



# Trinity In Touch

September 2025

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## Mission

***Our Mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.***

## Vision

***We strive to be an inclusive faith community that extends God's love in our neighborhood and world.***

## Core Values

**Diversity & Inclusiveness:  
Seeking to affirm every person as a child of God.**

**Scripture, Tradition,  
Experience and Reason:  
Searching for truth  
in our faith community.**

**Peace & Justice:  
Striving for positive social change in our neighborhood and world.**

**Trinity UMC  
1100 Lake Drive SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49506  
616.456.7168  
[office@grtumc.org](mailto:office@grtumc.org)**

## Behind the Worship: Rituals and Relevance

### Beginning Again

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." - Lamentations 3:22-23

For as long as I can remember, I've loved new notebooks. If you're ever in a bookstore with me, and you lose sight of me, all you need to do is find where the journals and notebooks are and you will find me there. With the journals, running my hand across the covers and opening them to that very first page. For some reason, a new notebook has always felt like a fresh start. Those blank pages hold so much possibility.

September can feel like that in the church. The choir returns to the loft, small groups ramp up, kids shuffle back into classrooms with their own fresh notebooks, and together we begin writing a new chapter of our life as a congregation. God hands us a clean page and says, "Let's begin again."

Of course, notebooks don't stay blank for long. Some get filled quickly with ideas and lists. Some end up half-used. Some get messy, with handwriting so hurried you can't read it back later. Our lives are no different. We start with excitement, but soon the margins fill with scribbles, the lines with mistakes, and the covers with the wear and tear of everyday use. If our worth depended on keeping every page pristine, we'd all be in trouble.

That's why the promise of Lamentations matters so deeply. God doesn't wait until the notebook is perfect. God's mercies show up every single morning. They don't run out after we've made too many mistakes. They don't dry up when we've wasted opportunities or left pages blank. God's mercy meets us exactly where we are, in the scribbles, the cross-outs, the coffee stains, and the dog-eared corners, and offers us a brand-new page each day.

So let me ask: what page do you need God to give you this September? Is it the page of forgiveness, where you release guilt that's been hanging around too long? Is it the page of courage, where you risk showing up to a new group or ministry? Is it the page of hope, where you dare to believe God is not finished with you yet? Is it the page of rest, where you allow God to remind you that you are loved just as you are?



Here's the good news: you don't have to write in isolation. The Spirit is already with you, guiding your hand, steadying your lines, and filling in the words you can't always find. And we write together as God's beloved community. Each class, each song, each table conversation, each prayer offered in worship is a sentence in the larger story God is telling through us.

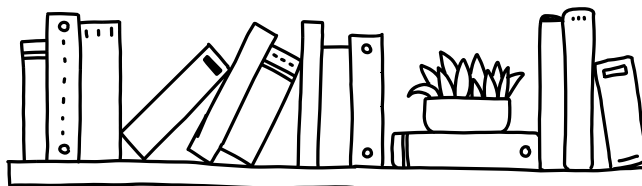
That is Autumn's gift. We are reminded that we don't have to be perfect students or flawless writers. What matters is the author who never gives up on the story. God's mercies are new every morning, the pages never run out, and the story isn't finished yet. So let's take up the pen together and trust that the God who is faithful will keep writing grace into every chapter of our lives.

Peace be with you,



Pastor Mike

## Ministry Spotlight



Did you know Trinity has its very own library that's free for everyone to use?

Our Library Team works hard to organize, curate, and maintain this wonderful resource so it's always ready for you to explore. But that's not all—the team also hosts the Sacred Justice Book Club! This group gathers once a quarter to dive into thought-provoking books on a variety of social justice topics and share meaningful conversation together.

The Library Team is led by Laura Johns, Dani Patrick, and Hannah Marshall, and they'd love for you to join in! Whether you're interested in helping with the library or want to know more about the next book club gathering, just reach out to [office@grtumc.org](mailto:office@grtumc.org) for details.

## UWF (United Women in Faith)



 **Come to the Table**  
with Trinity United Women in Faith

**Monday, September 29 from 6:00pm-8:00pm**

**Where conversation, good food, and insight come together and help us to become...**

Join us for a discussion on James Cone's "The Cross and the Lynching Tree" as well as view/discuss key points from an address done by Cone at the General Conference of the UMC in FL back in 2012.

A lite meal will be provided. **ALL ARE WELCOME!**  
RSVP to Dani at [office@grtumc.org](mailto:office@grtumc.org) or to Nichea Guy at [orangecelt00@aol.com](mailto:orangecelt00@aol.com)



## United Women in Faith Used Book Sale

### DONATE BOOKS:

Beginning September 14.  
Drop off in the Church Office on  
Mondays-Wednesdays from 9am-4pm.

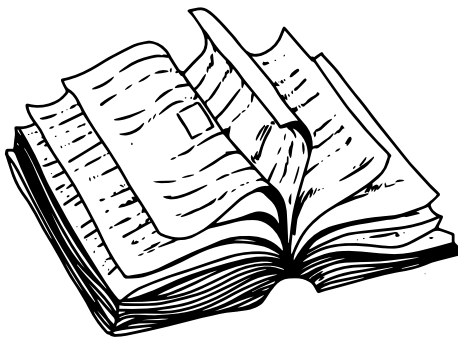
### SHOP THE SALE:

Friday, October 3 from 9am-5pm  
Saturday, October 4 from 9am-3pm  
Sunday, October 5 from 9:30am-11:30am

### QUESTIONS?

Contact [office@grtumc.org](mailto:office@grtumc.org)

*This event will allow for the United Women in Faith to  
meet their pledge to Missions here and around the  
world.*



## Spiritalk Book Club

United Women in Faith

**Join us as we discuss & dissect a new book each month!**

Meetings are the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00pm at Trinity.

Contact Joy Murphy for more info at [joymurphy@grtumc.org](mailto:joymurphy@grtumc.org).

#### September 9

Yellowface  
R.F. Kuang

#### October 14

The Library Book  
Susan Orlean

#### November 11

The Dream Builders  
Oindrila Mukherjee

#### December 16

Baptizing America  
Kaylor & Underwood



## Finances

Dear Trinity Members and Friends,

Thank you for your faithful giving. Your generosity, prayer, and participation are vital resources that sustain our ministry of justice, hope and love with our neighbors near and far.

As you are able, your support is needed so that we can recover from this summer slump.

Monthly financial reports are available in the church office and you may contact our treasurer, Joy Murphy for a copy or if you have any questions.

Submitted by: Pros Tumonong, Chair-Finance Committee







Trinity UMC celebrates the beautiful diversity of the human community. We affirm the sacred worth of each person as a recipient of God's love and grace. As followers of Christ, we are an open and inclusive congregation. We live this out by welcoming into full participation all persons regardless of gender, race, national origin, physical or mental abilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, marital status or economic condition.



Our intention word for September is Invite. Not sure what an intention word is? Pastor Mike wrote an introduction to this concept in September 2022's Newsletter. Check it out online at: <https://bit.ly/Sep2022Newsletter>

## Church Family

### ALTAR FLOWERS

**September 7 - Available**

**September 14:** Suzy Gill in honor of all the gardeners who helped make Trinity beautiful this summer.

**September 21 - Available**

**September 28 - Available**

**See an available Sunday? Reach out to [office@grtumc.org](mailto:office@grtumc.org) to sign up! A new altar flower schedule for the 2025-2026 program year is available in the Narthex.**



### PRAYERS AND CARE

*Randy Hamstra and his family in your prayers. His brother, Jerry Hamstra, is in the closing stages of life after a nine-month battle with cancer.*

[ranhamstra@gmail.com](mailto:ranhamstra@gmail.com)

*Rev. Steve Manskar as he undergoes outpatient hip replacement surgery on September 4, 2025.*

[steven.manskar@gmail.com](mailto:steven.manskar@gmail.com)

1900 Carlton Avenue NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

*Rich Tillstrom, who broke his hip in a fall and is recovering from surgery.*

[richandmarty@sbcglobal.net](mailto:richandmarty@sbcglobal.net)

1932 Peace Valley Ct. NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505



## Opportunities to Engage



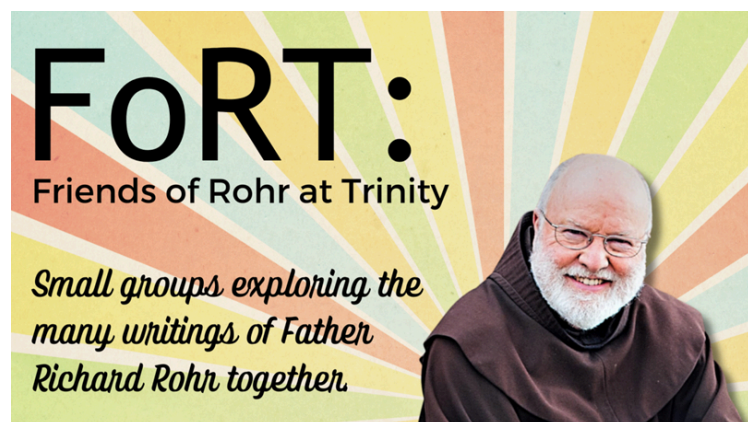
Is your child interested in helping to light the candles on Sunday mornings? Sign them up for summer & fall using our SignUpGenius:

<https://tinyurl.com/TUMC-AcolyteFall2025>

Questions? Email Laura Johns at [l.johns@grtumc.org](mailto:l.johns@grtumc.org).

A huge thank you to everyone that attended our annual Protection Policy & Safety Training on Sunday, August 24th. For all the latest information on Protection Policy, volunteer & staff requirements, training, and more – check out our website at: <https://www.grtumc.org/protection-policy/>

Still have questions or concerns about how to proceed or whether you need additional training/forms? Contact Laura Johns, Director of Discipleship, at [l.johns@grtumc.org](mailto:l.johns@grtumc.org).



Perhaps you've heard or seen a reference to FoRT (Friends of Rohr at Trinity). We are folks of Trinity who enjoy studying Father Richard Rohr's writings. As we gather each week to discuss our reading and enjoy fellowship together, we find we are "growing Deeper, loving Better, seeing God more Clearly (DBC)." You're invited to join us!

On Sundays, some of us meet as the "DBC" Small Group. Our first class for the fall will be Sunday, September 7 from 5:00pm-6:30pm in the Fireside Room. We'll be continuing The Divine Dance.

On Thursdays, as part of TNT, others of us gather as the "Everything Belongs" (EvB) Small Group in the upstairs Library. Our first class will be September 4 from 6:15pm-7:30pm. We will be starting a new book: The Naked Now.

Questions about any of these acronyms or the amazing groups of people they represent? Contact Laura Johns at [l.johns@grtumc.org](mailto:l.johns@grtumc.org) or other members of the FoRT Leadership Team: Merrita Tumonong, Penny Murray & Steve Murray.

Designed for Trinity families & friends ages 18 & up, God's Naturehood: Adult Edition is a great opportunity to visit a new park, get to know members of your Trinity family better, and get your daily steps in. The details on our fall meet-ups are below.



### **Friday, September 19 from 1:00pm-3:00pm**

Art Prize in Downtown Grand Rapids.

Explore some of the City Center Art Prize venues with your Trinity friends on opening weekend! Watch your email for information on our exact meet-up location, parking, and carpool options. We'll gather at 1:00pm, tour venues like Devos Place, Amway Grand, Fountain Street, and more with a stop for a snack & beverage part way through our extended 2 hour timeframe.

### **Friday, October 17 from 1:00pm-2:00pm**

Millennium Park (Secchia Meadows) at 1415 Maynard Ave SW, Walker, 49534.

Join us as we explore the Secchia Meadows side of Millennium Park at 1415 Maynard Ave SW, Walker, 49534. Park near the restrooms on the east side (Secchia Meadows) of Maynard. An optional cider & donut visit to Farmhaus Farms will be available after our walk. Maps and additional information will be sent out via email ahead of our adventure!

### **Friday, November 14 from 1:00pm-2:00pm**

Seidman Park at 8155 Conservation St NE, Ada, MI 49301.

Let's try a new to us park! Meet up at the south parking lot off of 8155 Conservation St NE, Ada. This park has beautiful natural surface trails for us to explore through 400 acres of woods, fields and wetlands.

RSVPs are requested but not required. Contact Laura Johns at [L.johns@grtumc.org](mailto:L.johns@grtumc.org).

We're trying something new this year! Join us at Schwallier's Country Basket in Sparta for a daytime outing on Sunday, October 26 from 3:30pm-5:30pm.

We've rented the upstairs of the big red barn for a private gathering & fellowship space. We'll meet there before heading out into the public areas on a special all-ages scavenger hunt – can you find the baby goats, the pumpkin patch, the rubber duck races, the special family photo booth? We'll reconvene in the barn for a time of sharing with cider & donuts. What's not to love?

The cost is \$15 per person and includes the barn rental, cider, donuts & other Trinity supplies. Free activities around the barn including petting zoo, farm play areas, and more! Additional snacks, goat food, apple picking, and access to the Back 40 (where we met last year) are not included.

If you have questions about this opportunity, contact Laura Johns at [L.johns@grtumc.org](mailto:L.johns@grtumc.org).



For more information and to sign up, use our online registration form at: [tinyurl.com/TUMC-Orchard2025](https://tinyurl.com/TUMC-Orchard2025)

Please note, we selected this date & time because it does not conflict with either Lions or Packers games, so you can play with us as still cheer on your favorite team!



Somehow it has happened. Another summer has flown by and now it's September! Folks are back to school, fall sports are full swing, and our schedules are filling up. We want to make sure you have all the latest on what's coming at Trinity this autumn so we can all focus on growing together!

New this fall, we'll be celebrating Discipleship Sunday! Coming September 7th, this special worship service will highlight the amazing ministries happening here at Trinity and all the wonderful folks involved. You won't want to miss our guest speakers, photo slideshows, and much more!

But that's not all... join us for Fall Kick Off on Sunday, September 14 and then throughout the month as many of our programs that take a summer holiday start up again.

You should have recently received an email from Director of Discipleship Laura Johns with all the updated information on what to expect! Paper copies are also available in the Narthex & Parlor and you can find everything online at <https://www.grtumc.org/newsletter-more/>. Check out...

### **The Trinity Guide**

This update to last year's guide features all the basic program year (September-May) information you're looking for on worship, faith formation, TNT, and more. It's a great tool for remembering what all is happening and for sharing with guests & friends!

### **Program Area Flyers**

These detailed area-by-area seasonal sheets provide extra info on what to expect from Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Adult Ministry, and TNT (Thursday Nights at Trinity). Plus, we've got a Calendar of Events so you know the important dates for all the September to December happenings!

### **Children & Youth Paperwork**

Updated registration paperwork has been shared as well as the latest on expectations, drop-off/pick-up procedures, and more. We really need grown-ups to review everything and complete all the attached forms. It is critical that we are all on the same page going into the fall and that your children's latest health, safety, and personal information is on file. A big part of our job is ensuring the safety of all of our children & youth and we can only do that if we know who is here and what their needs are!

Many things are the same as last year, but keep an eye out for new events & opportunities! We cannot wait to connect with you. Let's Grow Together!

Questions about Fall Kick Off? Check your email for past messages and additional updates or contact Laura Johns, Director of Discipleship, at [l.johns@grtumc.org](mailto:l.johns@grtumc.org).





Our Popcorn Party Time monthly movie or game nights are back for another year! We're still calling these special all-ages evenings Popcorn Party Time because that's what they'll be. A monthly party with lots and lots of popcorn!

Not just for kids, not just for grown-ups – Popcorn Party Time is a chance for the whole Trinity family to get together for fellowship and fun.

On game nights, bring your favorite game from home or play one of the group favorites Trinity will provide. On movie nights, we'll screen a family favorite flick in Faith at the Movies style. Every night, Trinity will provide the popcorn and beverages.

Our fall schedule is:

**Friday, October 10 from 6:30pm-8:30pm | Movie Night**

With Feature Film Monsters Inc.

Not just Popcorn Party Time, this movie night will feature a few spooky-season extras – tricks & treats!

**Friday, November 14 from 6:30pm-8:30pm | Game Night**

Join us for our first game night of the program year! What game will you bring?

**Friday, December 19 from 6:30pm-8:30pm | Movie Night**

With Feature Film Klaus

Get in the holiday spirit with a beautifully animated film about a selfish postman and a reclusive toymaker who form an unlikely friendship, delivering joy to a cold, dark town that desperately needs it.

Questions? Contact Laura Johns at [ljohns@grtumc.org](mailto:ljohns@grtumc.org).

Each Sunday, starting September 14th there is at least one offering for adults during the Faith Formation Hour. A few highlights for this program year include:

**Exploring the Enneagram:**  
Understanding Yourself & Others Better



**Adult Faith Formation Class**  
Sundays, September 14 to October 19  
11:30am-12:30pm in Discovery Room

Beyond just a personality test, the enneagram is an invitation to self-awareness and personal growth. Join us as we seek to understand our core motivations and recognize patterns of thoughts & behavior. Come away approaching your relationships with self and others with increased compassion, curiosity, and kindness.

Class will be led by Jenna Chisholm.  
Contact Laura Johns with questions.  
No materials are required to participate.

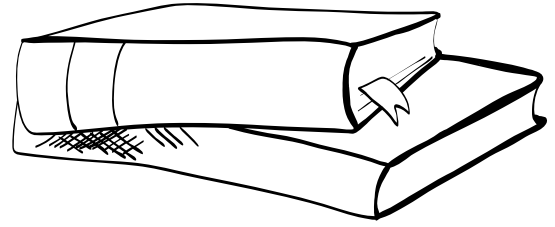
- Exploring the Enneagram: Understanding Yourself & Others Better
- The Deep End: Diving into the Gospels with Pastor Mike
- Keep Watch with Me: An Advent Reader for Peacemakers Book Study
- Unafraid by Adam Hamilton Book Study
- Courageous Conversations, Missions Speakers & More!

A detailed class schedule for September to December was just released as a one-page flyer. Check it out and make sure you have our first offering on your calendars: Exploring the Enneagram with Jenna Chisholm.

# Sacred Justice Book Club

Join us as we dive into a variety of different non-fiction justice titles!

Meetings are every three months on Tuesday evenings.  
Come for deep conversation, meaningful action, and dessert!



**August 5, 2025**

Jesus Feminist  
Sarah Bessey

**November 4, 2025**

How to Be an Antiracist  
Ibram X. Kendi

**February 3, 2026**

The Story of More  
Hope Jahren

**May 5, 2026**

Queer & Christian  
Brandan Robertson

## The Youth Connection Corner

YOUTH EVENTS FOR THE MONTH OF



Hello Friends! It's that time again...back to school! I know that my family is super excited and ready for not only the school year but also the program year here at Trinity! All summer long we have been hard at work to make this upcoming program year absolutely amazing with some meaningful content and lots of fun adventures!

Mark your calendars for...

### Kick Off & Youth Group Series: What's YOUR Story?

Our program year kicks off on **Sunday, September 14th** and I'm so excited about it! Each week this program year, the youth will have an experience that focuses on asking questions that the youth have expressed interest in! Our program series this year, called "What's YOUR Story?" explores a new theme each month through scripture, powerful stories from the book Holy Troublemakers & Unconventional Saints, inspiring guest speakers, discussion, games & more!

At Kick Off on September 14th I will go over the series overview with the youth as well as our adventures for the year & other fun stuff to expect. If you have any questions about any of the things we are doing this program year, don't hesitate to reach out to me!

### Save The Dates – Adventures & More Coming Soon!

Friday, October 10th – Popcorn Party Time Movie Night

Sunday, October 26th – Trinity Orchard Outing

Saturday, November 8th - Youth Only Movie Night Adventure

As we set off into September, I ask that you keep our youth and their families in your prayers, as they start the school year off strong and begin new routines, make new friends and try new things!

Annie Slabaugh, Youth Director - [a.slabaugh@grtumc.org](mailto:a.slabaugh@grtumc.org)

# Trinity Calendar of Events

## September 2025 - December 2025

**Thursday, September 4 from 5:15pm-7:30pm**

First TNT: Thursday Nights at Trinity (Weekly)

Includes Dinner, Chancel Choir, Youth Choir & Bells, & EvB Small Group

**Sunday, September 7 at 10:00am**

Let's Grow Together: Discipleship Sunday

**Sunday, September 7 from 5:00pm-6:30pm**

First FoRT DBC Small Group (Weekly)

**Tuesday, September 9 at 7:00pm**

First UWF Spiritalk Book Group (Monthly)

**Sunday, September 14 from 10:00am-12:30pm**

Let's Grow Together: Fall Kick Off Sunday

**Monday, September 15 from 9:30am-11:30am**

First Kids Food Basket Volunteer Day (Monthly)

**Sunday, September 28 at 6:00pm**

First Pints with the Pastor Meet Up (Monthly)

**Monday, September 29 from 6:00pm-8:00pm**

UWF Come to the Table: Cross & Lynching Tree

**Friday, October 3 to Sunday, October 5**

UWF Used Book Sale

**Tuesday, October 7 from 9:15am-10:00am**

First Gophers Exercise Class (Weekly)

**Wednesday, October 8 from 5:00pm-7:00pm**

First Community Ministries Program (Weekly)

**Friday, October 10 from 6:30pm-8:30pm**

First Popcorn Party Time: Monsters Inc.

**Tuesday, November 4 at 7:00pm**

Sacred Justice Book Club (Quarterly)

**Friday, November 7 at 6:00pm**

Community Ministries Night to Remember

**Saturday, November 8 at TBD Time**

Youth Only Movie Night Adventure

**Sunday, November 23 from 10:00am-1:30pm**

Christ the King & Music Sunday at 10:00am

MWCF Thanksgiving Dinner Fundraiser at 11:30am

Hanging of the Greens at 1:00pm

Trinity United Methodist Church | 1100 Lake Drive SE, 49506 | [grtumc.org](http://grtumc.org)

### YEAR ROUND OPPORTUNITIES:

**3rd Monday at 6:30pm**

Faith on the Fly (Monthly)

**Tuesdays at 10:00am**

Coffee & Conversation (Weekly)

**3rd Wednesday at 1:00pm**

Mahjong Group (Monthly)

**Wednesdays at 7:00pm**

Ping Pong for Adults (Weekly)

**Select Fridays at 1:00pm**

God's Naturehood: Adults (Monthly)

### FAMILY FELLOWSHIP EVENTS:

**Sunday, Oct. 26 at 3:30pm**

Orchard Outing at Schwallier's

**... and Popcorn Party Time...**

Oct. 10 at 6:30pm

Monsters Inc. Movie Night

Nov. 14 at 6:30pm

Game Night

Dec. 19 at 6:30pm

Klaus Movie Night

### ADVENT & CHRISTMAS:

**Sunday, Nov. 30 at 6:00pm**

Christmas by Candlelight

**Saturday, Dec. 6 at 9:00am**

The Greatest Advent(ure) ft.  
Breakfast, Crafts, Games & Stories

**Tuesday, Dec. 9 at 7:00pm**

Blue Christmas Service

**Wednesday, Dec. 24**

6:30pm - Christmas Eve Family

9:30pm - Christmas Eve Traditional



The Community Ministries Program is always working to find new ways to connect people through a shared purpose. Whether its children's weekly programming, fly fishing classes, volunteer opportunities or learning opportunities around important topics we strive to bring unique experiences that allows church members to not only connect with the community but also to put your faith into action that takes us outside of just a Sunday morning. So here are 5 ways to engage with the Community Ministries Program this fall that will allow you to flex your "Faith In Action" muscles this fall.

1. Engage in classes or conversations outside of just Sunday morning that allows you to meet new people and learn something new about you or your faith. (CM Opportunity...Faith on the Fly classes begin in January, attend a "My Life In Pieces" event, connect with volunteers in the CM Program about their experiences working with kids from Congress)
2. Volunteer with the different opportunities that come up through the year with the Community Ministries Program (CM Opportunity...volunteer with the weekly Wednesday evening Kids Club or Transitions Program, Volunteer at Congress Elementary School for special events as needs come up, help at community festivals and events)
3. Financially support the Community Ministries Program and help make community connections (CM Opportunity...give a meaningful amount to you and help advocate that others support the ministry too. Help make community connections with businesses or private foundations to whom you might have connections to help make larger donations on a yearly basis that the program can build from)
4. Celebrate and be inspired by the work being done (CM Opportunity...attend "A Night To Remember" Dinner on Nov 7th to come hear stories from people who work with the Community Ministries program and Trinity UMC and feel the impact this work has on our community. The event is free, but registration is needed for food and set up. Registration begins on Sept 1st. Email [m.witkowski@grtumc.org](mailto:m.witkowski@grtumc.org) to register with the guest's name, phone number and number of people attending in the registration. Registration will also be available in the Trinity Parlor.
5. Make a commitment to stay informed and share CM Program news with others both inside the church and out. (CM Opportunity...Like our Facebook Page, read the monthly newsletter, check in on Wednesday nights on Facebook to see what the kids were up to that evening, check the bulletin boards, like the Faith on the Fly Facebook or Instagram page and tell others what you see.)

These are just a few ways that you can start to put intentional actions to your faith journey that means the world to a program like ours. We want to grow but the only way that can happen is if we know what is happening in our church programming, get excited about it and share it with others. Will you help us? Find One...Two...or Five ways, like those listed above to help show your faith through action in our community through the local church. Lets get started today!



Join us for our Third Annual "A Night To Remember" Community Ministries Program Dinner. You won't want to miss this free event for older youth and adults that has great food, wonderful music performed by singers from StageGR and inspirational stories from our community members and partners sharing about what the Community Ministries Program and Trinity UMC relationship has meant to them. We will laugh, and maybe even shed a tear as you experience what true ministry looks like. We even do MINISTRY IN THE MOMENT at these events that can make a difference in a child's life or even a full-grown adult life too. You need to come on Nov 7th to experience this magical evening that's unlike anything else at Trinity.

**SIGN UPS START SEPT 1ST!**