

Tidings



A Monthly Publication from Trinity United Methodist Church, Tallahassee, FL

A Celebration of Service: Visit Trinity's Ministry Fair on August 10, 2025

By Susan Koehler, Director of Communications

Join us as we showcase the ministries, missions, outreach, discipleship, events, and activities of Trinity United Methodist Church. The Ministry Fair will be held in Moor Hall on Sunday, August 10. We will have only one service that day—at 11:00 a.m.—in the sanctuary. (Remember, we'll have our Blessing of the Backpacks during that service. See the next page for more details!) After the service, we invite you to meander through the displays, collect information, chat with ministry sponsors, make new friends, and learn about the many opportunities for service and connection.

Are you usually ready for lunch right after church? No problem! Hot dogs, chips, and treats will be served in the prayer garden, and seating will be available in the conference room, prayer garden, and multiple other areas throughout the grounds. We hope you will relax, enjoy the food and fellowship, and then take your time strolling through the Ministry Fair displays. After the service, in addition to lunch and the Ministry Fair, you can cool off with a snowcone or splash down a waterslide on our playground! Be sure to mark your calendars now. We look forward to seeing you on Sunday, August 10, 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., for a special combined service and all the fun that follows!

See a list of some of our Ministry Fair booths on the next page!

In This Issue

Trinity's Ministry Fair	1, 2
Blessing of the Backpacks.....	2
Stewardship Campaign Chairs.....	3
Grace in Every Dollar	3-5
Memorials and Honoraiums	5
Pilgrimage Reflections.....	6, 7
Preserving Isn't Just for Peaches ...	8
Nourishing the Soul.....	9
Join an Open Share Group!	9
Meet Alex Taylor	10
Children's Ministry Update	11
Preschool Update.....	11
Trinity Youth Happenings.....	11

Ministry Fair, *continued*

Check out some of the ministries that will be on display:

- Music Ministry
- Guatemala Ministry
- Mats for Firends
- JOY Club (Just Older Youth)
- BFC (Becoming Fit at Church)
- Trinity United Methodist Preschool
- Youth Ministry
- Creation Care
- Prayers and Squares
- Young Adult Ministry
- Zoe Empowers
- Club Cars / Ushers
- Acolytes
- Disaster Response Team
- Prayer Garden
- Care Ministry (HEO)
- Celebrate Recovery and Centering Prayer
- Residing Hope
- History and Preservation
- CAJM (Capital Area Justice Minitry)
- Altar Guild

... and more!

See you at the Ministry Fair on August 10!



Blessing of the Backpacks

By Susan Koehler, Director of Communications

Last year, we enjoyed a big crowd for our Blessing of the Backpacks in preparation for the start of school. In addition to the prayer, each backpack was given a special tag as a reminder of Trinity's love and support. This year, we once again invite our students, teachers, and school administrators to bring their backpacks. We want you to begin the school year with a blessing and to receive a tag as a reminder that you are surrounded by a community of love and support.



Senior Director of Christian Education Candace Duclos, surrounded by students, teachers, and administrators, leads the Blessing of the Backpacks in August 2024.

Our 2025 Blessing of the Backpacks will take place in the sanctuary on Sunday, August 10, during the 11:00 a.m. service. There will be only one service that day. After the service, we can enjoy all the festivities going on, including the Ministry Fair in Moor Hall, hot dogs, chips, and treats in the prayer garden, and a waterslide on the playground. The fun continues until 1:30 p.m. Put August 10 on your calendars now, and be sure to join us for a day of prayer, worship, fellowship, food, and fun!

Stewardship Campaign Chairs Named

By Susan Koehler, Director of Communications

Trinity's upcoming Stewardship Campaign will be chaired by Michael and Donna Bryan. The Bryans are longtime members with a consistent track record of service and commitment to Trinity's ministries and programs, especially in the area of music. Michael is the recently retired principal of Leon High School, and Donna is an IT Systems Administrator at the FLDFS/Division of Rehab and Liquidation.



*Donna and Michael Bryan,
Stewardship Chairs*

This year's Stewardship Campaign will begin on Sunday, September 7. In past years, the campaign has taken place in November, leaving little time for new year budgeting and planning. By moving the campaign to September, we hope to start 2026 with a clear and well-supported plan for our missions and ministries in the year ahead.

Grace in Every Dollar: How Trinity UMC's Finances Fuel Its Mission

By Laurie Atteberry, Business Administrator, and Frank Mercer, Finance Committee Chair

As we prepare our hearts and minds for the upcoming Stewardship Campaign, an overview of our current financial structures and practices is in order. Rooted in stewardship, accountability, and a shared commitment to ministry and the community, Trinity's financial practices embrace a long-term vision, ensuring a robust environment of worship and service today while building a strong foundation for generations to come. Trinity's financial structure is designed not just to keep the lights on, but to shine the light of Christ in our community and beyond.

Ways to Give: Faith in Action

Trinity's faithful and generous congregation makes our financial vitality possible. Congregational giving supports the church in multiple ways. A variety of giving opportunities allows members and supporters to contribute in ways that reflect their personal convictions and passions.

- **General Pledges and Offerings:** The backbone of the church's operating budget comes from member pledges and weekly offerings. These funds support the core functions of Trinity, including worship, pastoral leadership, congregational care, education, outreach, and the operation of church facilities.
- **Designated Gifts:** Want to support a specific cause close to your heart? In addition to general giving, individuals can direct contributions to specific ministries, projects, or causes. Designated accounts ensure that these gifts are held separately from the general budget and used solely for their intended purposes. Examples include funds for local and global missions, charitable benevolence, building improvements, youth programs, and other special projects. Please contact the church financial office to discuss the many designated ministries to which you can donate.
- **Endowment and Trust Contributions:** Members may also give to Trinity's endowments and trust funds, which serve as long-term financial resources for the church. Most of these funds remain untouched, with only the earnings used, ensuring a legacy that lasts. These contributions strengthen the church's ability to plan for the future, respond to unexpected needs, and maintain essential ministries across generations. See more detailed information below.
- **Estate Gifts and Property Gifts:** Consider leaving a lasting legacy by remembering Trinity in your will or by gifting property. Property gifts require Trustee Committee approval. Please reach out the financial office to learn more.

This layered approach to giving—general, designated, and endowment-focused—provides both stability and flexibility, empowering the church to respond to present needs and plan boldly for the future.

Grace in Every Dollar, *continued*

How to Give

Supporting Trinity is simple, secure, and flexibly designed to fit your lifestyle and generosity goals.

- **ACH Monthly Deductions:** Set up through the church finance office for easy, automated giving.
- **Cash or Check:** Drop off during services or mail to the church office.
- **Online Giving:** Use your credit or debit card anytime at www.tumct.org/giving.
- **Recurring Gifts:** Set up automatic payments through your personal online banking institution.
- **IRA Qualified Tax-Free Charitable Distributions:** If you're 70½ or over, you can make a tax-free gift directly from your qualified IRA. Talk with your financial advisor for details.
- **Estate Gifts (Monetary or Property):** Leave a lasting legacy through your will or by gifting property (property gifts require Trustee Committee approval).
- **Stocks and Bonds:** Trinity welcomes contributions of stocks and bonds. Please contact the church financial office for more information.

Your recurring or planned gifts ensure that Trinity can continue its vital work with stability and strength for years to come.

How Trinity Organizes Its Finances

To ensure clarity and accountability, Trinity's finances are managed across several well-defined categories:

1. **Operating Accounts:** These funds cover day-to-day ministry expenses—salaries, worship, music, congregational programs, utilities, property maintenance, and administration costs.
2. **Designated and Restricted Accounts:** These funds are earmarked for specific ministries or projects. Donors can be confident their contributions are used as the donor intended. Common designations include benevolence, justice ministry, children and youth programs, facility projects, technology improvements, missions, and music ministry. Please contact the church financial office to discuss these gift opportunities and get additional information.
3. **Endowment and Trust Accounts:** These long-term investments provide sustainable income for scholarships, missions, facilities, and more. See additional detailed information below.

Spotlight: Trinity's Endowments, Trusts, and Other Funds

Trinity's endowments, trusts, and other funds are a vital part of our long-term strength. These funds grow over time and allow us to support essential ministries without dipping into principal. Donations can be made to each of these funds. Please contact the church financial office for additional information. Here is a look at some of the key accounts currently supporting our church.

- **Trinity Trust:**
Contributing monthly to the operating budget, this trust supplements annual giving and is a cornerstone of Trinity's long-term financial health.
- **Collins Trust:**
This trust currently supports capital improvements.
- **Middlebrooks Trust:**
This trust is dedicated to the care and upkeep of Trinity's buildings and grounds.
- **Organ Fund:**
This trust preserves and maintains our beautiful sanctuary organ, a cornerstone of our worship and music ministry.
- **Ministry Scholarship Fund:**
This fund equips future leaders by supporting education and continuing ministry development through scholarships and continuing education endeavors, such as workshops that align with the church's mission.

continued...

Grace in Every Dollar, *continued*

- **Peters Family Endowment for Mission:**
The purpose of this endowment is to strengthen Trinity’s outreach and mission efforts both locally and globally.
- **The Rolland Fund:** Designed to support our HEO (Helping Each Other) and Music Ministries.

The aforementioned trusts were created by members who wished to have their financial gifts continue to support Trinity long after their lives ended. These funds have increased in value and impact almost every year. We encourage our membership to consider this generous and effective plan for perpetuity. It is simply the most effective way to express our support and love for God and growing the faith community through Trinity’s stewardship, forever.

Have Questions or Want to Explore Giving Opportunities?

Reach out to the church financial office to learn more about how you can support Trinity’s operations, missions, and ministries.

Stewardship: Fueling Our Mission with Faith and Generosity

At Trinity, faithful stewardship isn’t just about balancing budgets—it’s about building a foundation for our shared vision of the future. It’s a spiritual practice rooted in gratitude, trust, and vision. Every gift, every pledge, and every act of generosity becomes part of something bigger: a church that worships deeply, serves boldly, and reaches far beyond its walls.

Behind the scenes, dedicated members of the Finance, Investment, and Staff Parish Relations Committees, along with the Church Council and our hardworking clergy and staff, give thoughtful oversight to every financial decision. With prayer, discernment, and a clear focus on Trinity’s mission, each year’s budget is carefully crafted to support worship, service, education, and outreach.

Thanks to your generosity, wise planning, and a shared spirit of stewardship, Trinity remains financially strong and mission ready—not just for today, but for generations to come.

Mark Your Calendar: 2025 Stewardship Schedule

Our annual Stewardship Campaign begins on September 7 and culminates on Commitment Sunday, September 28. We encourage you to begin prayerfully considering your financial commitments to support Trinity’s mission and ministries in 2026. Your faithful giving helps fuel our worship, outreach, education, and service—now and into the future. Let’s journey together with generosity and purpose!

Memorials and Honorariums

June, July, and August 2025

- In memory of Sandy Frazier from United Women in Faith, Circle One
- In memory of Calynne Andrews Hill from Elizabeth Leggett
- In memory of Mart P. Hill from Mr. & Mrs. Patrick Conn, Jonathan Ward
- In memory of Bob Higginbotham from William and Barbara Bodie
- In memory of Martha Cureton from Dr. and Mrs. David Hortin
- In memory of Al and Millie Ferkany from Emily Waugh and Nancy Waugh
- In memory of Bill and Alice Grow from Allison Grow, M.D.
- In honor of Nancy Waugh from Jennings Brock, Margaret Hall, Christine Morrow, Robert Morrow, Nancy Smith, Harry Stowers, Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Stowers, Richard Stowers, Stewart Stowers, Emily Waugh, Goree Waugh, Harry Waugh, Jr., Mary Moak
- In honor of Janye Mittan from United Women in Faith
- In honor of Linda Rogers – Margie Tullos

Pilgrimage Reflections

By Rev. Dr. Matthew M. Williams, Senior Pastor

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it."
Psalm 24:1

Father Jerome Carosella was the eldest and most experienced clergyperson among the four churches on the island of Boca Grande, the place where I served for seven years as Senior Pastor of Lighthouse United Methodist Church. He had served Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church on the island for over thirty years and was very accustomed to the seasonal and affluent nature of the island and its residents.

Father Carosella watched as we embarked on an ambitious campaign to take the old parsonage down to the original exterior walls, lift it five feet, redesign it as an office building, enlarge it, and connect it to the church, all while keeping the facade on Third Street looking like a house. We even restored the original front porch, complete with screens and rocking chairs. Raising 2.5 million dollars and working with the town's historic preservation board was not for the faint of heart. However, even with challenges, setbacks, and victories, we completed it without accumulating any debt, and it will stand for generations to come.

I always knew the project was possible, and thanks to the faithful and gifted laity, it came to pass. During one of the challenging points in the process, Father Carosella (from here on out, Jerry) said to me: "Go to Rome—you will see that anything is possible—and you will connect with God. I have some contacts there, and I went to seminary at the Jesuit University."

I had always felt a need to embark on a quiet pilgrimage. I didn't know how to do this. I am accustomed to leading and hosting trips, not necessarily seeing God as my host. I first heard about the depth of a pilgrimage like this one when worshipping at the First United Methodist Church of Seattle, Washington. We sang the hymn "Bring Forth the Kingdom" from *The Faith We Sing*, and Rev. Dr. Sandy Brown shared his story of a recent three-month pilgrimage walking the Camino de Santiago. He returned able to see God's Kingdom more clearly in himself and others.

It took me many years, but I finally made it to Rome. With the full support of our Staff Parish Relations Committee, I embarked on a pilgrimage right after the public phases of our Onward Visioning Process were complete. I experienced exactly what Jerry had told me many years before. In fact, because of his generosity, care, and connections, I stayed in the Vatican at the Jesuit Generalate—the world headquarters of the Society of Jesus, adjacent to where he had attended seminary.

One of the things I treasured most about the pilgrimage was that the building I stayed in was silent. Adorned with centuries-old artwork, winding staircases, wooden shutters, and green gardens, it is a place of quiet peace. As you may know, I have the personality of a "forced extrovert," and one of my challenges is dealing with fear. I compensate for this with perfectionism and drive, often overthinking and moving too fast. Thus, staying in this place in and of itself was a pilgrimage—a place away from the noise and out of the weeds. I'm grateful to say that I was able to grow spiritually in the silence and solace of the Generalate.



Rev. Dr. Matthew M. Williams in Vatican Square



Michelangelo's Pieta

In addition, all that Jerry said was true. Rome wasn't built in a day, but my word...was it built! I have visited many countries while working on mission trips and pursuing my higher education. I have toured and worshipped in churches and cathedrals all over the world. I have led tours of the Holy Land and have preached in brush arbors in Central America. In all of these places, I had not yet seen anything like Rome. Italy is a beautiful country, and Rome is a city renowned for its architectural and artistic delights. Centuries build upon one another, echoing the foundations of changes in history, religion, and societal norms.

Roman Catholics from all over the world were in Rome as their church was having a Jubilee pilgrimage year. I spent most of my time following in their footsteps, visiting the Vatican Museums, the Sistine Chapel, the Papal Basilicas, and local churches. Both captivating and stunning, the sculptures, paintings, mosaics, and frescoes were unbelievable to see. It was like my Art History classes in college were in real time. Beholding Michelangelo's Pieta and Bernini's Fountain of the Four Rivers was a dream come true. I was also profoundly moved by the statue of Veronica, the Sixth Station of the Cross, in St. Peter's Basilica. That mystery has always enamored me: the woman stepping forward to wipe the tears of Jesus as he carried his cross.



The Tomb of Pope Francis

Equally profound was standing before the tomb of the late Pope Francis at the Basilica of St. Mary Major. His unadorned memorial, the simplest I saw, spoke volumes about humility and service. I also attended Sunday Mass at St. Peter's Basilica and had the privilege of participating in a Papal Mass presided over by Pope Leo XIV, the first American pope.

Growing older does not erase challenges, but it deepens our awareness of them and opens doors to new spiritual practices. This pilgrimage rekindled what I often discovered while writing sermons on Boca Grande's beaches or boating in the St. Mark's River: God's creation is astounding, always before our eyes.

Rome's grandeur, built by human hands, rises from the earth God created and rests beneath the sky that sustains us. As a Christian, I find myself living in the "in-between"—between prayer and answer, plan and outcome, giving and receiving encouragement. The list goes on, a quiet rhythm of longing and hope that shapes the life of faith.

Isn't that most of us? Are we not all "in-between" people? Is this not why we pray, seek, and serve as followers of Christ, reaching for the divine while tethered to the earth?

Across from the Jesuit Generalate in Rome stands the church of Santo Spirito in Sassia, a sanctuary whose history dates back to the 8th century. Founded as part of the Schola Saxonum, a haven for Anglo-Saxon pilgrims drawn to the tombs of the apostles, it was built to offer spiritual solace and physical care through its adjacent hospital. Rebuilt in the 12th century by Pope Innocent III and entrusted to the Order of the Holy Spirit, it became a beacon of charity and compassion. By the late 15th century, Pope Sixtus IV transformed it again for the Jubilee of 1475, with architect Baccio Pontelli crafting its elegant Renaissance form. In 1992, Pope John Paul II designated it the center of the Divine Mercy devotion, inspired by St. Faustina Kowalska's visions. In 1994, it was rededicated as the Sanctuary of Divine Mercy—a place where pilgrims gather to encounter God's boundless mercy.

One afternoon, I crossed the street to Santo Spirito in Sassia to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, a prayer I first learned as a child watching television, its words etched in my heart. Each day at 3:00 p.m., the church fills with the soft cadence of this devotion, a plea for mercy that echoes through time. As I approached the side doors, I noticed the stone steps were worn down in the middle, smoothed by centuries of pilgrims' feet. For over a millennium, countless souls, all living in their own "in-between," had climbed those steps, seeking solace, hope, and God's presence, just as I did that day.



Street of Jesuit Generalate, an evening view of the dome of St. Peter's Basilica

Standing there, surrounded by the church's ancient stones and the faint glow of the Divine Mercy image of Christ, I felt a profound truth settle in my soul: perfection does not exist in the in-between, but the journey toward it does. We are all being built, stone by stone, like cathedrals in progress. Our lives, imperfect and unfinished, are works of divine artistry.

I look forward to the day when future pilgrims can gaze upon the cathedral of my life—not perfect, but shaped by the story of God's grace—and find inspiration to continue growing, learning, and practicing stillness in their own in-between seasons. When I slow down and stay present, I see this happening in Trinity. A renewed vision and mission are leading us onward. We are growing as followers of Christ. There is beauty and there is hope.

We are becoming the worn steps that others climb—the steady foundation built not of stone and mortar, but of lives faithfully lived in the unknown spaces in between. We are the generation that will make great strides for the Kingdom, both locally and around the world. If we see this journey as a pilgrimage, we will listen closely to the whisper of God and see clearly that it is we who are being built into the likeness of Christ by the Great Architect.



Veronica, Station 6

I embarked on this pilgrimage to see great things, and I did. Moreover, I saw God in the painted stories of faith and in the eyes of fellow pilgrims. I tasted God in the bounty of food and in the Eucharist. I prayed to God, only to rediscover the meaning of prayer itself.

As the plane lifted off to carry me back across the Atlantic, I thanked God for Jerry, whose wisdom and kindness guided me to this sacred journey.

To hear more spiritual insights from Rev. Dr. Matthew's pilgrimage, listen to the sermons from June 22 and 29 on [Trinity's Youtube channel](#).

Preserving Isn't Just for Peaches

By Amy M. Jones, Member of Trinity's Committee for the Preservation of Church History

Remember when you were a child, enjoying the delicious homemade peach preserves your grandmother spread on a warm biscuit or drizzled over homemade ice cream? All the effort she invested in preserving those peaches served to make great memories that became part of your life's history. A similar effort is being made to preserve the history of God's work through Trinity United Methodist Church.



Under the Book of Discipline, the Senior Pastor is responsible for preserving the history of the church. Pastors already have a great number of responsibilities, so many years ago, Trinity created the Committee for the Preservation of Church History (CPOCH), now chaired by Cecile Baker. Lynn McLarty is the official historian of Trinity.

Committee for the Preservation of Church History

The all-volunteer CPOCH is sanctioned by the Church Council and is an official part of Trinity's administrative structure. The current committee is made up of six people, but there are many other volunteers who assist with our efforts.

This committee and its members are responsible for preserving the historical documents, artifacts, and photographs that depict Trinity's work. This includes securing all the relevant material, sorting it into categories, labeling it, and storing it in a manner that will allow it to be preserved over time. This process is reminiscent of the way your grandmother gathered the peaches, then sorted, peeled, and cooked them. She was properly preserving the peaches for future consumption.

Previous efforts of church members at preserving Trinity's history were clearly evident in our 2024 Bicentennial Celebration. Work is still being done to inventory all the documents and group them by subject for easier research. With a new website dedicated to Trinity's history, much of our preserved history will soon be online for all to use.

Trinity Historical Society

Separate from the CPOCH is the Trinity Historical Society, made up of church members who develop ways to present our preserved history. Their responsibilities include the production of *Crossroads*, articles in *Tidings*, Lay Academy presentations, and the material presented during the bicentennial. The role played by this group of volunteers in the life of Trinity can be compared to cranking the ice cream churn on the back porch or stirring up biscuit dough so grandmother's peach preserves can be consumed.

Trinity is a leader in preserving its history, as evidenced by the Yates Heritage Center, the only entity of its kind in Florida's United Methodist Conference. While it was a vision of many, Bob and Linda Yates brought the vision to life, and it continues to expand with every artifact now identified and often displayed.

Volunteers Needed

While church staff support the preservation efforts, volunteers make it happen. Our church's volunteer historians have contributed tens of thousands of hours to keep the legacy of Trinity alive and meaningful. However, more volunteers of all ages are needed. Volunteers can contribute on a routine basis, to a specific project, at a one-time event, or as needed. We hope you will consider joining your fellow church members in preserving Trinity's rich history for the next 100 years. Please email preservation@tumct.com if you would like to help, and be sure to visit our booth at the August 10 Ministry Fair.

As a child, you may not have thought it was fun to help grandmother preserve peaches, but looking back, helping her create great family memories was wonderful. Come help Trinity "preserve its peaches" by volunteering today.



Nourishing the Soul: Practices for Inner Peace

By Margie Clay, Trinity Member

When God is at your core, everything changes.



If your prayer routine is starting to feel a bit stale, why not try out Lectio Divina and Centering Prayer for a fresh take on Scripture and a closer connection with God? Come to our weekly group sessions to learn and practice these together—check out the details below.

Lectio Divina: Deepening Your Prayer Life

How a Simple Practice Can Bring You Closer to God

If you're looking for a way to make your prayer life feel more real and personal, Lectio Divina might be exactly what you need. Instead of just reading the Bible quickly, this practice helps you slow down and really soak in each word. It's like having a heartfelt chat with God—one where you actually pause, reflect, and listen. The steps are simple: read a verse or two, think it over, pray, and just sit quietly with it. You might find that verses you've read a hundred times suddenly feel new or speak to you in ways you never expected. Bit by bit, Lectio Divina can turn quiet moments into opportunities for real growth and connection, making your prayer time something you look forward to, not just another thing to check off the list.

Interested in joining, or have questions? Visit the "Lectio Divina and Centering Prayer" table at the Ministry Fair in Moor Hall on August 10, or contact Margie Clay at margietally@comcast.net. The group will set a meeting time after the fair.

The Power of Centering Prayer

A Simple, Calming Spiritual Practice

Centering Prayer is a gentle, relaxing way to connect with God. Instead of talking or reciting words, you sit quietly and let your thoughts drift by, returning to a chosen word whenever your mind starts to wander. It's a bit like meditation, but with a spiritual twist. Practicing Centering Prayer can really help take the edge off stress, bring a little more calm into your busy day, and help you feel more in tune with what's going on inside. Over time, people find it makes them more aware of the presence of God throughout the day, more patient, and more open-hearted—not just with themselves, but with others, too. If you're looking for a simple way to recharge and find a little peace, Centering Prayer might be just what you need.

Join an Open Share Group!

By Margie Clay, Trinity Member

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed."

Psalm 34:18

Looking for a safe, welcoming space to talk things out? The new Trinity Open Share Groups are just that—a place where you can open up, get honest, and find real support. Each group is led by someone who's been on their own recovery journey, so they get it. There are some simple ground rules: everyone shares from their own experience, keeps things private, and listens without interrupting, so nobody feels left out. Instead of trying to "fix" each other, the group is all about encouragement, understanding, and having each other's backs. It's a great way to make real connections and feel less alone—plus, hearing how others have handled similar challenges can be really inspiring.

There's a women's Open Share Small Group meeting every Tuesday, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., starting August 19. Want to learn more? Stop by the "Open Share Small Groups" table at the Ministry Fair on August 10 in Moor Hall, or contact Margie Clay at margietally@comcast.net.

**CELEBRATE RECOVERY
OPEN SHARE GROUPS**

*A Christ-centered recovery program offering
freedom from life's hurts, habits, and hang-ups*

**Doubt, abuse, anger, anxiety, fear, divorce,
eating disorders, substance abuse, job loss,
grief, perfectionism, shame, stress,
overspending, perfectionism...**

*Women's group begins 8/19
Men's group coming soon*

Meet Alex Taylor

By Susan Koehler, Director of Communications

Alex Taylor is Trinity's full-time Contemporary Music Worship Leader. Since his arrival in June, Alex has easily made connections, has added depth and beauty to worship services, and has become a comfortable presence for staff and congregants alike. We're grateful for this opportunity to learn more about Alex and his family.



Alex, Karen, and Max Taylor

We're so happy that you've joined us, and we'd love to know more about your background.

I'm a Tallahassee local. I attended Florida High from 3rd through 12th grades and went to FSU to study International Affairs. My family were members of Chaires Methodist, and my childhood was full of covered dishes, children's sermons, and felt board Bible stories. Summer camp at Warren W. Willis was usually the highlight of my year, and it's also where I first picked up a guitar.

We're certainly glad you picked up that guitar! Tell us more about your life as a musician.

I played trumpet in middle and high school—marching band, All-State, the whole thing. I sang alto in the church choir for special occasions like Christmas and Tenebrae. Eventually, I picked up guitar and started channeling all my musical energy into playing the kind of campfire worship songs we did at church camp. That led me toward songwriting, joining an indie rock band, doing a little touring, and eventually moving to NYC to try to make it in music. While there, I started two recording projects: *Washer Dryer*, a rock band with my wife Karen, and *Colorvault*, a worship collective focused on bringing new songs and sounds to the worship world.

Now that you've settled in at Trinity, how would you describe your role here?

Primarily, I see myself as a singer—but I also think that managing the repertoire of songs and leading the volunteer band is a big part of what I do. And I suppose, at the core of it, is the purpose of encouraging others to sing, too. I believe deeply in the power and beauty of congregational singing, and I would never prefer to be singing alone.

What have you found to be your favorite things about working at Trinity?

Well, not gonna lie... I love my office! I've also found the rest of the staff to be exceptionally kind-hearted and easy to work with. So far, I've really enjoyed coming into the church and being busy preparing for Sundays.

We know music consumes a lot of your time, but what are your hobbies and interests outside of music?

I'm a very curious person and have sooo many interests—just not nearly enough time to pursue them all. I have a three-year-old, and when I'm not writing, rehearsing, or recording music, I'm usually hanging out with him.

Tell us more about your wonderful family!

My home is a very musical one. My wife Karen is my longtime bandmate and writing partner, and we're always up to something musical. Our son Max sings, dances, and toots on my trumpet—it's basically a racket all the time. Karen's parents are our neighbors, and my dad lives here in town, so we spend a lot of free time with family.

Our senior pastor often refers to Trinity as “the most exciting church in Tallahassee.” What excites you about being here?

Well, I think the building is quite stunning and a real gift. I also think the location, right in the heart of the city, makes this a unique gathering place for people from all over. Having grown up in the Methodist church, I know there's a deep tradition here—but I also sense a willingness to try new things and look for fresh expressions of faith. I love that.

If you could tell the people of Trinity one more thing, what would it be?

Please feel free to come and talk to me. I love meeting new people!

Thanks, Alex. We're grateful that you've become a part of our Trinity family, and we've enjoyed learning more about you. For fun, let's close out our interview with a lightning round of your favorites!

- Favorite food?** Pizza or French fries
- Favorite dessert?** Mochi Ice Cream
- Favorite genre of music?** Pass
- Favorite game?** Ticket to Ride
- Favorite holiday?** Christmas

- Dream vacation?** Backpacking Europe
- If you could have one superpower, what would it be?** Never being anxious
- Favorite team?** FSU
- Favorite Bible verse?** “It is finished.”

Children's Ministry Update

By Candace Duclos, Director of Christian Education

W oohoo, summer has been fun, but now it's done! We enjoyed VBS, our summer dinner series, Sunday school, and the Parenting Village Pool Party (right).



We're looking forward to Sunday, August 10, when we have our Blessing of the Backpacks during our one service at 11:00 a.m. in the sanctuary. Wear your bathing suit under your church clothes and bring a towel so you can enjoy the outside water events, including a WATER SLIDE!

We hope everyone has a great start to the new school year. Our Wednesday activities will resume on August 27. Look for registration information coming soon.



Preschool Update

By Erin Casey, Director of Preschool



I t's been a busy summer in preschool! We've enjoyed Water Days, Snow Cones, and a Fourth of July Parade! As we look forward to a new school year, we are excited to introduce our new Trinity United Methodist Preschool logo, which honors our long history of serving this community and is representative of our child-centered approach to learning.

Our enrollment is already at capacity for the 2025-2026 school year, but we do have a waiting list available on the church website. Please keep us in your prayers as we welcome several new staff members, our new families, and the precious children entrusted to our care.



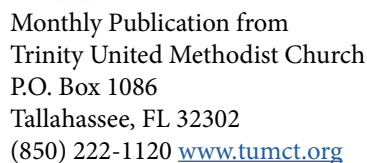
Trinity Youth Happenings

By Britton Stacey, Director of Youth Ministries

I t's been a great summer! Our youth have been active in VBS, camp, our mission trip to North Carolina, summer meet-ups, and Youth Week. As we look ahead to the new school year, we want to encourage all 6th through 12th grade students to get involved with Trinity's Youth Ministries.

On August 10, we'll have one service at 11:00 a.m. Be sure to bring your backpack for a blessing and stay for food and fun. Come back at 4:00 for Praise Band and 5:00 for UMYF! Our first official Sunday school meeting of the new school year will be on August 17. We hope you will join us! Contact Britton at bstacey@tumct.org for more information.





Early Service: 8:30 a.m. in the Chapel
Contemporary Service: 9:45 a.m. in Moor Hall
Liturgical Service: 11 a.m. in the Sanctuary

PASTORAL STAFF

Rev. Dr. Matthew M. Williams, *Senior Pastor*
Rev. Anna Brook Opalinski, *Associate Pastor*
Rev. E. Wayne Curry, *Minister of Pastoral Care*

Laurie Atteberry, <i>Business Administrator</i>	Patti Groh, <i>Sexton</i>
Ben Armstead, <i>Sexton</i>	Brett Ingram, <i>Facility Director</i>
Dori Barton, <i>Financial Assistant</i>	Justin Kendrick, <i>Sexton</i>
Dr. Viktor Billa, <i>Organist</i>	Susan Koehler, <i>Director of Communications</i>
Yuliia Billa, <i>Director of Music</i>	Charlotte Mathews, <i>Sexton</i>
Erin Casey, <i>Director of Preschool</i>	Britton Stacey, <i>Director of Youth Ministries</i>
Zachary Cramer, <i>Technical Director</i>	Alex Taylor, <i>Contemporary Worship Music Leader</i>
Candace Duclos, <i>Senior Director of Christian Education</i>	Heather Watson, <i>Administrative Assistant</i>
Melanie Gonzalez, <i>Church Operations Administrator</i>	

Susan Koehler, *Editor*

- Sign up for our News & Notes weekly email newsletter on our website www.tumct.org
- Like us on [Facebook](#) @TrinityUMCTallahassee
- Follow us on [Instagram](#) @umctrinity
- Find our livestream on [YouTube@TrinityUMCTallahassee](#)