

Tidings



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

The Lenten Season is Upon Us

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

Ash Wednesday begins a liturgical season of penitence and spiritual centering that helps us prepare for Easter. Ash Wednesday occurs forty days before Easter (excluding Sundays) and recalls the Israelites' forty years in the desert and Jesus' forty days in the wilderness.

Lent is an opportunity to go deeply into our hearts and the souls of our communities and to recognize the horror and depth of our estrangement from God. In practicing the disciplines of Lent, such as self-examination and repentance, we seek systematically to put things right. Lent is a period when we, as a church, turn our hearts toward Christ more deeply. At the center of all we do in worship, service, and community is Jesus's life, death, and resurrection.

We begin the Season of Lent on Ash Wednesday, March 5, 2025, with a liturgy and the imposition of Ashes at 6:30 PM in Trinity's Sanctuary. We invite everyone to join us for this service. In this service, the clergy will impose ashes on the foreheads or palms of those seeking to observe a holy Lent. Given that the ashes are created from the palm branches from the Palm Sunday of the prior year, this gives an immense amount of reflection. To make it personal, what has happened in your life since Palm Sunday of 2024? What do you personally long for in your spiritual life in 2025?

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Lenten Sermon Series

This Lent, we will focus on the Seven Last Words of Christ, the final phrases Jesus spoke from the cross. These words are more than history; they are alive and speaking into our world, church, and souls today. Too often, we impede our spiritual growth by filtering our interpretation of the events going on around us through a personal lens: How does this affect *me*?

While these questions are commonplace and necessary, especially for Methodists who have a keen interest on the progress of the world to ever more mirror the Kingdom of God, we can easily lose ourselves to other valid interests such as politics and nationalism, thus marrying the God of all creation to them. Rather than losing ourselves in the whims of a temporary political environment, may we use this season of Lent to move beyond fleeting obscurities and embrace eternal truths. Have you ever considered what Jesus might be saying to us – to you - now? How do the final words of Jesus call us to transformation in our lives, relationships, and community? As your pastor, I have been reflecting upon this. How do we listen to Christ's unchanging words in our contemporary world? What is Christ saying to us that is deeper than temporal reactions to situations? In his final words, I believe that Jesus has spoken hope into all of our struggles.

Each of Jesus' last words offers us an invitation to deep contemplation:

Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.
Are we practicing true forgiveness in our own lives?

Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.
Do we trust in God's mercy, even in our darkest moments?

Woman, here is your son, Here is your mother.
How are we called to care for one another in Christ's love?

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Can we bring our doubts and pain honestly before God?

I am thirsty.
Are we paying attention to the spiritual and physical needs around us?

It is finished.
Do we truly believe in the fullness of Christ's redemption?

Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.
Are we fully surrendering our lives to God's will?



Lenten Devotion Book: A Walk in the Word

Richard Rohr reminds us, “We do not think ourselves into new ways of living, we live ourselves into new ways of thinking.” As Trinity lives and thrives together, we must listen to God and each other for our spiritual formation. This year, we have the opportunity to share in a daily devotion book called *A Walk in the Word: Personal Reflections for the Lenten Season*, written by Trinity members. Each entry into our Lenten daily devotional is based on one verse and how that verse affects the person writing it. Through this daily practice, you will be able to connect spiritually with many in our congregation.

Is this between God and you? For sure. Lent has always been a season of sackcloth and ashes. It has been a time for individuals to reconcile with God. What is the role of the church during Lent? It is to help, to guide, and to nurture. Of course, your reconciliation with God is a step you must take of your own free will; the church cannot do it for you. But the beauty of the body of Christ is that we can help each other in our spiritual journeys. This Lent, through our daily devotional, through hearing the Seven Last Words of Christ, and through praying the same prayers, we will be able to walk side by side in our personal journeys toward a deeper relationship with God.

Let us set aside time to dwell in these words, to listen for what Jesus is speaking into our lives—our personhood. May we each make a conscious effort this Lent to worship, grow, and serve. Let us enter this sacred season with open hearts, ready to be changed through the words of Christ.

¹ Richard Rohr, “Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life,” p.201

Stations of the Cross

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

Commonly known in Jerusalem as the Via Dolorosa, the Way of the Cross traces the traditional steps and encounters of Jesus as he journeyed to Calvary. The steps and encounters have been marked as stations as they seek to convey specific interactions of Jesus' journey. All over the world, these stations have been depicted in cultural traditions that connect with the spiritual understandings of people.

Many who have visited Jerusalem as pilgrims have walked this narrow way through the bustling old city as an act of devotion. Throughout the entire world, people walk the Way of the Cross. Their journey includes prayer at each station, so to deepen their understanding of the redemptive suffering of Jesus as he walked that fateful journey. The Stations of the Cross draw us closer to the Savior as we realize that even in his human frailty he accepted what he faced to redeem the world.

Trinity is offering the Stations of the Cross throughout the season of lent in the Glenn C. James Chapel. Brett Ingram has created original artwork to mark each of the stations. With the stations surrounding the intimate worship space of the James Chapel, participants are invited to imagine and experience what Jesus endured for the entire world as he walked the journey to the cross.

The liturgy evokes personal connection with the sufferings of Jesus. At each station, the portion of the liturgy begins with a section entitled "Christ Speaks." This is read aloud by the leader of the liturgy; whether clergy or laity, and is followed by those gathered in a response. The Stations of the Cross is an act of meditation that can be experienced with large or small groups, families, Sunday School Classes, they can be led by clergy or laity, and they can be walked as an experience of private devotion. Please watch your Sunday Bulletin and News and Notes for times we will offer the Stations of the Cross as a communal act of Lenten devotion.

Lenten Studies

By Candace Duclos, Director of Christian Education

During this season, there are several different Lenten studies going on throughout the church and in private homes. See the schedule below to find a group you may like to join. For more information, contact cduclos@tumct.org.

Sundays at 8:30 a.m.

Young Adult Early Risers | Library | *Entering the Passion of Jesus: A Beginner's Guide to Holy Week* by Amy-Jill Levine

Sundays at 9:45 a.m.

Aldersgate | Room 305 | *The Passion Play: Living the Story of Christ's Last Days* by Rob Fuquay

Agape | Room 303 | Lenten Study led by Sally Huggins

Betty Phifer Class | Room 307 | *Moral Man and Immoral Society* by Reinhold Niebuhr

Just Us Gals | Groom's Room | Lenten discussions with friends

Wesley Bible Study | Conference Room | *Jesus' Beloved Community* from Adult Bible Studies

Sundays at 11:00 a.m.

Son Servants | Room 305 | Open discussions surrounding the topic of Lent

Mondays at 9:30 a.m.

Ladies' Lenten Study | Library | *The Gospel of John* by Amy-Jill Levine

Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m.

Wayne Wiatt's Lake Talquin Study Group | *The Final Days: A Lenten Journey through the Gospels* by Matt Rawle

Young Adult Study Group | Meeting in private homes - contact Rev. Opalinski for details | *Seven Words* by Susan Robb

Wednesdays at 7:00 a.m.

Men's Daybreak | Moor Hall | TUMC Lenten Devotion Book: *A Walk in the Word*

Fridays at 10:00 a.m.

Friday Study Group | Zoom | *Everyone Who Is Gone Is Here* by Jonathan Blitzer



Trinity's Women in Ministry

By Susan Koehler, Director of Communications

March is Women's History Month, a time set aside to honor the achievements and contributions of women, both those who served as trailblazers throughout history and those who lead us today. Each year, the National Women's History Alliance selects and publishes a theme, and for Women's History Month 2025, the theme is "Moving Forward Together! Women Educating & Inspiring Generations." Trinity United Methodist Church is blessed by the women who serve in ministry roles, educating and inspiring all generations to grow in wisdom, love, and grace.

Rev. Anna Brook Opalinski, Associate Pastor

Rev. Anna Brook Opalinski grew up as the child of a Florida pastor who was appointed to churches in Sebring, Miami, Fernandina Beach, and Fort Lauderdale. As a child, Anna Brook was determined to be anything *but* a pastor. Among her many accomplishments, Anna Brook is proud to point out that although there are other Opalinski athletes, she was the first scholarship collegiate athlete in her family. She continues to enjoy running, and has completed six marathons since 2020, including the Boston Marathon, for which she had to qualify. During her time as a cross-country and track athlete and an undergraduate at Florida Southern College in Lakeland, she experienced a calling to ordained ministry. She went on to obtain her Master of Divinity from Boston University School of Theology, and although she enjoyed New England, she was happy to come home to Florida's mild winters. Recently, Anna Brook was approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry for ordination during the summer of 2025.



Rev. Opalinski completing the Boston Maraton, 2023

As Trinity's Associate Pastor, Anna Brook serves as the minister of the 9:45 a.m. Contemporary Worship Service. She works closely with the Contemporary Worship Music Leader to ensure continuity between music and scripture, and she seeks to respond to the needs of her congregation. For example, when the Contemporary Worship Team received feedback that the congregation wanted more United Methodist tradition but with less formal language than is used in liturgical services, Anna Brook responded by rewriting the traditional United Methodist Church liturgy to make it appropriate for the contemporary service. She says, "the process of rewriting liturgy is one of my favorite parts of my job because it allows me to reflect on what it means to be a disciple of Christ and how we can do that in our United Methodist Context."



Rev. Opalinski and Rev. Bryant Manning showing tattoos from Guatemala

Anna Brook also serves as the Clergy Liaison for Social Justice at Trinity UMC, which she describes as being the point-pastor for any justice or mercy ministries that happen at Trinity, including the Snack Pack Ministry, Local Missions, Justice Ministry, and DEI Working Group. According to Anna Brook, "Justice has always been such a crucial part of my calling, and I am grateful to be serving a church that does justice and mercy work so well, recognizing that justice and mercy ministries are ways of worshipping God." Equipped with the spiritual gifts of joy and encouragement, Anna Brook seeks to create stability in the liminal spaces and remind all people that they are loved by God and are an important part of our church family. With the help of several congregation members, Anna Brook started the Justice Committee, whose current focus is on anti-racism work. She prays God can use her to help establish an explicit justice ministry at Trinity, especially in the area of anti-racism.



Rev. Opalinski with Juan, age 2, assisting with the building of his family's home

It comes as no surprise that Anna Brook's favorite scripture is Micah 6:8: "Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God." She sees it as a reminder that faith is active rather than passive, and that God calls us to share love, to be in relationship with one another, and to be a part of the Kingdom of God that is already here on earth. With her characteristically jovial smile, she admits that her favorite translation of Micah 6:8 is "Do Justice, love mercy, hustle humbly!"

Yuliia Billa, Director of Music

Yuliia Billa's path to the present has been a remarkable journey in music. This Ukrainian soprano and conductor is a Tchaikovsky National Music Academy graduate with a conducting degree, holding both a Master of Music in Vocal Performance and a Master of Arts in Choral Conducting from Florida State University. Yuliia's career spans solo recitals, opera roles, and vocal training across the United States, Bulgaria, and Italy. She enjoys advancing her conducting skills through numerous notable choral and orchestra conducting institutes and workshops in America and Europe. She loves to discover new colors of music with music ensembles, choirs, and orchestras. And now, Trinity is blessed to have this accomplished musician serve as our Director of Music.



Yuliia Billa, Choral Conductor

In her role at Trinity, Yuliia is not always visible. We may see her briefly as she conducts the Chancel Choir or other groups during the service, but these glimpses comprise only about 1% of her work Director of Music. Much of her work takes place behind the scenes. At least half of her time is spent selecting repertoires for all groups and choirs, a task that is both difficult and exciting. The music selections should align with the pastors' sermons each Sunday and should include a variety of styles and levels of difficulty. Yuliia reports, "Leading rehearsals takes up 30% of my work, and it's the most enjoyable part of my job. It's a time when great fun and pleasure happen among all the musicians." Clerical tasks and the hiring musicians are also on the agenda for this job that Yuliia describes as "diverse and enjoyable."



Yuliia Billa, front right, performing with the University Singers at FSU

Yuliia feels a deep sense of responsibility to spiritually guide the congregation through music. She strongly believes that nothing touches the human soul as strongly as music. The church is a place where people can be honest with God, and music can help them experience joy or comfort while being there. Yuliia believes that singing helps us know God better through the beauty of the music and the messages found in the lyrics of the songs we sing, particularly the intriguing revelations hidden in the Latin texts, as they share with us truly faithful and sacred messages. Perhaps this is why Psalm 104:33 resonates strongly with Yuliia and her calling: "I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being!"

Candace Duclos, Director of Christian Education

Candace Duclos grew up in Plant City, Florida. She came to Tallahassee to attend FSU and decided to make Tallahassee her home! In 1999 Candace began working at Trinity as a preschool teacher for the four-year old classroom. In 2012 she migrated to Leon County Schools, teaching kindergarten first at Hartsfield and then at Buck Lake Elementary. With a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and a Master's degree in Reading Education, Candace is a Florida certified teacher for grades K-6 with a specialty in Reading and English as an other language (ESOL) and has served as a mentor teacher and LCS trainer for curriculum and behavioral management. Altogether, she has taught for 25 years in both the private and public sector. Respected by her colleagues as well as the families whose lives she has touched, Candace was named Teacher of the Year at both Hartsfield and Buck Lake Elementary.



Candace Duclos, Director of Christian Education

How fortunate for learners of all ages that Candace has brought her infectious joy and gift of teaching to our church! Her current role actually began with the children's ministry, where she coordinated and helped lead Sunday school worship for kids as well as the Wednesday afternoon and evening lessons and activities. Over time, she graciously broadened the scope of her ministry to serve Trinity's adults through coordination of Sunday school, Wednesday evening classes, and any other classes or activities that nurture fellowship and spiritual growth. In reflecting on her ministry, Candace says, "I believe God is using me to nurture, excite, and engage people with our church family as they strive to follow Jesus."

When asked for a favorite verse, Candace is quick to quote Ephesians 4:32: "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as I have forgiven you." She says, "This is a verse that I have used with my family, when I taught preschool here at Trinity, and in my life each day. I work to remember that Jesus needs me to be his hands, feet, and example of love here on earth. Of course, some days are easier than others, but each day my mind and heart work to show Jesus' love and kindness to all I encounter."

Retired Female Clergy

Women currently serving in ministry at Trinity do not have to look far to find role models in faithful leadership. A quick scan of the congregation on any given Sunday reveals that Trinity is home to many retired pastors. We are fortunate that three members of this esteemed group of retired clergy are women who remain active in the ministries of the church.

Rev. Barbara Hynes continues her participation in a group she has been a part of for over 30 years. She regularly travels on church mission trips and is an active participant in Trinity's justice ministries. Rev. Patty Daniels, a published author, serves as an usher in the liturgical service and is leading Trinity's new Care Ministry Team. Rev. Anne Godbold is an active participant in many of Trinity's programs and ministries, including Becoming Fit at Church (BFC). Both Patty and Anne serve as mentors to Rev. Anna Brook Opalinski, Trinity's Associate Pastor. They meet weekly for lunch to support and encourage Anna Brook as she follows in their footsteps as female clergy.

Whether retired or actively serving, Trinity's women in ministry are easy to find because they maintain active participation in the life of the church. This was evident to Rev. Catherine Fluck Price, Superintendent of the North West District, on a recent visit to Trinity when she experienced a serendipitous meeting with three of Trinity's female clergy in the church office.

Rev. Barbara Hynes

Rev. Barbara Hynes served full time at Trinity from 1993 until 2017, overseeing programs of Christian Education for all ages. Barbara was born and grew up in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She considers herself fortunate to have grown up in a large family with both sets of grandparents living nearby. For high school, she attended a magnet school, which exposed her to many different faiths and ways of life. She credits this experience with instilling in her a curiosity about and respect for the wide diversity of the world. Through her association with a United Methodist church in Naples, Florida, she found her call to ministry, which came to fruition here in Tallahassee at Trinity United Methodist Church. In 2023, she celebrated the 25th anniversary of her ordination. In her retirement, Barbara has been able to continue to pursue her interest in the wider world through much travel and continued study. She has visited twenty-two countries on five continents! She has hiked as a pilgrim along El Camino de Santiago and spent weeklong retreats the Isle of Iona three times. Barbara looks forward to returning with Trinity's mission team to Guatemala in May 2025 to assist in the medical clinic for her fourteenth year.



Rev. Barbara Hynes

Here at home, Barbara serves on the Capital Area Justice Ministry Board and the District Committee on Ministry. She enjoys working in her garden and bird-watching whenever she is able, and reading still takes up a lot of her time. She is still a member of the Friday Study Group, which she joined when she first came to Trinity over 31 years ago, and she still considers this group to be a highlight of her week. According to Barbara, "In there, I get to examine in depth what it means to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God as stated in my guiding verse, Micah 6:8. I will always be grateful for the opportunity I have had to grow and serve at Trinity. It has been and continues to be a deep well for my faith."

Trinity's Previous Female Associate Pastors

Rev. Opalinski is Trinity's third female associate pastor, following in the footsteps of Rev. Carol Williams-Gilbert (formerly Kowalski) and Rev. Beth Fogle-Miller.

Rev. Williams-Gilbert was ordained as an elder in the United Methodist Church in her home state of North Carolina in 1981. After serving at smaller churches in North Carolina, she moved to Florida to become Trinity's first female associate. Rev. Williams-Gilbert went on to serve more than a dozen churches over the course of 42 years. Now retired, she lives in North Carolina, where she and her husband enjoy gardening, cooking, reading, and entertaining friends.

Pictured right: Rev. Carol Williams-Gilbert (formerly Kowalski) during her days as the first female associate pastor at Trinity (1981-1982)



Rev. Catherine Fluck Price (Superintendent, North West District), Rev. Patty Daniels, Rev. Anne Godbold, and Rev. Anna Brook Opalinski gather in the church office

Rev. Patty Daniels

Rev. Patty Daniels is a fourth-generation native Floridian, born in Tampa, Florida. Her father was in the Air Force, so she grew up all over the Eastern United States, attending 13 different schools before graduating from Dunedin High School in Dunedin, Florida, in 1972. She graduated from the University of South Florida in 1975 and from the Divinity School of Duke University in 1979. She met her husband Jeff at Duke, and they married in 1977. Patty was ordained into the United Methodist Church in 1977, one of about twelve women clergy at that time, and served nine churches in the Florida United Methodist Conference, before retiring in 2014 and moving to Tallahassee. She and Jeff have two daughters, Rachel and Cathy, and four amazing grandchildren, Logan, Ian, Valerie, and Nathaniel. She enjoys reading, writing, cross-stitching, and playing with her new puppy, Kai. Three years ago, she started violin lessons and enjoys playing just for herself. In 2020 she fulfilled a lifelong dream and joyfully published her first novel, *Jan's Sanctuary Walk* (Dove Publishing House, 2020). The book is loosely based on her early years in ministry serving in Northwest Florida in the 1980s, and chronicles the difficulties and joys of serving in a small church with her young family.



Rev. Patty Daniels

One of Rev. Daniels' favorite scripture passages comes from Romans 8:26, "likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words." This verse has carried her through the many joys and sorrows of her life and ministry by reminding her that she is never alone. God is always there.

Rev. Anne Godbold

Originally from North Carolina Rev. Anne Godbold moved to DeLand, Florida, when she was five. She was born with Neurofibromatosis (NF-1) a rare genetic disorder that caused her to have large tumors on the surface of her skin that also grew along the nerves in her body. One such tumor paralyzed her soft pallet, making her voice nasally. Because the tumors can be painful, Anne has undergone over 50 surgeries to remove them. In 1977, she had Pharyngeal Flap surgery to help her speak more clearly. In adulthood, the tumors became smaller. Anne graduated from Deland High School in 1973, Young Harris Junior College in 1975, and High Point College in 1977. She attended United Theological Seminary and was ordained in the United Methodist Church in 1979. Anne remembers her call to ministry as a second grader. She would tell her stuffed animals that Jesus loved them even before they knew him, and that once they received Jesus into their hearts he would come and live there and his love would help them become more like him...Grace! She is grateful that while serving as a single pastor, God brought her son, John David (JD) into her life in 1987. Anne enjoys baking, reading, and taking walks with her friends as well with her dog, Lilly. She also likes traveling, cruising, and going to Disney and the beach. NF still affects her life so she appreciates the Becoming Fit at Church ministry at Trinity that is helping her battle this disease. No matter how great the struggle, there is always joy in the journey. As Psalm 30: 5 proclaims: "Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning."



Rev. Anne Godbold

Throughout her life, Anne has worked to share God's love with all people, for no one is expendable. That is why one of her favorite verses is I John 4:7-8: "Dear friends, let's love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God. ⁸The person who doesn't love does not know God, because God is love."



Rev. Beth Fogle-Miller Beth is a retired elder in the Florida Annual Conference. Married to Rev. Dr. Jim Fogle-Miller, who is also clergy, they have one adult daughter, Carlene. After graduating from Candler School of Theology, Beth was appointed to a variety of churches, both rural and suburban, in every role from solo to associate to senior pastor. She and Jim also served several times as co-pastors, pioneering that model in the Florida Conference in 1991. Her final appointment was at Memorial UMC in Fernandina Beach, from which she retired in 2018 after more than 34 years in active ministry.

Picture left: Rev. Beth Fogle-Miller during her time as Trinity's associate pastor (1988-1991)

The January 2024 issue of *Crossroads* is dedicated to the many women whose lives and ministries impacted the development of Trinity United Methodist Church across its 200-year history. To read the full issue of the January 2024 *Crossroads*, visit tumct.org or scan the QR code (right).



Women Whose Call to Ministry Was Nurtured at Trinity UMC

Trinity United Methodist Church is a vibrant example of the 2025 Women's History Month theme of "Moving Forward Together! Women Educating & Inspiring Generations." In addition to our current women in ministry and our active retired clergy, Trinity is proud to have played a role in the ministries of Rev. Hannah Pye, Hannah Stelter, and Irene Gonzalez, a new generation of women in ministry.

Rev. Hannah Pye

Rev. Hannah Pye, formerly Hannah Prasse, is currently serving as the pastor of Bostwick United Methodist Church in a lovely community about an hour outside of Atlanta. Additionally, she leads contemporary worship with her husband, Josiah, every week at Madison First United Methodist Church. Hannah is a recent graduate of the Candler School of Theology at Emory University (M.Div) and will be wrapping up her first year of doctoral studies at Duke Divinity School in just a few weeks! In the recent past, Hannah led contemporary worship at Trinity, and prior to that, she was an active member of Trinity's children's and youth programs for many years. Hannah's candidacy for ministry was enthusiastically supported by Trinity's Staff Parish Committee and Charge Conference. Asked how Trinity helped shape her ministry, Hannah replied with the following:



"I credit the members of Trinity United Methodist Church for laying the foundation of my ministry and personal faith journey. I was deeply shaped by every person who took the time to invest in me—from Ms. Victoria in the nursery, to Mrs. Lumsden in elementary Sunday school, and Ms. Ruth Ann High, who led our rowdy middle school Sunday school class. My wonderful Trinity family showed me what it means to be the body of Christ and helped me envision a lifetime of vocational ministry."



Hannah Stelter



Hannah Stelter, formerly Hannah Duclos, currently serves as the Director of Family Ministries at Harvest UMC in Bradenton, Florida. During her youth, Hannah was very involved in UMYF, camp, the Youth Praise Band, VBS, and many other church activities. As an adult, she has chosen to lead and direct those spiritual formation activities for children and youth. When asked what role Trinity played in shaping her ministry, Hannah shared this:

"Trinity connected me with several other UMC ministries throughout Florida, including Gator Wesley, Warren Willis Camp, and Harvest UMC, where I currently serve. I am so grateful to the Trinity Youth Group who encouraged me to invest in my faith and develop leadership skills. Trinity also gave me some of my best friends who I still talk to on a weekly basis. These friends have always been supportive of my ministry and I am so glad that Trinity gave us the space to develop these friendships through various youth activities. I implement some of these activities in my ministry today in the hopes that the students I serve will develop life-long friendships as well. The youth group programs that I grew up with at Trinity have become the basis for many of my current ministry programs today. I am truly thankful for all the ways that Trinity has supported me and my ministry throughout the years."



Irene Gonzalez

Irene Gonzalez is currently attending Candler School of Theology at Emory University, but just a short time ago, she was a familiar presence at Trinity. Irene served as Youth Director, was a leader in Trinity's young adult ministries, and attended a mission trip to Africa. After expressing her call to ministry, Irene gained support from Trinity's Staff Parish Relations Committee and Charge Conference. Irene credits Trinity with being very influential in her path to ministry:

"In May of 2023, a friend invited me to visit Trinity because they were serving on the worship team that Sunday. Accepting that invitation is one of the best decisions I've ever made! For the first time since childhood, I felt at home in a church. God had been calling me to ministry for over a year at this time, and there was also an opening for the Director of Youth Ministries position. So, not only is Trinity where I first joined the UMC, it's also where I got my first job in ministry! It was on the many adventures with our youth to Warren Willis that I fell in love with the Florida UMC. While serving at Trinity, I began to hear the call to ordained ministry and on a trip to Zimbabwe to meet our Zoe Empowers group, I knew God wanted me to start taking steps on this new journey. Trinity supported me while I explored my call and entered the candidacy process. In January, I moved to Atlanta to attend seminary at Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, but no matter where this adventure takes me, Trinity will always be home!"



BFC Exercise Flips in Moor Hall!

By Beth Curry, BFC Team Leader

Great news! During the month of February, thanks to the help of Zach Cramer and Brett Ingram, the BFC Exercise program flipped directions in Moor Hall! Class participants used to face the sound booth, and BFC instructors taught from behind the computer and a big screen TV on the floor, making it hard for both to see each other. By using the equipment in the sound booth and mounting the big screen TV overhead, the BFC Exercise instructors now stand at the opposite end of the room on the platform at the stage, providing an unobstructed view for all. Most importantly, it's increased the safety of the program tremendously by having clear floor space too! Stop by and visit a class anytime!

Advanced registration is required to participate in class. For more information email BFCSeries@yahoo.com or call the church office at 850-222-1120 and leave a call back request.

Here's What People Are Saying

My favorite thing about BFC Exercise is

- *Working out with a group gives me motivation to not give up* – Glen
- *The accountability from friends! They miss you when you're gone!* – Kathy
- *The exercises have strengthened me after my accident. And my friends in class are very encouraging!* - Nan
- *Beth inspires me to work hard! LOVE Staying Strong exercise class!*
- *Exercise with a smile! The most pleasant exercise group I have ever been in!*



Two views of the BFC Variety Mix Class

Heart for the Campus Revived!

By Daniel Diaz, Board of Directors, Wesley Foundation at FSU and TSC

Calling all Trinity members! You are invited to the Heart for the Campus celebration dinner at FSU/TSC Wesley on March 22, 6:00-8:00 p.m., at 705 W Jefferson Street. The cost is \$10 per person. All congregations in our Tallahassee connection are welcome to come and get a taste of the amazing work that God is doing down here on campus.

Veteran campus ministry supporters may recognize this event as a revival of the beloved Garnet, Gold, and Blue Jean Banquet, which was faithfully hosted at 705 W. Jefferson St. for over a decade. The latest iterations of the event took on a more upscale aura, featuring catered banquets and distinguished speakers from Seminole Athletics. Now, six years since the last event, the ministry is in a new era, marked by dynamic growth and revival. Simultaneously, we are back to our roots with the return of the barbeque chicken dinner and blue jean attire. This year's event will feature student-led music, testimony, and a silent auction fundraiser. Make sure to visit fsuwesley.com to purchase your tickets in advance. If you'd like to support in a different way, we are looking for partners who are willing to donate an item for our silent auction. Auction partners may call 850-222-0251 or visit the event webpage for more information. As an alumnus of this ministry, I can personally attest to the fact that lives are changed here. The church is built here. It is an exciting thing to witness. Come and see!



Students at FSU Wesley

Memorials and Honorariums

February 2025

- In memory of Mart Pierson Hill from Virginia Perkins, Beauvais McCaddon, Sarah Jane Alexander, Henry & Missy Brown, Charlie & Sheree Lee. Robert & Beverly Burleson, Duncan & Mary Ann Moore, Ann Parks
- In honor of Judy Levy from Karen Vo Tschirschky
- In memory of Wayne Marlin Hodges and Norma McIntosh Hodges from Brad & Lisa Whittington

Onward Trinity: Visioning for the Future

By Nan Hillis, Co-Chair of the Strategic Visioning Process

Can you feel the excitement? The future of Trinity United Methodist Church is positive, and with a meaningful strategic plan, the growth in our ministries is certain. The Strategic Planning Task Force you read about in last month's *Tidings* is made up of a cross-section of members of our congregation. The members are hard at work planning for the future of Trinity. By now, we have compiled the thoughts and ideas you shared via the survey that was distributed in February. Your input is valuable information that the task force is using as part of the research on the best way to move our vision and mission forward.



The strategic planning task force is made up of three distinct committees: Research, chaired by Rick Burnett; Communications, chaired by John Koehler; and Onward Visioning, co-chaired by Beverly Burleson and Amber Pendleton. The committees are working hard to deliver an exceptional strategy with specific goals and tasks for success. The timeline is a quick one. We don't want you to miss out, so watch for updates in your News and Notes, *Tidings*, announcements, and even messages from the pulpit. We are excited to celebrate the completion of the plan in May with an Onward Planning Day on May 3. Watch for information, and plan to be there. It will be special!

🎵 March Music News! 🎵

Mark your calendars for two special events in March:

- On **Saturday, March 29, at noon**, our **Steel Pans** group will perform. Enjoy the music during Springtime Tallahassee, and be sure to get your Spaghetti Lunch from our youth.
- Orchestra Sunday** will be **March 30 at the 11:00 a.m. service**. Marc-Antoine Charpentiers "Te Deum," an early-church hymn of praise attributed to St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, will be performed.

Preschool News

By Stacey Duggar, Preschool Director

Enjoy a photo tour of Trinity United Methodist Preschool on Valentine's Day!



Pizza for lunch is always fun at preschool!



Even the toddlers showed their Valentine spirit!



Good friends shared smiles together!



There is always time to be silly!



WE

YOU!



Look at all the Valentine love!

Children's Ministry Update

By Candace Duclos, Director of Christian Education

Trinity's kids have been busy as our Children's Ministry continues to grow in God's love! NETKIDS is in full swing each Wednesday night! Woodworking, cooking, and crafting—Enjoy these snapshots of joy in action!



NETKids having fun while learning to love Jesus and others



Snow Day on the playground with friends



Coloring in our Bicentennial Coloring Books

Trinity Youth Happenings

By Britton Stacey, Director of Youth Ministries

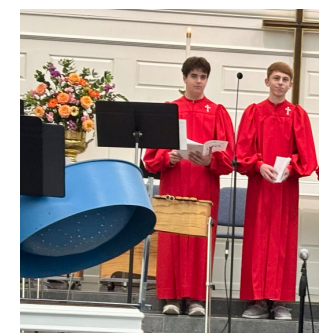
Recently, we have been doing some great things in the youth group! As this is a new year for the youth, one of the things we have done is some new visioning. We looked at ways we can do service, tackle fundraising, and have fun in 2025. We also figured out some topics the youth wanted to learn about for our Bible studies this year. As we held these meaningful discussions, we were able to strengthen our bond as a group. One of our biggest moments for the year so far was performing a song during the 11:00 traditional service for Music Ministry Sunday. As we move forward, we are excited for youth to join us for all of the fun that is going to happen this year!

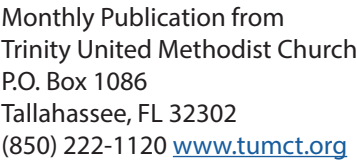


Looking ahead, we have a lot of exciting things coming our way. The Spaghetti Fundraiser is March 29, and VBS is just around the corner. Be sure to sign up as a volunteer for True North VBS. We need lots of help to make this week a big success! Registration for our summer mission trip to Charlotte, North Carolina is available now on our Trinity app. And watch for information about camp, coming soon!

Important Dates:

- Vacation Bible School - June 2 - June 6
- Camp - June 16 - June 21
- Carolinas Mission Trip - July 13 - July 18





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

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

Laurie Atteberry, *Business Administrator*
Ben Armstead, *Sexton*
Dori Barton, *Financial Assistant*
Viktor Billa, *Organist*
Yuliia Billa, *Director of Music*
Zachary Cramer, *Technical Director*
Candace Duclos, *Director of Christian Education*
Sarah Duclos, *Sexton*
Stacey Duggar, *Preschool Director*

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