



Trinity In Touch

April 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.**

**Trinity UMC
1100 Lake Drive SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506
616.456.7168
office@grtumc.org**

Behind the Worship: Rituals and Relevance

“Generation after generation stands in awe of your work;
each one tells stories of your mighty acts.”
Psalm 145:4

Do you ever hear a word so often that it doesn't register anymore? It just sort of floats by. Or you see a word in something you are reading and gloss over it without really thinking about what it means or is trying to communicate?

We actually do this all the time.

Think about words like “fine.” Someone asks how you are doing and you say, “I'm fine.” That tiny little word is doing a whole lot of heavy lifting. Sometimes it means what it says, and other times, the exact opposite. Or phrases like “we should get together sometime.” I have a clergy friend who served a church about 30 miles away from me. But I would only ever see him at Annual Conference. And every year at conference we would say “we should get together sometime” but then life would happen and another year would go by and we'd do the dance all over again. Strangely enough he also serves a church in Grand Rapids and we still don't get together as often as we probably should.

We use words and phrases like that so often that we stop asking what they really mean. At Trinity we use a word that I think also gets lost in translation sometimes. And that word is “intergenerational”.

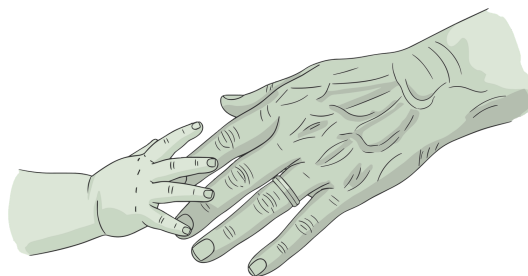
Whether you realize it or not you have probably seen it in the newsletter. Or on the Monday email or heard Laura mention it in the announcements. It sounds important. It sounds like someone paid a lot of money for that word at college. And yet it's easy to move right past it without giving it much thought.

So let's slow down for a minute.

At Trinity, when we say an event is “intergenerational” it's not just a buzzword. It is something we aspire to as we follow Jesus. You have probably all heard the phrase “it takes a village” that usually ends with “to raise a child”. While that is absolutely true it also doesn't end with children.

We also believe it takes a village to care for one another through life. Through the good seasons and the hard ones. Through the loud moments and the quiet ones. And villages only work when people actually know each other. That is the point.

Instead of keeping everyone in their own age group or demographic all the time, we try to create space where generations come together. Where people who might not normally cross paths end up sitting at the same table, sharing a meal, playing a board game, or working on something side by side. Because that is where real growth happens.



When generations mix, beautiful things start to happen.

- Children are seen and recognized by people who are not their parents, and that enhances their sense of belonging.
- Children watch the example of older teens and adults in worship and learn the rhythms of the service.
- Youth hear stories about faith that lasted through job loss, illness, or grief, and begin to understand that faith isn't just something that happens on Sunday.
- Teenagers can help less tech savvy adults figure out a function on their phone or a livestream and can see they have something to offer the world right now.
- Adults can hear a child ask a simple question about God and find themselves rethinking a belief they haven't thought of in years.
- Adults laugh more, move more, and loosen up when there are children in the room who remind them that those things are more important than stains on a carpet.
- Older adults tell stories about moments where God showed up, and those stories become part of the church's shared memory.
- Someone who lives alone has a child run up and give them a fist bump, and for a moment they feel seen in a way they did not expect.
- People begin to recognize each other across age groups, not just by face but by name and story.
- Faith stops being something you learn in a class and becomes something you see lived out in front of you.



At Trinity we believe in connecting people of all ages with each other because that is how we will truly build the beloved community of God. If you have ever been involved in one of our intergenerational events you know what I am talking about: some folks facilitate activities, some play, some cook, some eat, some bring big energy, some bring quiet wisdom. All matter. All are needed.

And here is the part I do not want you to miss. When you see something labeled “intergenerational” at Trinity, it is not code for a certain group of people. It means it is for you. It doesn't matter if you are 3 or 103, you belong there. You are part of what makes Trinity the amazing place that it is.

Because this kind of ministry does something deeper than any single program. It builds relationships across the whole church. It helps people feel known, not just by the people their own age, but by the whole community.

It teaches faith in a way that is lived, not just talked about. You learn how to pray by hearing someone else pray. You learn how to care by caring alongside someone else. You learn how faith helps you by watching how others live it out.

Over time, those connections start to hold people together. That is how a church becomes a community. That is how a community becomes a place where people show up for each other without being asked.

The Psalmist tells us clearly that we need to bring the generations together so we can share the stories of all that God has done for us. That is what we are working toward with intergenerational ministry.

So the next time you see “intergenerational” in the newsletter or in the Monday Email, don't skim past it. Pause. Pray. And then show up. Because you belong.

And because we grow better together than we do apart.

Grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike".

Pastor Mike

Large, stylized handwritten text in black ink that reads "Better Together". The word "Better" is on the top line and "Together" is on the bottom line, with a vertical line through the middle of both words.

UWF (United Women in Faith)

United Women in Faith
“Living into Hope”
Lenten Breakfast

Saturday, April 4, 2026
9:30am Parlor, Main Floor

A donation of \$8 is suggested with proceeds going to the UWF Prayer and Self-Denial Offering supporting Children’s Programming in our National Mission Institutions.

RSVP to the church at office@grtumc.org
- Or -
Nichea VerVeer Guy at orangecelt00@aol.com



Outreach & Advocacy

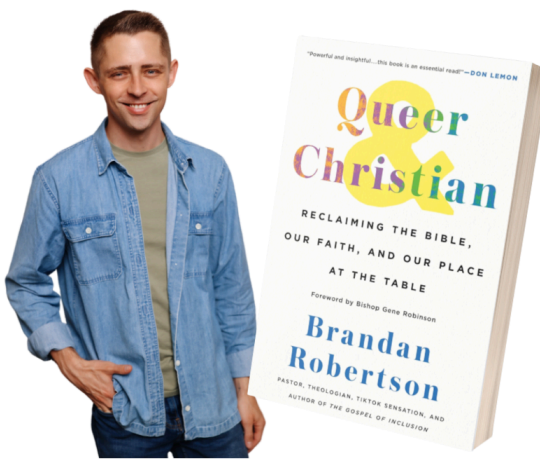
SAVE THE DATE

Queer & Christian

We’re excited to announce an upcoming event on June 9, 2026, featuring **Brandon 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 Brandon, a Q&A session, access to community resources and a book signing.

More details coming soon!



Ministry Spotlight

With so many amazing ministries here at Trinity it is hard to choose which to highlight!
Make recommendations to the office at office@grtumc.org.



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 April is Change. 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

- April 12 - OPEN
- April 19 - OPEN
- April 26 - OPEN

Reach out to the office at office@grtumc.org if you would like any of the open April dates.

CONDOLENCES

Donella Collins and Family as John Collins passed away on Sunday, March 22, 2026. Please keep the family in your prayers.
dmjcollins@yahoo.com
829 Cooks Crossing Dr SE
Byron Center, MI 49315

John's obituary can be viewed [HERE](#).

Funeral will be at OField Funeral Home (4500 Kalamazoo Ave SE) on March 28.
Visitation: 11:00am
Service: 12:00pm

PRAYERS AND CARE

Please lift up Kay Block's Dad, Tom Block, as he recovers from heart valve surgery.
kayblock321@gmail.com

Please lift up Denny Smith's brother as he is dealing some medical issues. Prayers for healing and peace.
mollemom@att.net

Prayers for healing and a speedy recovery for Marty Tillstom after her knee surgery.
richandmarty@sbcglobal.net

Prayers for healing and a speedy recovery for Susan Cooper as she is undergoing a cornea transplant in April.
sdcoop@yahoo.com
153 Lawrence NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Prayers for Dard Schmidt and family as he is transitioning into the end of life. Please lift up Dard and his family during this difficult time.
Dardschmidt@comcast.net (Dard)
stacizuspann@icloud.com (Staci, daughter)
706 Braeside Dr. SE
Byron Center, MI 49315

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 spring meet-ups are below:

Friday, April 24 from 1:00pm-2:00pm

Aman Park at 0-1859 Lake Michigan Dr, Grand Rapids, MI 49534

Access to the park is off of a drive on the right (north) side of Lake Michigan Drive after you pass through Standale but before you get to GVSU or Allendale. Once you turn onto the Aman Park / Indian Trails Camp drive, you'll continue a little way until you get to several small gravel lots on the left side and a larger lot on the right. Park in either and then meet at the north end of the drive near the large gate.

Friday, May 15 from 1:00pm-2:00pm

Lepard Preserve at 6030 76th St SE, Caledonia, MI 49316

Park in the main lot that is accessed from an entry off 76th Street just east of Broadmoor Ave SE. The most visible road signage will be for the Spirit of Life Lutheran Church.

Friday, June 12 from 1:00pm-2:00pm

Cascade Peace Park at 8900 Grand River Dr SE, Ada, MI 49301.

Park in the main lot off of Grand River Dr SE and meet at the trailhead.

The trails at all our spring walks have some uneven surfaces & elevation change per requests from some of our regular walkers. If you have questions or concerns about any of the parks, contact Laura. We will make sure to include some options with more level and/or paved trails soon!

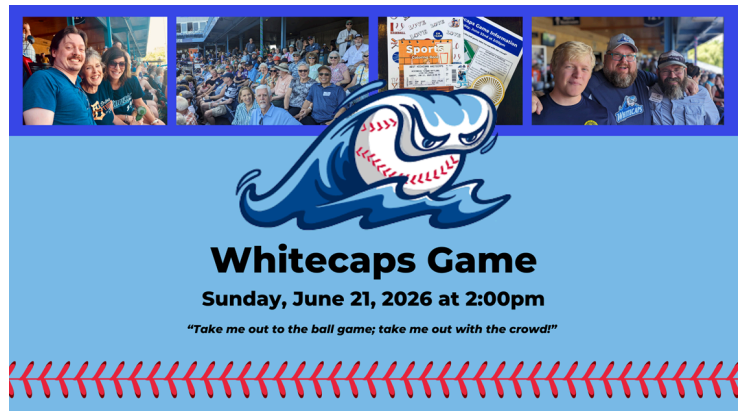
RSVPs are requested but not required. Contact Laura Johns at ljohns@grtumc.org.



Join your Trinity family at LMCU Ballpark on Sunday, June 21 at 2:00pm as the West Michigan Whitecaps take on the Lansing Lugnuts.

We have reserved seats for the 2:00pm game. We will be in the same area on the third base side (Section 120) as last three years ensuring protection from the sun most of the afternoon and accessible seat options for anyone who needs them.

To ensure no one goes hungry – a Methodist tradition – we are adding an option for you to select a special group voucher to add to your tickets. You can mix & match options with your tickets, but once our tickets are reserved in late May, you will not be able to change your selection. Options are:



\$16 – Box seat ticket only

\$22 – Box seat ticket and one hot dog & one 16oz soda

\$33 – Box seat ticket and your choice of one hamburger, cheeseburger, or brat plus chips & one 16oz soda

All the vouchers save you on taxes and are less than the face value of the food items with the hot dog & soda voucher representing a 50% savings! You can turn in the voucher at any point before or during the game at concessions to collect your items.

Grown-Ups With Kiddos: June 21st is a "Kids Eat Free" day at the ballpark meaning the first 1,000 kids receive a food voucher. That said, we cannot guarantee your receipt of one of those passes for your kiddos, so you may still want a Trinity arranged voucher. The choice is up to you!

Purchase your tickets and vouchers today! Trinity has options for a 20% discount as well as additional accommodations should anyone need them. **The deadline to purchase your tickets is May 15 at 12:00pm.**

Use our online form at tinyurl.com/TUMCWhitecaps2026 or contact Laura for help registering.



“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed... the smallest of all seeds.” (Matthew 13:31-32)

Come to Family Camp this year and get ready to get tiny!

Slow down with us and seek out the small things: a moss covered stone, a grain of sand on the beach, a bird singing in the trees, a mustard seed. Pause and remember that little actions have big impacts. One person can make a difference. Rest and refresh so you're ready to find God in new ways during these "days of small things." (Zechariah 4:10)

Registered Campers: The reservations are in and we have an amazing group signed up this year! It's going to be a fantastic weekend on the West Michigan lakeshore. Laura will be emailing you lodging & meals confirmation, as well as a pack list, schedule of events, and other key info by mid-May. If you have questions in the meantime, do not hesitate to reach out.

All Trinity Friends: Join our overnight campers for a day! On Saturday, you can stop by for a whole host of activities including crafts, games, and a brats & dogs dinner. On Sunday, join us at 11:00am for worship in the Dining Hall featuring camp music favorites. A delicious lunch will be provided after the worship service to all campers and visitors. After lunch, stick around for family activities, a hike to the lake, and more!

There is a suggested donation of \$10 per person for any camp meals. Please RSVP with number of visitors and any dietary needs / allergies by using the food section of our online registration form or by emailing Laura.

Still Interested in Registering for Camp? Contact Laura ASAP about options. There is still a spot or two available and we would love to have you join us!

Contact:

Laura Johns, Director of Discipleship, ljohns@grtumc.org



Another program year is flying by and somehow we've made it to the last Popcorn Party Time of this season. Where did the time go, friends?

Make sure you join us on **Friday, April 17 from 6:30pm-8:30pm** for an Epic Game Night! We'll have board games, card games, and more. And popcorn... lots and lots of popcorn! Not just for kids, not just for grown-ups – Popcorn Party Time is an intergenerational event that gives the whole Trinity family a chance to get together for fellowship and fun.

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

Adult Small Groups

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

FoRT (Friends of Rohr at Trinity) is a group of over 40 folks who enjoy studying Father Richard Rohr's writings. Some of us have followed Rohr and the Center for Action & Contemplation for years while others of us are unfamiliar with anything Rohr. Wherever we start, together we desire to integrate action and contemplation in our lives. 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." You're invited to join us! Details on each group can be found in the graphic or you can contact the FoRT Leadership Team: Laura Johns, Penny Murray, Steve Murray, and Merrita Tumonong.

Spring 2026 Update


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

Deeper, Better, Clearer (DBC)
Sundays from 5:00pm-6:30pm
Fireside Room | Book: The Tears of Things
No Class on March 29, April 5 & May 10 | Last Class May 17

Everything Belongs (EvB)
Thursdays from 6:15pm-7:30pm
Library | Book: The Naked Now
No Class on April 2 & April 9 | Last Class on May 14

FoRT:


Friends of Rohr at Trinity



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 <u>Jesus Feminist</u> Sarah Bessey	November 4, 2025 <u>How to Be an Antiracist</u> Ibram X. Kendi	February 3, 2026 <u>The Story of More</u> Hope Jahren	May 5, 2026 <u>Queer & Christian</u> Brandan Robertson
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After an amazing inaugural year, the Sacred Justice Book Club is excited for its last meeting of the 2025-2026 program year. On May 5th at 7:00pm, we'll be discussing *Queer & Christian* by Brandan Robertson. Make sure you join us for conversation and dessert plus we'll be selecting the books for next year and we want your feedback. Also, a reminder that Brandan Robertson will be speaking at Trinity on June 9th (see page 3 of the newsletter for more info) so the May meeting will be a great opportunity to prepare for his visit. All are welcome! Questions about Sacred Justice Book Club? Contact the Library Team: Laura Johns, Hannah Marshall & Dani Patrick

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!



Mugs & Munchkins

A Trinity Playgroup



Trinity United Methodist Church
3rd Tuesday from 9:30am-10:30am
PreK & Under Kiddos with Caregivers

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@grtumc.org.

January 13 <u>Fahrenheit 451</u> Ray Bradbury	February 10 <u>The Small and The Mighty</u> Sharon McMahon	March 10 <u>My Friends</u> Fredrik Backman	April 14 <u>The Demon of Unrest</u> Erik Larson	May 12 <u>Everything is Tuberculosis</u> John Green
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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
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Adult Faith Formation



Migration

Guest Speakers & Conversations

Sundays, April 12 to May 3 from 11:30am-12:30pm
Adult Faith Formation Class | Discovery Room

Join us as we continue to explore topics related to immigration, refugees, justice, advocacy, and more with help from guest speakers & Trinity friends.

After spending Lent reading and discussing *Migration: Experiencing God's Care for Immigrants*, we are excited to continue to explore topics related to immigration, refugees, justice, advocacy, and more with help from guest speakers & Trinity friends.

Join us for one Sunday or all of them! Each class will offer new information and new opportunities to think about how we can make a difference in our Church, our community, and our world.

Sunday, April 12 at 11:30am | Guest Speaker

Dale Dalman of Hope for Neighbors

Come learn about Hope for Neighbors, a grassroots program that convenes volunteers and community members to provide support for detainees, immigrants, and neighbors facing discrimination, struggle, or confinement.

Sunday, April 19 at 11:30am | Guest Speaker

Liz Balck of ACLU of Michigan

Let's hear from West Michigan Policy Strategist Liz Balck about the ACLU's current efforts to support our immigrant neighbors including exploring Safe Spaces legislation, Know Your Rights resources, and more.

Sunday, April 26 at 11:30am | Vital Conversation

Connecting Faith, Race, and Immigration Justice

Watch a video featuring James Kang of the UMC's General Commission on Religion and Race about how the Church can move beyond "charity" and into transformative relationships with immigrants. How do we create a culture that doesn't just welcome diversity but deeply desires it?

Sunday, May 3 at 11:30am | Conversation

Outreach & Advocacy Update

Come wrap up our two studies with a discussion facilitated by the Trinity Outreach & Advocacy Team about resources, partnerships, and next steps. Let's brainstorm together how we can be people who see God in our immigrant neighbors and who practice justice in our lives.

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/>.

The Youth Connection Corner

YOUTH EVENTS FOR THE MONTH OF



Well hi there, Trinity Friends and Family!

Spring has sprung and with it a new theme for *What's YOUR Story?* This month we'll be diving into the theme of **Mental Health & Self-Worth**. Throughout April, we'll be creating a space where we can discuss our emotional and environmental wellness, and how our faith reminds us that we are deeply loved and valued just as we are both now and in the future. We'll dive into scripture, hear guest speakers, and read about our Holy Troublemaker. It's going to be a great time!

April will also have our last **Popcorn Party Time** of this program year. Join us on **Friday, April 17th at 6:30PM** for another amazing game night! It will be an evening filled with laughter, games, and connection. I'll be there with my game face on and hope to see you as well!

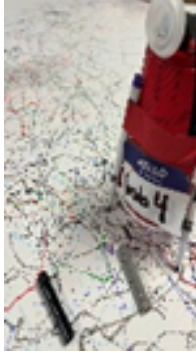
Annie Slabaugh, Youth Director - a.slabaugh@grtumc.org

Community Ministries

A Program Year Winds Down...



As the 2025-26 Community Ministries school year program winds down, I think of all the fun evenings with the kids, the wonderful volunteer connections made and seeing the smiles on families' faces at pick up time. When we started in the fall, we had a waitlist and were able to get everyone into the program throughout the year. This year we have done art projects including "Robot Art", engineering projects like "Creative Tower Builds", we've done our version of the "Trinity Winter Olympics" (Including broomstick curling), bringing in Josh Dunigan for a "Drumming Circle", "Murphy's Ride" (A horse program), "Crab Soccer" and so much more...



We asked one of our parents who have been in our program for a few years with two children to write a reflection to pass along to Trinity UMC:

"The program that Trinity offers for the kids is such a blessing. My girls have been going to the Community Ministries Program at Trinity for three years now. They look forward to going every week and always ask to stay just a little bit longer. I think it's been such a rewarding experience for both the kids and the adults that help. The program is always doing different crafts and activities that really get their minds going. The girls have come home so excited about the science experiments they learned and couldn't wait to show me. My oldest daughter has always been on the more shy side and I've noticed she's definitely opened up and become more comfortable around her peers and adults. She is in the 6-8 grade Transitions Program and couldn't be happier with her time spent there. Both of my girls have come a long way in their leadership and teamwork abilities. It's a lot of fun for both of them and we'll all be sad when they age out. I can't recommend the program enough."

-Chelsie Jandron

Upcoming Community Ministries Program Dates & Opportunities...

Community Ministries Program Sunday

May 3rd

Join us for Sunday worship and hear an update on all things about the Community Ministries Program here at Trinity UMC!



Congress Elementary Violin Transfer for Concert

May 5th

Help us transport violins from Congress Elementary School for the concert at Trinity.

Congress Elementary School Concert at Trinity UMC

May 6th

Help us provide hospitality for our Congress families by door greeting, helping guests, cookie and punch clean up, etc..



*Community Ministries Program Spring Newsletter will be sent out around this time. Keep your eyes open and check it out! This is our most comprehensive communication about what we have done in both our Community Ministries and Faith on the Fly Programs this year.