



Trinity In Touch

March 2026

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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.**

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Behind the Worship: Rituals and Relevance

"...test everything; hold fast to what is good;" - 1 Thessalonians 5:21

These days when I scroll through social media, which is not very often, I see more and more people talking about deconstructing their faith. If you are not familiar with "deconstruction", it means: carefully examining the faith you were given, naming what was life giving and what was harmful, and deciding what you will carry forward and what you need to leave behind. It is difficult work. It can be painful. It takes courage to revisit what you were taught and ask honest questions. In many ways, I think of that process as discipleship. We grow by examining our beliefs and letting go of what no longer reflects love or truth.

The friends I worry about are the ones who come out of that process unable to name anything life giving, only long lists of harm. Not just disagreement. Not just doubt. But trauma. They speak of shame, fear, manipulation, abuse, and silence. They describe churches that used God and Jesus to control, exclude, or wound. Some of that harm was intentional. Some of it was not. The impact was real either way.

Lent is a season of reflection and repentance. It calls us to examine our own lives honestly. Sometimes that examination must extend beyond our personal actions to the traditions we inherit and represent. Even if we did not cause the harm ourselves, we belong to a faith that has, at times, harmed people in the name of Christ. We cannot ignore that and we must be willing to repent of it.

Repentance is the deliberate choice to face the truth, to change our minds, and redirect our lives onto a different path. It is the courage to face what has been done in the name of our faith. It is listening without interrupting. It is saying, "I am sorry this happened to you," without defending it. Even when we were not the direct cause, in this case, we still repent. We can acknowledge the damage done under the banner of our tradition. We can name it as wrong. We can stand with those who were hurt and say, "We see you. We believe you. We are committed to doing better." It means refusing to protect the institution at the expense of a person. And, if our witness of God's love and grace is going to mean anything, especially in our present moment, it must begin with humility. We do both because it is right and because we believe that Christians, even the ones we don't always agree with, are still members of the household of faith. We listen because this kind of healing begins with being seen. We tell the truth about our history so we can more faithfully reflect Christ's love.

If someone you know is untangling their faith and carrying wounds from the church, perhaps this Lent, the holiest gift you can offer is space. Offer empathy. Offer an honest apology where it is needed. Not to get them back into a pew, but to let them know their story matters, and faith or no faith, they are loved.

That is repentance. That is a faithful step. That is how we follow the way of Jesus.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Mike

***You're
LOVED***

Ministry Spotlight

Vision & Leadership Board (VLB)

The Vision & Leadership Board (VLB) helps shape the long-term direction of our church by setting strategic goals and discerning God's vision for our future. Their work focuses on the big picture—guiding priorities so Trinity can grow and serve faithfully.

VLB meetings are open, and all are welcome to attend. If you are interested in learning more or joining the committee, please contact the church office at office@grtumc.org

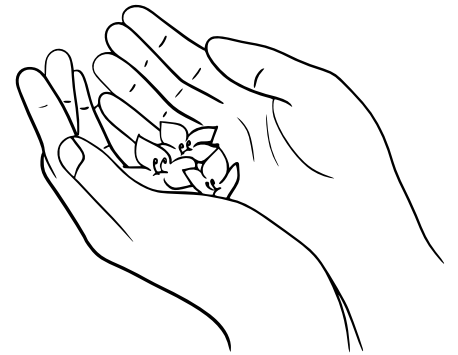
UWF (United Women in Faith)

A service of healing and hope in a hurting and desperate world...

Sunday, March 1, 2026 at 6:30pm



This intimate, candlelit service will offer a sacred space for reflection, prayer, and quiet strength in uncertain times. Each attendee will receive meaningful takeaways to continue the spirit of the service at home. Come as you are. Leave with hope, practical tools, and a renewed sense of shared purpose.



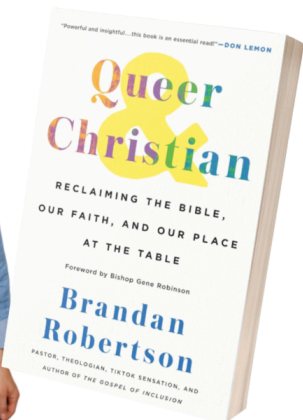
Outreach & Advocacy

SAVE THE DATE
Queer & Christian

We're excited to announce an upcoming event on June 9, 2026, featuring **Brandan Robertson**, queer scholar and pastor, and author of *Queer and Christian*. This promises to be an inspiring evening of dialogue and community engagement.

The night will include a discussion with Brandan, a Q&A session, access to community resources and a book signing.

More details coming soon!





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 March is Seek. 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

March 1 - 29 : LENT

Altar Flowers will resume after Easter.

PRAYERS AND CARE

Please pray for healing and comfort for Dard Schmidt as he is currently receiving care at the hospital.

Dardschmidt@comcast.net

Prayers for Nancy Chowning as she is having a total knee replacement surgery on 2/24/26.

NJChown@aol.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 of our January to March meet-ups are below:



Friday, March 20 from 1:00pm-2:00pm

Northeast Park at 1900 Middleground Dr SE, Grand Rapids, 49546
Park in the main parking lot near the picnic pavilion.

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

Adult Faith Formation

MIGRATION
EXPERIENCING GOD'S
CARE FOR IMMIGRANTS

Sundays, February 22 to March 29 from 11:30am-12:30pm
Adult Faith Formation Class | Discovery Room



Join us throughout Lent, Sundays February 22nd - March 29th, as we read and discuss Migration: Experiencing God's Care for Immigrants. This interactive Bible study invites us to explore how the movement of people reflects God's love, purpose, and call in our lives. Through a diverse mix of Scripture, essays, spoken word, visual art, and personal testimonies, Migration offers a spiritually rich experience designed to deepen our connection with God and foster compassion for others. Workbooks available now on the counter near the Office and in the Discovery Room on Sunday mornings.

After Lent, we'll continue the topic of migration with a series of guest speakers and courageous conversations.

Questions about what's coming? Contact Laura Johns at ljohns@grtumc.org or check out our updated program flyers online at: <https://www.grtumc.org/newsletter-more/>.

Adult Small Groups

Looking for a place to grow together this March?
Check out one of our adult small groups...

Winter 2026 Update

Join a small group exploring the many writings of Father Richard Rohr together!

ForT:

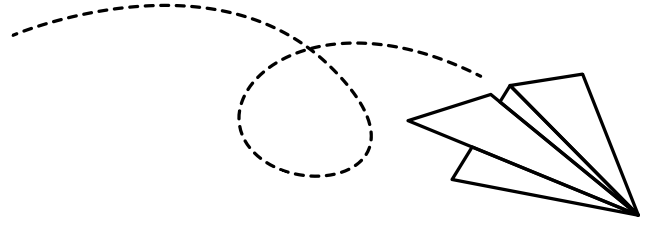
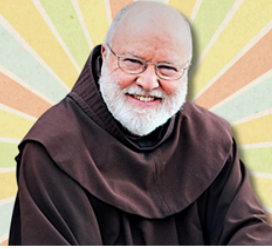
Friends of Rohr at Trinity

Deeper, Better, Clearer (DBC)

Sundays from 5:00pm-6:30pm
Fireside Room | Book: The Tears of Things

Everything Belongs (EvB)

Thursdays from 6:15pm-7:30pm
Library | Book: The Naked Now



Gophers

Tuesdays from 9:15am-10:00am

Most Tuesdays from October 7, 2025 thru May 5, 2026

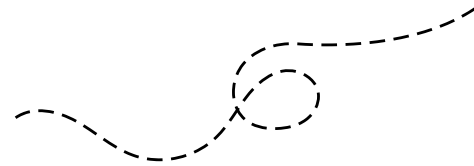
Join a fun group of older adults for a weekly exercise class featuring tai chi, strength training, balance work, and more. This low impact opportunity is great for all ability levels.

Stick around after class for Coffee & Conversation!

Sacred Justice Book Club

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

Meetings are every three months on Tuesdays at 7:00pm. 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

Monthly Mahjong

First & Third Wednesday of Each Month at 1:00pm

Gather in Fireside on the first & third Wednesday of each month for an opportunity to practice your mahjong skills or learn new ones.

All ages & abilities are welcome - beginner to expert!

Contact the Office for more information.

Now Twice a Month!



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@grtunc.org.

January 13
Fahrenheit 451
Ray Bradbury

February 10
The Small and The Mighty
Sharon McMahon

March 10
My Friends
Fredrik Backman

April 14
The Demon of Unrest
Erik Larson

May 12
Everything is Tuberculosis
John Green

Books Switched for March & April

Spring 2026



Spring 2026

Pints with the Pastor

Select Sundays at 6:00pm at Taco Borracho

Jan. 25

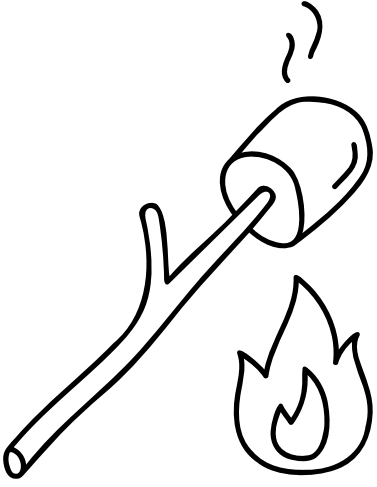
Feb. 22

March 22

April 26

May 17





Maybe you have been attending Trinity Family Camp for 40 years? Maybe you've just heard the stories? Either way, this is your year to join us! Come experience the magic of the West Michigan lakeshore with your Trinity family this Memorial Day Weekend.

Save the Date:

Friday, May 22 to Monday, May 25, 2026
Lake Michigan Camp & Retreat Center at 5807 Ridge Rd, Pentwater, MI 49449

Family Camp 101:

Family camp is an inter-generational overnight opportunity for Trinity family & friends. Each family unit has their own lodging but we gather together for shared meals, activities, fellowship, worship, and more!

The Lake Michigan Camp & Retreat Center is located 90 minutes northwest of Trinity near Pentwater. Situated where the woods meet the sand, the camp features a half mile of pristine Lake Michigan waterfront. Enjoy hiking, biking, mini golfing, volleyball, disc golf, campfires, and so much more! We will provide a full schedule of opportunities available through the camp and through Trinity before you arrive for your stay.

FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVED REGISTRATION:

All sites, cabins, and other lodging options will be available on a first-come, first-served basis again this year to ensure new & returning Trinity friends have the most options available to them. **The online camp registration form will go live on Tuesday, March 17 at 12:00pm.** If you have your heart set on a specific lodging option, plan to RSVP right at 12:00pm on March 17. Our hope is that this process will go smoothly again this year and give everyone an opportunity to book a lodging option that works for them!

All the information you need for booking your lodging and planning your stay will be circulated via email by Tuesday, March 3 and then shared again in the Monday emails. This gives you two weeks to review it and decide on your plans.

The registration website will go live Tuesday, March 17 at 12:00pm and is:

<https://tinyurl.com/TUMCFamilyCamp2026>

RSVPs are requested as soon as possible after the website goes live. We need to let Lake Michigan Camp & Retreat Center know by late March if there are any sites we do not need to avoid paying for nights/sites we are not using.

If you have questions or concerns about family camp or about the registration process, contact Laura Johns, Director of Discipleship, at ljohns@grtumc.org.

Lent/Easter @ TRINITY



New for 2026 we're combining the best parts of three years of *From Hosanna to Hallelujah* and two years of *The Greatest Advent(ure)*.

Our new FREE *Easter Expedition: Exploring Holy Week Together* will start with a light breakfast from 9:00am-9:30am. Once you're fortified, you'll have 90 minutes to seek out all the "treasures" buried in the Easter story. Crafts, activities, prayer stations, and more will help you find clues and reveal new understandings. At 11:00am, we will all gather again as a group for a special treat, a time of sharing, and more!

Can we figure out the mystery of Easter together? Join us and find out!

RSVP: Planning to attend? Email Laura Johns at ljohns@grtumc.org. This gives us a better idea of numbers for purchasing supplies. That said, join us no matter what. All are welcome here!!

Lend A Hand: To make this expedition work, we need room hosts, hospitality folks, and greeters. All helpers are asked to arrive at 8:40am for a quick tutorial. If possible, two volunteers will be assigned to each station to ensure that even our volunteers have an opportunity to join in on the adventure. To sign up, contact Laura Johns at ljohns@grtumc.org.

Thursday, April 2 | Maundy Thursday Worship Service @ Trinity

On the night before the cross, Jesus washed feet, shared bread, and gave his disciples a new command to love one another. We'll gather at Trinity for communion and worship as we remember the meal, the mandate, and the love that shapes the church.

Friday, April 3 | Good Friday Worship Service at St. Paul's UMC

We'll gather at St. Paul's for a joint Good Friday service as we hear the passion narrative, sing hymns, and hold space for the depth of Christ's love. The service concludes in silence as we await the dawn of Easter.

Saturday, April 4 | United Women in Faith Lenten Breakfast

A traditional celebration brings good food, warm fellowship, and a delightful message of hope to all guests.

Sunday, April 5 | Easter Sunday Worship Service

On Easter morning we join the church in proclaiming the good news that Christ is risen and love has not been defeated. Our service will feature the Trinity Orchestra, congregational singing, and a joyful celebration of resurrection hope for all ages. A special combined Easter class will be offered for children ages Pre-K to 5th grade during worship (after Children's Moment). We will not have after worship Faith Formation offerings this week.



Popcorn Party Time is on hiatus in January for Faith at the Movies but will be back on Friday nights at 6:30pm from February to April 2026. Save these dates in your calendar now!

March 6 – Movie Night featuring *How to Train Your Dragon* (PG | 2025)

April 17 – Game Night

Not sure what Popcorn Party Time is? It's our monthly movie or game nights! We're 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.

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

The Youth Connection Corner

YOUTH EVENTS FOR THE MONTH OF

MARCH

Well hi there, Trinity Friends and Family!

It's March and with it we have jumped into the important season that is Lent. In Youth Group this month, *What's YOUR Story?* will be focusing on our next topic **What does Grace REALLY mean?** though the lens of Lent. We'll have extra guest speakers this month who will share their personal stories, faith journeys and real world applications of what it looks like to live grace loud and proud!

In addition to this conversation, March also will have some fun opportunities for our youth and their families alike!

Mark your calendars for...

Popcorn Party Time: How to Train Your Dragon – LIVE ACTION!

Join me on **Friday, March 6th 6:30PM** for an epic tale of a boy and his dragon as they explore friendship, courage and seeing the good in others—which is perfect for our theme of grace this month! Bring your comfy clothes and I'll pop the popcorn for a dragon-tastic time!

The Easter Expedition: Exploring Holy Week Together - March 14 from 9:00am-11:30am

We're combining the best parts of *From Hosanna to Hallelujah* and *The Greatest Advent(ure)* for one morning of epic Easter-ness. Oh man I'm excited! Our new Easter Expedition will be taking place on Saturday March 14th and will start with a light breakfast from 9:00am-9:30am. Once you're full and ready to go you'll have 90 minutes to seek out all the "treasures" buried in the Easter story. Crafts, activities, prayer stations, and more will help you find clues and reveal new understandings. I'll be there and I challenge the youth to come find me and tell me one thing that they learned before 11:00am, when we will all gather again as a group for a special treat!

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

Community Ministries



When It Means A Little More...

This phrase has been rattling around in my head for the past few days. Through the Community Ministries Program and Faith on the Fly we have lots of amazing stories of people finding a love and passion for fly fishing and the community that we built...and continue to build. For the past 10 years you have heard me talk about building community with parents, students, those people inside the church and those from outside too!

After spending quality time together (multiple years in many cases) the little things seem to mean a little more. My first group of kids are now in college and others who we played basketball with in our gym and helped tutor are now star athletes on their high school teams and looking to the future. Those chance encounters and getting updates mean the world to me and our volunteers.

In our Faith on the Fly Program, we have seen friendships grow and milestones reached in fly fishing as new challenges and opportunities present themselves and people grow in their skills to do new and exciting things while taking on new and daunting adventures. We've had kids start fly tying and now are looking to joining our monthly meeting to continue to grow and their families being excited that their children have found a new way for them to grow, build and connect with our community of people who care about them. We recently had a FOTF member and local artist ask if he could design a "Faith on the Fly" Patch that could be affixed to a hat to help represent Faith on the Fly to the community. He worked on this project behind the scenes, and we just gave them out to members and they were so excited. As a "hat guy" I love to get a free hat but that's not why I was so excited for both him and our group. He cares about our brand...and gave of his time talent and treasure to give back to others with no expectation of anything back. This guy does not go to our church but has found a home here through the community we have built and the quality programming that his child has enjoyed through the Community Ministries Program. He is connected through this group and is highly respected for his commitment to learning and growing as an angler, while building community together. It the little things like a simple hat, that means a little more.

So, we've challenged some of our parents, volunteers and kids to share what they like about the Community Ministries and the Faith on the Fly Program so that you get to hear from our community why the work we do matters. Our hope is that this will continue to support this amazing program and appreciate the reach it has far outside the walls of the church to bring more good into our world. So while you've heard me speak about this for years, I feel that hearing from the people we serve makes it meant a little more.

Keep up with all of our adventures on our Community Ministries Program and Faith on the Fly Facebook pages, our Faith on the Fly website at faithonthefly.net, or on Instagram [@faith_onthefly](https://www.instagram.com/faith_onthefly).

