



Trinity In Touch

November 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

Behind the Worship: Rituals and Relevance

"Give thanks to the Lord, for God is good; God's steadfast love endures forever."
- Psalm 136:1

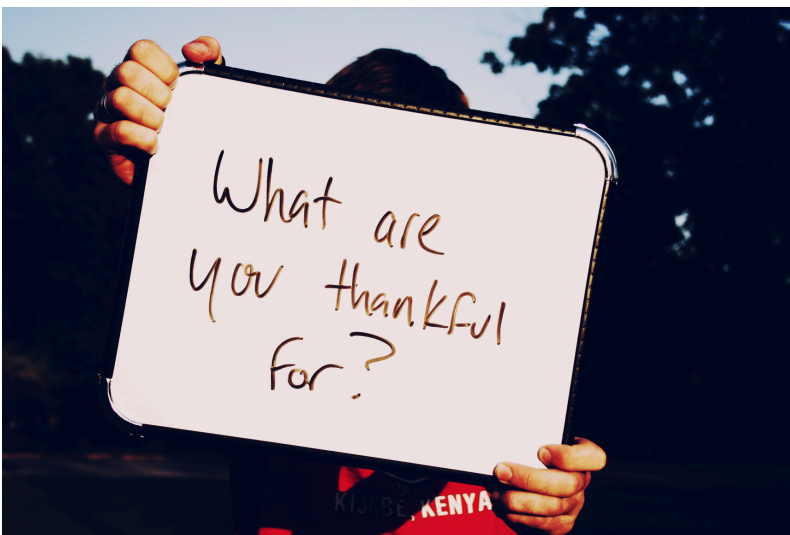
It seems to me that November is the month when the year starts to feel its age. The air grows cooler, the daylight shorter, and the trees give up their leaves without much complaint. They say it's just part of getting older. The earth slows its hurried rhythm. The year, worn but wise, looks back with gratitude for all it has experienced. Joy and sorrow. Surprise and defeat. Stifling heat and bone-numbing cold.

Every year we see the cycle of new birth in spring and everything laid to rest in winter. All of creation reminds us that life is precious and holy because it isn't permanent. That's why it is fitting to begin November with a celebration of All Saints Sunday. A day of reflection on those who have shaped our lives, strengthened our faith, and finished their time and gone ahead to wait for us. We remember the laughter, the lessons, and the love that continue to echo through this church and through us. In their memory, we are reminded that every life leaves an imprint of grace.

This fall I presided over the memorial of a dear friend gone too soon, and just last week my family laid to rest the last set of great-grandparents my kids had. While my grief over the loss of such wonderful people is profound, I also find myself deeply grateful that I was blessed to have them in my life at all.

Our gratitude deepens when we take time to notice what has been good. Not perfect, but good. Not easy, but worth it. Nothing is ever perfect, and easy is how we make macaroni and cheese, not how we live a life worth remembering. The days behind us hold both joy and heartache, and yet God's faithfulness has carried us through every bit of it. Gratitude is one of the most honest acts of faith. It doesn't require everything to be right. It simply asks us to pay attention, to name the good, the grace, and the people who remind us we're not alone.

This month gives us a chance to do that together. On Sunday, November 23, we'll share our annual Thanksgiving Dinner after worship. It's a simple meal with deep meaning, a reminder that faith is not only built in the sanctuary but also around the table. It's in the laughter, the conversations, the passing of plates, and the presence of community.



After dinner, we'll move into the Hanging of the Greens as we prepare our sanctuary for Advent. The wreaths, candles, garlands, and lights we hang are more than decoration. They are symbols of readiness, our way of saying that we believe hope still comes, light still shines, and love still finds a way to be born among us. As the year continues to feel its age, we are reminded that every ending carries the promise of a beginning. The slowing of one season prepares the ground for the next. Reflection gives birth to renewal. Gratitude turns our attention forward. Hope begins to stir quietly beneath the surface, waiting for its moment to rise.

Grace and peace,



Pastor Mike

P.S. Next month we begin our Advent series, *Unwrapped: What We Didn't Know We Needed*. Please join us as we discover together the unexpected gifts that come when we make room for Christ. - Pastor Mike

Ministry Spotlight

Did you know Trinity has a great group of volunteers that assist with Kids' Food Basket each month?

Kids' Food basket has been committed to West Michigan since 2002. It started with 125 sack suppers to 3 schools in Kent County, now they provide 11,000 daily sack suppers to 66 schools in Kent, Ottawa, and Muskegon Counties!

Trinity volunteers the 3rd Monday of the month from 9:30am-11:30am doing food prep (breaking down large quantities of food into single-sized servings). Trinity has been volunteering since 2021.

If interested in volunteering, contact Rick Nelson at 616-485-5058 or rnelson2@comcast.net.



Kids' Food Basket

Join us at Trinity for an informative Town Hall Meeting on Wednesday, November 12 at 6pm.

We will learn about 3 petitions that are currently being circulated: **Rank MI Vote, Invest in MI Kids, and Michiganders for Money out of Politics.**

All are welcome.

Contact Bonnie Czuhajewski for more information.



UWF (United Women in Faith)

Just Around the Corner.....United Women in Faith

The busy holiday season is upon us and we want to let you know of some upcoming opportunities to enjoy United Women in Faith activities at Trinity. Save these dates and watch for more details in the weeks to come.

Thank you for supporting the social justice mission work of United Women in Faith.

Sunday, November 30 6:30pm Christmas by Candlelight

This decades celebrated event begins our Advent season with wassail, music, and holiday desserts, set in the festively decorated Fellowship Hall. Watch for ticket sales in November.



Sunday, December 21 during the morning worship hours. Holiday Cookies Sale.

You will not want to miss out on buying these delicious treats to make your holiday special. If you would like to donate your favorite family cookies, you can drop them off at Trinity before the Saturday, December 20 gift-boxing at 1pm.



Sunday, January 4 following worship. Soup Cook-Off and Diaper Ingathering.

This winter favorite includes donations of homemade soups from a variety of Trinity cooks! You get to vote on your favorite! The soup lunch will include a salad bar, artisan breads and topped off with delicious dessert! We will need a variety of soups to make this fun and successful. If you would like to donate your family favorite let us know! You could win. This year we are also giving you the opportunity to donate disposable diapers that will be given to our neighbor, Northlawn UMC. Their ongoing diaper ministry serves area families in need and is always in need of new supply. All sizes needed. Watch for reservation details coming soon.

If you would like to know more about United Women in Faith, you can go to their website uwfaith.org and learn about the amazing ministry to women, children and youth here and around the world.

All proceeds from our events become a part of our Pledge to Mission that enables these important ministries and resources.

**COMING
SOON**

The Annual Charge Conference is coming up on November 16, 2025. Trinity's time slot is set for 2:00pm. Please attend if you can!

We are hosting this year, if you would like to help be a friendly face for our guests, assist with food prep, or clean up, please sign up at:

<https://tinyurl.com/ChargeConferenceVoluntneers>

Missions & Justice

Help Increase the Supply of Affordable Housing

Inner City Christian Federation Community Homes (ICCF) is a non-profit housing corporation who has been increasing and sustaining the supply of affordable housing in Grand Rapids for over 50 years.

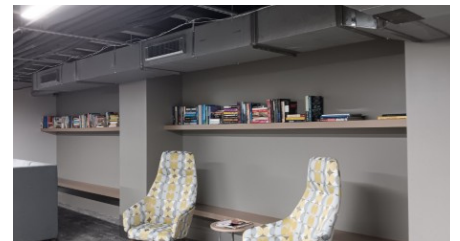
Trinity will be doing a volunteer workday at one of ICCF's properties on Saturday, November 15, 2025 from 9:00 am to noon. Come for all or part of the time as you are able. The work typically is yardwork, cleaning, demolition, painting, or organizing -- we'll know the specifics shortly. Youth are welcome. Background checks by Trinity are required for those 18 and older.

Contact Kip Smalligan 616-485-6198 to join.

Our Thanksgiving Holiday Offering is for United Methodist Community House, a ministry supporting Grand Rapids and Kent County families. UMCH is growing! The beautifully renovated Sunrise Bakery Building at 900 S Division opened in August for dining, wellness classes, clubs, speakers, library, and social events, all for older adults. The baby and child care areas will now be expanding at the 904 Sheldon Street building. UMCH provides childcare for parents who work second shift – a big help. Thank you for supporting UMCH. You may give online through Trinity Gives, the offering in worship, or at the church office. Your Missions Work Area

Thanksgiving Food Ingathering

Share your blessings with the food pantries of North End Community Ministries (NECM), South End Community Outreach (SECOM), and At Tahweed Islamic Center. Bring your food items to the narthex Sunday, November 9. Or give online or by check to the offering or church office designated for the Food Ingathering. Thank you for expanding our outreach to all our neighbors.!



The UM Community House is in a growing phase this year. The newly renovated Sunrise Bakery Building at 900 S. Division was opened in mid-August for congregational dining, wellness classes, clubs, classes of interest or with speakers, library, and social events, all for older adults. Soon dance class, including line dancing will start. A favorite exercise group is seated YOGA. UMCH has busses for transportation and trips. The Fresh Market helps people using the local city bus to have access to a food market.

The baby and child care areas will now be filling the 904 Sheldon Street building.

The baby and toddler classes will be able to help more families, as well as the pre-school classes. A helpful childcare need has been helping parents who work second shift have childcare service.

The school age programs continue at nine nearby schools in the afternoon. Also summer camp programs will continue. Our Thanksgiving offering will support programming as needed. You can see your gifts will help in many ways, as the UM Community House grows in use by many people of all ages.

Thanks for Giving,

Your Missions and Justice 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 November is Inspire. 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

November 2: Carolyn Miller in memory of what would have been Don and Evie Miller's 61st anniversary.

November 9: Eve and David in memory of Peggy Ricketts and Pamela Howard.

November 16: Deb White in memory of Tim White.

November 23: The Myers, Gifford, & Mortensen family in memory of Allen Myers.

November 30: Advent



PRAYERS AND CARE

Prayers of comfort and healing for Mary-Lyn as she is currently receiving care after an e-bike accident.
frostmarylyn1@gmail.com

Prayers for Corinna Goodman and her overall health and well-being.
goodmancorinna@gmail.com

Prayers of health and healing for Heather Barnard's father who is currently healing from internal bleeding.

Condolences to Jann Myers, The Gifford Family, The Myers Family, the Mortensen Family on the passing of Helen Scholten.
jmyers4779@gmail.com

Opportunities to Engage



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, 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.

Friday, December 12 from 10:30am-2:30pm

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park at 1000 E Beltline Ave NE, Grand Rapids, 49525.
Meet inside the Welcome Center but before ticketing.

This God's Naturehood is extended so that we can take a wintertime walk outside as well as visit the Christmas & Holiday Traditions Exhibit and eat lunch together in the café. Participants are responsible for covering their own admission & lunch although we usually have plenty of free passes to share. If cost is an issue, contact Laura about options, as we never want price to prevent participation!

RSVPs are requested but not required. Contact Laura Johns at l.johns@grtumc.org.



You're invited to join us this fall for Pints with the Pastor. This gathering is an opportunity for all of us to get a drink, get a taco, and get to know each other better. Meet up at Taco Borracho at 755 Michigan St NE anytime between 6:00pm-7:30pm. No RSVP required.

Contact Pastor Mike at m.desotell@grtumc.org with questions.



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, 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 l.johns@grtumc.org.

Great news! You don't have to find out "just how far you'll go" to escape your Winter Break blues. You can do it at Trinity. That's right, friends, Winter Break Family Night is back in 2026!

Celebrate the end of your long winter break with us on Friday, January 2 from 4:30pm-8:30pm!

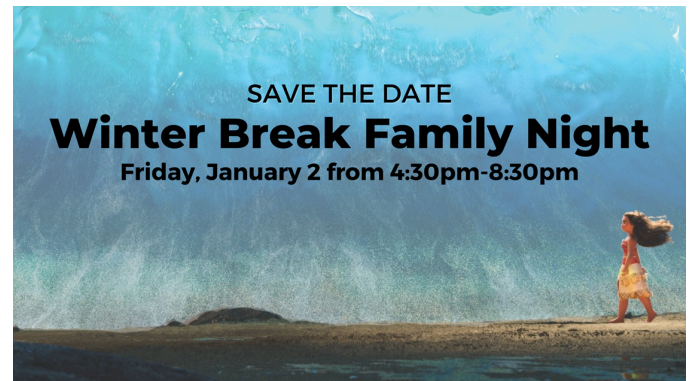
Don't miss "Moana" themed crafts, gym time, dinner, dessert & an epic glow dance party. Plus, we'll join our church-family for the Faith at the Movies film screening!

What can we say except, "You're Welcome!" Seriously, you are welcome at this event. Regardless of your age, whether you have kids, whether you are a demi-god of the wind & sea, or whether you can sing all the words to all the Moana songs – you are welcome and have a place here with us!

In order to plan supplies and food appropriately, we need folks to RSVP. There is a suggested donation of \$10 per person; maximum \$35 per family to help offset food & supply costs. That said, we never want price to prevent participation, so you're always welcome to select the subsidized options on our online form.

Get all the details and register at: <https://tinyurl.com/TUMC-WBFN26>.

Questions? Contact Laura Johns at l.johns@grtumc.org.





Join your Trinity family for our annual Thanksgiving Dinner on Sunday, November 23rd at 11:15am. Lunch will include a full spread – turkey, dressing, potatoes, gravy, vegetables, salad, cranberries, relishes and pie! Your donation of \$15 per adult, \$10 per child 12 & under supports the Mission Work Camp Fund.

Come for the delicious food. Stay to hear more about potential opportunities to put your faith into action over the coming year – something the funds we raise helps make possible!

Lend A Hand:

We're also looking for volunteers to help prepare the feast on Saturday & Sunday, as well as folks to donate salads, relishes, and pies! To volunteer, use our SignUpGenius at tinyurl.com/MWCF-Turkey-Volunteer25 or contact Laura Johns at l.johns@grtumc.org.

RSVP:

Contact Laura or use our online form at: <https://tinyurl.com/MWCF-Turkey-2025>! Advanced registration is appreciated.



Hanging of the Greens

November 23, 2025

1:00pm - 2:00pm

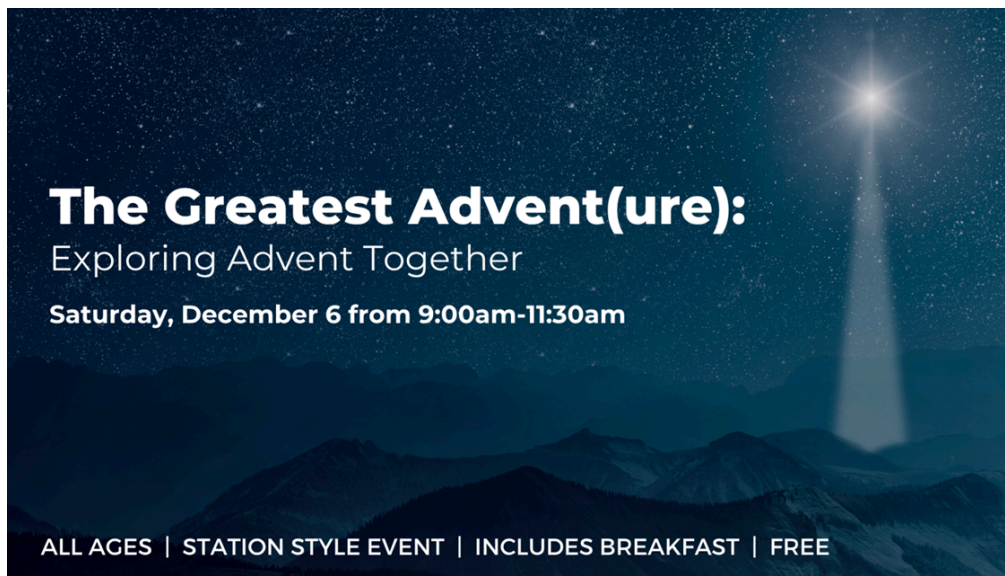
Listen to Christmas tunes while you help the Worship Team & Trinity Staff decorate the church for the holidays!

There will be jobs big & little for folks of all ages & abilities.

Join us after our annual Thanksgiving Dinner.

Meet in the Parlor to get your supplies and your assignment.

Please RVSP to the Office!



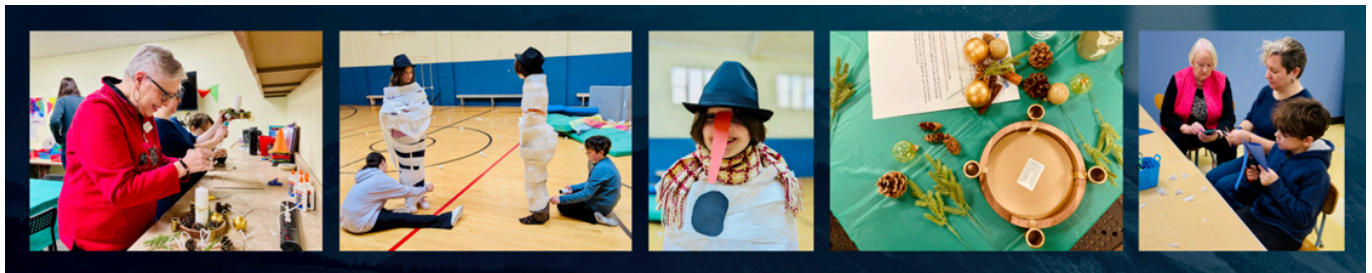
The Greatest Advent(ure) is back! Join us on Saturday, December 6 from 9:00am-11:30am for an all-ages Advent experience. Our Advent(ure) will start with a light breakfast from 9:00am-9:30am. Once you're fortified, you'll have 90 minutes to complete your quest – an epic journey through the four weeks of Advent!

Crafts, activities, prayer stations, a mission moment, and more will guide adventurers toward deeper understandings of the hope, peace, joy, and love we celebrate each Advent. You won't want to miss the opportunities that will be found around every turn including a NEW special family Advent craft.

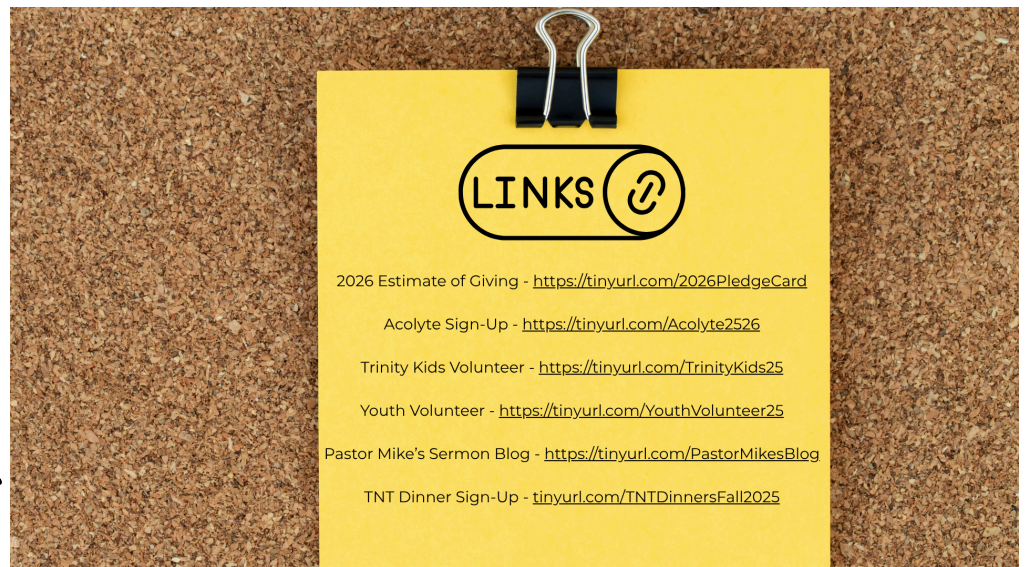

At 11:00am, we will all gather again as a group for a hot cocoa bar, a time of sharing, and a storybook reading!

Come – all ye faithful – and experience The Greatest Advent(ure) as we prepare our homes, our families, and our hearts for Christmas. Come explore Advent with us!

Questions? Contact Laura Johns at ljohns@grtumc.org.



Special Links
&
Sign-Ups



Adult Faith Formation classes kicked off on September 14th and we've been having an amazing time growing together each week....

A huge thank you to Jenna Chisholm who led us through our six week Exploring the Enneagram class! Now we are diving into The Deep End with Pastor Mike through November 16.



THE DEEP END

Diving into the Gospels

Adult Faith Formation Class
Sundays, October 26 - November 16 from 11:30am-12:30pm

Join Pastor Mike as we dive into the Gospels, exploring their origins, historical settings, and the unique voices of each writer. Together, we'll uncover how these stories of Jesus still speak powerfully to our lives today, making deeper biblical exploration accessible and engaging for everyone.



With the coming of Advent, plan to join us for a special opportunity. We'll be reading the daily devotional Keep Watching with Me: An Advent Reader for Peacemakers and then discussing select passages and practices on Sunday mornings during Faith Formation from November 30 to December 21.

Books will be available starting November 2 on the counter near the office with a suggested donation of \$15 per book.



Keep Watch with Me
AN ADVENT READER FOR PEACEMAKERS

Sundays, Nov. 30 to Dec. 21 at 11:30am
Adult Faith Formation | Discovery Room

KEEP WATCH WITH ME
An Advent Reader for Peacemakers
CLAIRE BROWN & MICHAEL T. MURRAY

The Adult Ministries Council is really excited about this resource! Why? Keep Watch With Me is a collaborative daily devotional featuring diverse contributors: black, white, LGBTQ, Latinx, Palestinian, incarcerated, Native American, Australian, Americans, Irish, South African, clergy, laity, activists, authors, organizers, and more. The season of Advent, as the church prepares for the birth of Christ, is a penitential season of reckoning with our need and the needs of the world. Keep Watch With Me offers stories, reflections, prayers, and spiritual practices to sustain and challenge the faith of those who work for justice and peace, and long for the coming of God with us.

If you have questions about any of these opportunities, contact Laura Johns at l.johns@grtumc.org.



We're revealing our Faith at the Movies selections early this year in an exclusive sneak peek!

January 2026 we will be watching and discussing lessons learned from Moana, National Treasure, The Sandlot, and Come From Away.

What will we learn? What will Pastor Mike wear? Stay tuned for more details as we wrap up 2025!

The Youth Connection Corner

YOUTH EVENTS FOR THE MONTH OF

NOVEMBER

Happy November everyone! We just wrapped up our first month's "What's YOUR Story?" topic: *LGBTQ+ Issues & Christianity* and November kicks off our next topic: *How the Bible Applies to our Lives*. The questions, insights, and heart the youth are bringing to the table each week is so amazing to see. I love how this group is growing, learning, and supporting one another in such meaningful ways.

We've also excited as November is shaping up to be a month full of connection, laughter, fun & faith in action! Mark your calendars for...

Youth Fall Adventure – Movie Night & PJ Party!

Our Adventures are BACK people! The Youth are invited to join me in the **Parlor** on **November 8th from 5:30PM – 9:00PM** for a Youth ONLY Movie Extravaganza and PJ Party! We're talking cozy pjs, pizza, snacks, music, games and of course, the showing of the movie our youth voted for: *KPop: Demon Hunters*! Throw on your jammies, bring a friend and RSVP to me by Sunday, November 3 at 11:59PM so I can make sure to grab enough snacks!



Popcorn Party Time – Game Night!

Popcorn Party time is back for another month! Pop on in on **Friday, November 14th from 6:30pm-8:30pm** for an **epic game night**! We're talking board games, we're talking card games, we're talking **all the games**! Bring your game face—and maybe a friend and get ready for an awesome time!

Turkey Dinner & Hanging of the Greens

It's that time again! Join us on Sunday, November 23rd after church for our annual **Thanksgiving Dinner & Hanging of the Greens**! Enjoy a full Thanksgiving feast (I'm getting hungry just thinking about it!) while supporting our Mission Work Camp Fund. Then, once you're full, stick around as we decorate the church for Christmas! The youth will help deck the halls with festive fun, laughter, and some holiday magic! Note: We won't be having Youth Group this day so everyone can be part of the fun! Come hungry, come festive!



As we head into this beautiful but busy season, I ask that you keep our youth in your prayers. Pray that they continue to grow, to ask the hard questions, and to simply know that they loved. Pray that they will feel God's love deeply, not just with their church family, but also with everyone around them...and that they continue to do the same for others. Just as Jesus would!

Annie Slabaugh, Youth Director - a.slabaugh@grtumc.org

Community Ministries

What happens when you've done your good deed. You've helped the stranger and looked out for your neighbor more than one time, and you've met your quota, now what? What if I told you, you've only just begun. Sounds exhausting right? If you find that to be true maybe it's not the quantity of service you're doing, maybe a tweak in mindset is needed. Let me explain...

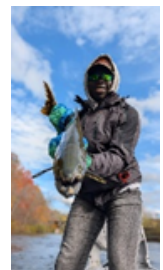
So, you've just served food at the local elementary school for an event where help was asked for or supported a food mission that is helping bring food to those in need, awesome! If you only see the act of service as a simple event then when that event is over all those good feelings you felt will also be gone soon, so you do another, and another, with the same results. Great work is being done, you are helping the community, but do you ever dream of what your action could mean to someone and play it out like a ripple effect.

What if a kid at the school was facing bullying and never lifted their eyes to greet people they see every day because they feared of what might come from it. But you are someone new, a new face who gives them a smile and makes them feel seen. They walk into their next class with a bit more confidence and they soon realize that kids are easily distracted, and they aren't focused on the oft picked-on child. With their eyes up, they connect with another kid who gives them a smile and now they don't feel all alone, in a big school. The two kids sit together at lunch and make the day a bit better as they become friends. It all starts with a smile from a random stranger doing a good deed. The truth...we never know what small actions might mean the world to those we serve. The mindset change is in the planting of the seeds and the mystery of what might become. That fills the bucket, raises the energy and has the doer of good deeds looking for more opportunities to plant more seeds. The world needs more planters willing to find joy in the process and not in the result.

Check out these recent and upcoming events for the Community Ministries Program below:

Faith on the Fly

We just spent the day on the Muskegon River with two different pairs of Faith on the Fly members chasing after Kind Salmon as they continue their pursuit learning to fly fish while building community!





Exploring Grief

OCT 28TH 6:30-8PM
@ TRINITY UMC

Join us for this evening of story, insight and exploration of a difficult topic with our three phenomenal guest speakers. Learn to find hope through tragedy and meaning in grief. To register for this program, please email m.wickowski@grtunc.org with name, email and if attending. This is a free program w/registration.



My Life In Pieces

On Tuesday, Oct 28th 6:30-8pm, we are bringing people together to Explore Grief through a thoughtful, intimate discussion with our panel of speakers sharing their personal stories and helping people find hope through grief.

"A Night to Remember" Nov 7th 6-9pm Free event (Great Date Night Out!)

Join us for music, wonderful food and ministry moments shared by our community partners in their own words,

Hear Congress students and teachers, local nonprofit with Trinity connections, longtime member Gary Roelofs speak about Faith on the Fly, StageGR singers with early days reflections and so much more. It's like nothing you've seen before, and you don't want to miss out.



"A Night to Remember"

Join us for a special night of music, inspirational stories, ministry in the moment and connection with our community.

Nov 7th, 2025 6-8:00pm
Free (w/Registration)
Trinity United Methodist Church

To Register: Email m.wickowski@grtunc.org with name, email and total # attending.