Eight months after the storm, the area remained devastated with countless homes and businesses damaged or destroyed, rivers that formed new paths, 60-70 bridges out, and mudslides that still occasionally occur.

Trinity's crew worked on three homes in Swannanoa. We completely drywalled one home, repaired several plumbing issues, and installed a new bathtub. Several team members moved to a house across the street and finished the siding, along with repairing the soffit and fascia boards on the roof. Another house on the block had some plumbing work done, including installation of a dishwasher, making the house ready for final inspection.

The team also had the privilege of participating in two home dedications. The homeowners were given the keys to their house so they could move back in! Prayer shawls and quilts from Trinity were given to these homeowners, along with prayers, hoping that they can begin getting back to a "normal" life.

Many thanks to the support of Trinity and its members who made this trip possible. The lives of the homeowners, team members, and the countless people met during our time in North Carolina have forever been impacted by our time there.

■ **BABY CARE KITS**

BY BEV HALL

Trinity's Baby Care Kit program had its best year in 2025—sending 140 kits through Lutheran World Relief. These kits went overseas and to areas impacted in the U.S. by hurricanes and floods.

This program sends kits including blankets and clothing items for infants in need. We have a number of people who help sew, knit, and crochet some of the items, but we can always use more help. Please check out our table outside the entrance to the Koinonia Room for info, patterns, fabric, and yarn.

Thank you, Trinity, for helping to sponsor this program!

■ CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

BY LINDA HOLTEBECK

The Cancer Support Group has been meeting at Trinity since 2016. We meet on the third Friday of each month at 1 p.m. The meetings are open to cancer patients, survivors, those who support cancer patients, and friends. All are welcome! For those who cannot attend, Zoom is available.

Our meetings are informal conversations of sharing and support. The open meetings support a “learn from each other” approach and prove the concept that we are never alone in the journey!

This year, the Cancer Support Group has started a ministry of creating “cancer care bags.” They contain items such as a blanket, a book titled *Peace in the Face of Cancer*, a prayer shawl (made by Trinity women), a journal, an invitation to our meeting, etc. We have completed 30 bags that have been and will continue to be given to cancer patients in the community and beyond. This ministry was started with memorial dollars given by the family of Jeanne Kirk, one of our dear members.

The future goal of the Cancer Support Group is to reach as many cancer patients as possible to encourage and support them in their journey. Come and join our conversation!

■ TRINITY'S TINY TREASURES PRESCHOOL INC.

BY BRITTANI MARTIN, Director

Trinity's Tiny Treasures is pleased to report another successful year of growth for our early education program. We launched the 2024-25 school year with our largest enrollment to date, currently serving 34 students weekly. We take pride in being one of the few early education programs in the community to offer flexible part-time options for families. Our student population primarily consists of children aged 3 to 5 years old.

Over the summer, we continued our “Bridge Program” to provide enrolled students with continued education, enrichment, and community engagement. This included weekly excursions to local resources, such as the library and park, allowing our youngest learners to explore and benefit from the offerings of the Waupaca community.

We are actively seeking dedicated new Board members following the departure of two invaluable individuals who were instrumental in shaping our program's success. We extend our deepest gratitude and appreciation to Cheryl Sletten and Kathy Hurt for their service.

Our current dedicated Board members are:

- President: Amanda Johnson
- Vice president: Megan Thoe
- Treasurer: Kyle Everson
- Church liaison: Hugh Kress
- Members: Charlene Kuenzi, Trisha Everson, and Amber Koski

■ TRINITY'S TINY TREASURES PRESCHOOL INC. (CONTINUED)

A message regarding our financial state from Kyle Everson, volunteer treasurer: "Trinity's Tiny Treasures continues to demonstrate strong and steady financial health. Generous memorial gifts from Bea Olsen and Yvonne Wedell have made it possible to install a new sign near our playground, enhancing visibility and increasing community awareness of our program. Through continued collaboration with families and Waupaca County, Tiny Treasures is proud to provide affordable, high-quality childcare to families who qualify for Wisconsin Shares assistance. In addition, a grant from the Waupaca Rotary Club has expanded our reach by supporting 4K after-school care, allowing us to serve even more children and families. Looking ahead, we are optimistic and confident in the future of Trinity's Tiny Treasures as a financially stable program committed to excellence in early childhood education and care."

Trinity's Tiny Treasures remains committed to our part in addressing the ongoing child care crisis faced by Waupaca County and the state. Our dedicated team will continue to provide safe, reliable, and high-quality care within our community. We express our sincere gratitude for the enormous blessing and support provided by Trinity Lutheran Church, which allows us to operate within this facility. We look forward to many future years of continued growth and educating Waupaca County's earliest learners.

■ NOTES

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING OPENING LITURGY

Recognizing that our faith is a living, busy, active and mighty thing, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with each of you.

And also with you.

Teach us to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Descend on our hearts, that we may love others in the ways Jesus loves us.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Empower us to be enthusiastic in pursuing your vision for our congregation.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Move us to engage issues in our community in Christlike ways, and to pursue deep and authentic relationships with those with whom we serve and partner.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Strengthen us to face the barriers we encounter in doing your work, learning to work with others amid disagreement.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Give us the ability to adapt to the cultural, economic and social changes that occur in the neighborhoods we serve.

Receive our prayer, O God.

Guide us to be a healthy congregation that learns from its failures as well as its successes and offers wisdom to others.

Receive our prayer, O God.

As we strive to become the church that we proclaim to be, raise up leaders who focus on the gospel of freedom, forgiveness and reconciliation as given to us through God's indescribable act of love in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Renew us daily in our baptism, that we may discover vitality in our relationships with you, each other and those we serve in the world.

Amen.

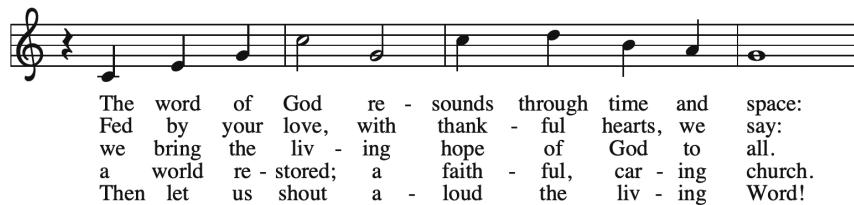
Founded on Faith



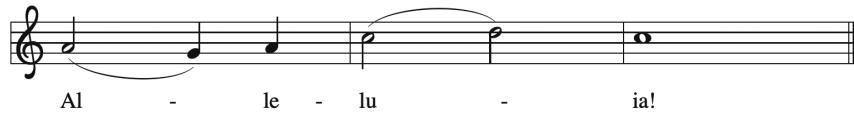
1 Found - ed on faith, the church— a - live by grace—
2 Your cross, O Christ, re - news our life each day.
3 E - quipped by prayer, we live the Spir - it's call.
4 Grow - ing in grace for God's cre - at - ed earth,
5 Found - ed on faith, called forth, em - pow'red to serve,



pro - claims the gos - pel here and ev - 'ry place.
Bap - tized in you, we learn and teach and pray.
Em - pow'red to serve with gifts, both great and small,
we yearn for jus - tice, peace, and hu - man worth;
we share God's end - less love with - out re - serve.



The word of God re - sounds through time and space:
Fed by your love, with thank - ful hearts, we say:
we bring the liv - ing hope of God to all.
a world re - stored; a faith - ful, car - ing church.
Then let us shout a - loud the liv - ing Word!



Al - le - lu - ia!

All Creation Sings, 1048

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THROUGH YOUR GENEROSITY, GOD IS AT WORK ACROSS THE ELCA.

MISSION SUPPORT

A portion of your offering, called Mission Support, advances the ministry of our church, helping the ELCA nurture Christian community, raise up leaders, serve our neighbors and strive for justice.

ELCA WORLD HUNGER

Part of our church's long tradition of meeting human needs, ELCA World Hunger testifies to our hope for and commitment to God's promise of a time when we will hunger and thirst no more. ELCA World Hunger walks alongside communities in more than 60 countries — including the United States — to create unique solutions to hunger and poverty.

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

Lutheran Disaster Response shares God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need.

WHERE NEEDED MOST

Where Needed Most supports the powerful ways we work together around the world — supporting leaders, inspiring young people, fueling ministries and championing global mission. Gifts to Where Needed Most support and sustain the people, congregations, synods and ministries working around the world to realize the hope-filled future God promises.



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

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