



Trinity Trumpet

MARCH 2026



THE STORY OF TRINITY

Last month former Trinity member Joanna Stelloh Phelps shared information she found in Trinity's 75th Anniversary Celebration booklet with our joint visioning committee. "History Nerd" me thought it was really interesting to read about our rich history here in our neighborhood! As we are currently planning and praying over what Trinity will look like in 2026 and beyond, I thought it would be a good time to share some of the highlights of our first 75 years as a congregation.

- The first service held on August 30, 1903, had to be moved from its scheduled location on a lawn to a nearby barn because of rain. There were 100 people in attendance of whom 42 were received as charter members of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church.
- Lots for the church and parsonage were given to St. Paul's by Mr. Charles Post, founder of Post Cereals. He continued to contribute financially until his death.
- The cornerstone for the church at 59 Illinois Street was laid on August 28, 1904. That cornerstone is in the narthex of our current building.
- From 1906 to 1913, our membership grew from 8 (a low point for our congregation) to 115 communing members.
- The first annual state Luther League Convention was held at St. Paul's from February 21-22, 1917. (*I remember attending state Luther League conventions in the 1960s, anyone else?*)
- The Rev. Harvey J Fenning was installed as pastor on February 22, 1929, and served until December 31, 1949. This was (*and still is*) the longest pastorate in the history of the congregation.
- In 1942, the congregation voted to change the name from St. Paul's to Trinity Lutheran Church because there existed another St. Paul's

Lutheran Church (Missouri Synod) in Battle Creek. (*When we joined over 30 years later in 1973, there still were members “cranky” about the need to change the name of our church.*)

- To celebrate our 50th anniversary in 1953, a building program began for a 35-foot expansion at the back of the building and a renovation of the interior. Worship services were held in the Post Club House. However, due to a strike at General Foods, services were moved to the incomplete basement of the church. The dedication of the renovated church was held on November 29, 1955.
- Our first son of the congregation to enter the ministry was David Darling. He served congregations in Lansing, Traverse City and California.
- Trinity hosted the annual meeting of the Michigan Synod in May of 1957.
- In 1961 it was determined that the location on Illinois Street was inadequate for our ministries and the search for a new site began. Properties in Pennfield were first explored but it was decided to search for a property east of Illinois Street either on Michigan Avenue or Columbia.
- 1965 was the year of the Building Fund Crusade when an architect was commissioned to prepare a preliminary floor plan for a future church and parish building. The church on Illinois Street was listed for sale.
- A Site Committee was formed in 1968 and was followed by the formation of a Building Committee. In October, 1968, there was a special congregation meeting to approve an architect and the building program. This was also the year the members were first trained to serve as communion deacons and lay assistants something we currently take for granted.
- Preliminary plans were approved in 1969 and the Vestry was authorized to secure bids. (*Fun Fact: We formerly called the Council the Vestry and the newsletter was called The Rapport.*)
- The cornerstone was laid in 1971 and the last service at the Illinois Street church was held on February 6, 1972. The Vestry approved renting our former church to Maranatha Christian Community. In 1975 the property was sold to St. Mark Christian Methodist Episcopal Church for \$50,000.

Our computer died & I lost a lot of my files. I found an old copy of the Trumpet in my emails to use to set up this newsletter. As I was deleting the previous articles, this line from The President's Letter written by Jeff Andert caught my eye: "While we have much work ahead, 2024 holds an exciting promise for Trinity securing and expanding our ministry." Looking back on our long rich history (nearly 123 years) while looking ahead at Trinity in 2026, these words are exceptionally appropriate right now!

Connie Everson

PRESIDENT'S REPORT RECONCILING IN CHRIST AND TRINITY

Over the last several months our internal visioning group, Trinity 2026, has identified ministries which distinguish Trinity as a congregation. This discussion identified our relationship with the Co-Op, service to the Post neighborhood and being a welcoming church. In fact, it was our Reconciling in Christ (RIC) designation which rose to the top as a ministry we hoped to continue and expand. Through this designation, Trinity is recognized as a church who values and affirms everyone for equal participation in our congregation and society as a whole. We are welcoming to all regardless of sexual orientation, gender identification, race, income, mental or physical ability, age, nationality, political ideology or religious background. The RIC expresses Trinity's commitment to those on the margins who were the focus of Jesus' blessings.

The RIC is a national program of churches who are welcoming and affirming, particularly regarding gender identification/expression, sexual orientation, race and nationality. To become an RIC congregation a process of discernment is necessary which can require two years of work by a congregation to demonstrate their commitment to these values. Being an RIC Partner requires four public commitments:

- Clearly state a welcome to people of "all sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions or LGBTQIA+ and name also name its commitment to racial equity or anti-racism in a Welcome Statement

- Be open to calling LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC (Black, Brown, Indigenous, Person of Color) Rostered Leaders.
- Allow sanctuary/community space to be used for LGBTQIA+ weddings and blessings.
- Contribute annually to the support of the national RIC program.

Trinity completed this process and was awarded the designation in 2018. Since that time, we have advertised this commitment, participated in community events and partnered with community organizations promoting these values. There are two additional congregations in Battle Creek with such designation – First Congregational Church and St. Thomas Episcopal Church. We have shared worship with these congregations. Trinity 2026 identified goals of increasing our community participation with our sister congregations.

And yet, as the Trinity 2026, identified, there is much more we can do. It is notable our most recent new members to Trinity joined us due to our RIC designation. The RIC designation provides a recognized means of publicizing Trinity's welcoming values and reaching more community members looking for a spiritual and social home. It is important for us to "walk the walk" in terms of our commitments. An example is the February 22nd Trinity RIC Sunday. This service is provided by the national RIC and all partners are encouraged to provide such services once per year, usually in January. Unfortunately, Trinity has not held such a service. Thanks are due to the committee who made this service and luncheon happen. Heidi Peterson's sermon involving her personal experience was the perfect message for the service. Stephanie Wheeler, Tish Gancer, Eileen Martens and Diane Andert all made major contributions. There is already talk of this as an annual service joining our BC Pride Festival and possible joint services with our RIC partners each year. The RIC flags are still flying!

As our visioning team has identified our strengths as a congregation, the RIC designation is a good example of a ministry we have in place but need to foster and nurture along. There are certainly others which we will be discussing in the coming months. If you have an interest in fostering our RIC program please reach out to one of the committee members.

Jeff Andert

We've been invited!

FCC-BC Church SPRING FLING POTLUCK PARTY - April 12, 2026 after
Sunday service!

April 12 will be a *gorgeous day* and is the Sunday right after *Easter!* 🐰



Pancakes & sausage will be prepared by the fabulous Dorothy, Roger & Nanc team! Coffee, tea, juices, and mimosas on the house!

Please think about special ***breakfasty or lunchy foods you'd like to share*** with our Church family & guests!! Foods like casseroles, fruit & veggie dishes, desserts, even Grandma's famous jello salad are perfect! Be sure to **invite** your family & friends too! We Love Love company!

Looking for special entertainment and springtime table decorations to brighten things up too? Buuuut most of all, we're looking to CELEBRATE the Promise of SPRING with you!!

Peace, Love, Joy 🕊️

Sharalyn Davis & Church Council 💖

616-719-7286

Words of Wisdom from The Woman's Co-Op

Happy Monday from the Co-Op 💖



If today feels heavy, you're not alone.
Building stability takes time.
Learning something new takes courage.
Asking for help takes strength.

We see people doing brave things every day – enrolling in classes,
applying for jobs, showing up even when life is messy.

You are not behind, you are building.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT LAST MONTH PART 1:



On February 1 we welcomed Dr. Candy McCorkle-Boughton back to our pulpit to share a message on the Beatitudes when she reminded us that God doesn't want us to be perfect, He gives us standards for eternal peace.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT LAST MONTH PART 2:

We welcomed Bishop Julie Schneider-Thomas on February 8. She shared a map of Michigan showing all the ELCA churches during the children's sermon. Since it was her first visit, she took our picture!! Her sermon reminded us that Jesus told us "You are the salt of the earth". A little salt can make a difference; you don't need a lot. As is our custom, we celebrated her first visit to Trinity with cake!



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT LAST MONTH PART 3:

After getting cake and coffee, members came back to the sanctuary for a question-and-answer session with Bishop Julie. Pastor Ed Ruble and several members of St. Peter also joined us. A copy of the questions and answers appears at the end of this newsletter.



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT LAST MONTH PART 4:



Pastor Erick Johnson and his wife Delia were back on February 15. He shared a wonderful children's sermon when he taught the kids to say "Jesus is Lord" in Spanish!! He gave us a powerful message that reminded us of MLK's words and seeing the light in our current world.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT LAST MONTH PART 5:

February 22 was extra special – it was our first Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Worship! Tish Gancer shared the Children's Sermon where she assembled a colorful bouquet of flowers showing the kids how beautiful it looked when all the colors came together!



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT LAST MONTH PART 6:



Heidi Peterson shared the heartfelt story of her family and how she came to visit Trinity and join our family before delivering a sermon that the life of faith is not a straight line, it's always circling back to the beginning. If you didn't have a chance to hear it, it's available on the Trinity Lutheran FaceBook page until March 22.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT LAST MONTH PART 7:

After the service, a colorful & yummy luncheon was enjoyed by all! Our first annual RIC Sunday was definitely a success!!





RECIPE CORNER

Cherry Yum - Yum

Ingredients:

- 3 ½ C. Graham Cracker Crumbs (one 14 oz box of graham crackers)
- ¾ C. (1 ½ sticks), unsalted butter melted and cooled slightly
- 2 ½ t. of kosher salt
- 8 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature
- ¾ C. sugar
- 2 C. heavy whipping cream, chilled
- 1 ½ t. of vanilla extract
- ¼ t. almond extract (optional)
- 2 21 ounce cans of cherry pie filling

1. In a medium bowl, combine graham cracker crumbs, butter and 1 ½ t. salt. Stir thoroughly to combine, then set aside.
2. Add the cream cheese, sugar and remaining salt to a large bowl, if using a hand mixer, or to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment. Beat on medium-high speed until the cream cheese has become fluffy and the sugar has started to dissolve, about 1 minute. Scrape down the sides of the bowl and add the heavy cream, vanilla extra and almond extract (if using). Beat on low speed to combine, then raise the speed to medium-high and beat until medium peaks form, 1 to 2 minutes.
3. In a glass or metal 9 x 13 pan, add half of the graham cracker mixture and press firmly into an even layer. Add half of the cream mixture on top and smooth into an even layer, making sure it fully covers the graham cracker crust. Add both cans of cherry pie filling and gently smooth into an even layer over the cream mixture. Top with a layer of the remaining cream then the remaining graham crackers mixture. Cover and chill overnight (or at least 4 hours).
4. Scoop to serve, straight from the refrigerator, into bowls or plates. Cherry yum-yum will keep in the refrigerator for at least 5 days.

March Prayer Partners

We are praying weekly for Lutheran Congregations in our Synod. Our prayer partners for March are:



March 1 – Hope Evangelical Church, Plainwell, Rev. Nicole Smith

March 8 – Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Portage, Rev. Martha Porter-Reid

March 15 – Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Portage,
Rev. Rachel Laughlin

March 22 – Leer Lutheran Church, Posen, Supply Pastors

March 29 – St. Paul Lutheran Church, Reed City, Rev. Marcy Miller

Worship Volunteers & Readings for March

Lay Assistants, Sound Board

March 1 – LA: Jeff Andert
Sound: Ellis Cutler
Streaming: Doug Martens

March 8 – LA: Mary Conklin
Sound: Staff
Streaming: Doug Martens

March 15 – LA: Tresa Garver
Sound: Ellis Cutler
Streaming: Doug Martens

March 22 – LA: Chase Lehman
Sound: Staff
Streaming: Doug Martens

March 29 – LA: Laurie Swanson
Sound: Elli Cutler
Streaming: Doug Martens

Readings

Genesis 12: 1 – 4a
Psalm 121
Romans 4: 1 – 5, 13 – 17
John 3: 1 – 17

Exodus 17: 1 – 7
Psalm 95
Romans 5: 1 – 11
John 4: 5 – 42

1 Samuel 16: 1 – 13
Psalm 23
Ephesians 5: 8 – 14
John 9: 1 – 41

Ezekiel 37: 1 – 14
Psalm 130
Romans 8: 6 – 11
John 11: 1 – 45

Matthew 21: 1 – 11
Isaiah 50: 4 – 9a
Psalm 31: 9 – 16
Philippians 2: 5 – 11
Matthew 26: 14 – 27; 66

March Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

3/29 – Eileen Martens
3/29 – Gwen Geselle
3/30 – Diane Andert
3/31 – Kendra Witkowski - Lehman

Anniversaries

3/13 – Doug & Eileen Martens



Prayer Requests

COMMUNITY

Sharon Cutler
Pam Ellison-Kring
Linda Hermann
Tish Gancer
Diane Andert
JoAnn Rusan
Steven Rusan
Dan Cox
Michelle Tooker
Damian Diamante (deployed)



IN OUR HEARTS/ON OUR MINDS

Cliff Whitney (Val's Husband)
Howard Winnie (Val's Father)
Rod Tungate (Janelle Hickey's
Uncle)
Colton Will (Andert's Grand-
Nephew)
Roseann Littel (Connie
Everson's Cousin)
Bob Kampius

OTHER WAYS TO CONNECT WITH TRINITY

Trinity's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/trinity.church.581>

"Like" the Trinity Facebook page to follow events and activities.

WEBSITE

Trinity website: <http://www.tlcbattlecreek.org>

Check out the **What's New** tab to see the latest events going on at Trinity. You can also find transcripts of Pastor Kjersten's sermons under the **Worship** tab.

TRUMPET

To update your newsletter email/mail preferences, contact Pastor Kjersten at pastor@tlcbattlecreek.org or 963-5356. Let us know if you would like to be added our quarterly mailing list to receive a color brochure of what's new at Trinity.

ONLINE GIVING

Trinity now has online giving. Simply go to Trinity's website, <http://www.tlcbattlecreek.org> and click on the yellow button that says "Donate" on the bottom left corner of the page. Or go to Trinity's Facebook page and click on the blue button that says "Donate" on the right side of the page.

MAR2026

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

01	02	03	04	05	06	07
10:30 Worship Coffee Hour	1 – 4 Co-Op Monday Mingle 7 Trinity 2026	12:30 Franklin Pantry	6:30 Choir			
08	09	10	11	12	13	14
10:30 Worship Coffee Hour	1 – 4 Co-Op Monday Mingle		6:30 Choir			
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
10:30 Worship Coffee Hour Lily Orders Due 	1 – 4 Co-Op Monday Mingle		6:30 Choir	11:30 Road Runners @ Applebees		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
10:30 Worship Coffee Hour	1 – 4 Co-Op Monday Mingle 7 Trinity/St Peter Visioning @ TLC	7 Council	6:30 Choir			
29	30	31				
10:30 Worship Coffee Hour Palm Sunday 	1 – 4 Co-Op Monday Mingle					

Q & As with Bishop Julie Schneider-Thomas, 2/8/26

- How many congregations are doing something like this in the Synod right now? There are 3 – 4 groups working on similar project. We are unique because we are looking at sharing a pastor and adding a staff member. We are not the only ones with the 75-25 split.
- What is the Bishop's experience in a shared ministry?
 1. The church she was at for 30 years reduced her time to 75% then a church nearby (20 minutes apart) was a restart congregation and could not afford a fulltime person and contracted with her for 25% of her time.
 2. Both congregations changed their worship times a little bit.
 3. They started doing things together (Advent & Lent) along with many "fun" things to build a relationship.
 4. The pandemic really brought their congregations together because three congregations (her two and her husband's one) were attending services televised from her living room.
 5. She noted that the relationship cannot be dependent on the pastor, it must be dependent on the congregations.
 6. "We are serving God in two churches!"
- Is there a worry about "Pastor Burn Out"?
 1. Pastors are trained as ministers of the word and sacrament but, in a small congregation, they take on other things like boilers (and roofs ...).
 2. Having the extra hire will help alleviate "Pastor Burn Out".
 3. Pastor Ed added that without the extra person he could not do this. We will not be able to start this collaboration without the extra person in place. He could, however, act as a supply pastor until this person is hired.
- How to do church differently? "We serve one God"! Applaud those that want to do this, otherwise, churches die.
- What will the resume of the person hired look like?
 1. Will wear a "social worker hat".
 2. Work with the amazing assets at the Co-Op.
 3. Grant writing.
- Pastor Ed
 1. There will be 2 independent councils, he will have a vote at St. Peter but not at Trinity.
 2. Note: A call can be made to only one congregation.
 3. For Bishop Julie, being at two churches while being called to only one was not an issue, she was the pastor at both.
 4. Pastor Julie had a meeting with both of those churches to plan for a joint contract.
 5. The contract needs to be organic, it needs less structure at the beginning.

- In the past, Trinity had several grants from the Synod, will we be eligible again?
 1. Trinity was formerly a “strategic congregation” a classification which no longer exists.
 2. This does not mean there aren’t other things now available, things that both churches can look at together.
 3. Look for grants to be a bigger presence in the community.
Ex: A Lily Foundation Grant to help fund Alternative Choices to help bring folks to Songs at St. Peter.

- Process & Timing
 1. Hoping to get part of it going sometime after Easter.
 2. Things we do together already: Songs at St. Peter, FED
 3. The Bishop needs to see the contract between the two congregations but does not need to sign off.

- Does the Synod have anything to lift up lay people to help serve both congregations?
 1. On the radar but staff is not available right now, hopefully in the spring.
 2. More congregations need full time pastors but fewer are “coming down the pipeline”.
 3. We have people that can fill some of these rolls, they will need some training.
 4. The new hire will be a lay leader; part of their job will be to raise up more lay leaders.
 5. Trinity has been doing more with lay leaders in the past year with the downside being a lack of weekly sacrament.
 6. What is going to strengthen each congregation is us!

- Advice on how to bring people into the new plan that are less than “excited”?
 1. Make sure they are “heard”.
 2. Listen and then get them to the right folks that will tell them that it will be ok – do not let them stay on the outside and complain.
 3. Hoping people will come with open hearts and say we’re praying the Holy Spirit will bring us to something new.
 4. If it fails, at least we can say “we tried”.
 5. Adventures can sometimes be “uncomfortable”. Bishop Julie can attest to that!