



Trinity In Touch

October 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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A Little Appreciation Goes a Long Way

"Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing." - 1 Thessalonians 5:11 (NRSV)

Friends,

Did you know October is Pastor Appreciation Month? I know. I'm a little embarrassed to even bring it up. And I promise this isn't a self serving letter. Pastor Appreciation Month is one of those made-up occasions that lands on the calendar somewhere between National Pizza Month and Halloween. Again, I am not mentioning it to drop hints. Please don't feel the need to slip me a note with a gift card tucked inside. (Though if it's for coffee, I wouldn't turn it down.☺)

But this month does give me a chance to say something I don't say often enough: **thank you.**

Nearly every week someone stops me after worship, sends an email, or catches me in the hallway to say something mattered to them. A line from the sermon stayed with them all week. A hymn opened something up they didn't expect. A prayer said what they couldn't find words for. Every one of those moments means more to me than you could realize.

Here's the truth: plenty of pastors never hear that. They pour themselves into ministry week after week and wonder if anything they do is having an impact. I don't have to wonder. You tell me. I am truly, deeply blessed to be the pastor of a congregation like Trinity.

And that's what I want to talk about, because appreciation shouldn't be saved for a special month or day on the calendar, and it certainly shouldn't be reserved for pastors. (Seriously I don't know a single pastor that doesn't feel awkward about this thing when October rolls around.)

Think about the people who have shaped your life. The teacher who believed in you. The friend who called at exactly the right moment. The neighbor who shoveled your driveway without being asked. The person singing two pews back whose voice makes Sunday feel like home. How many of them know what they mean to you?

Too often we wait. We assume people already know. We tell ourselves we'll say something later, when the moment is right. Unfortunately that means some times we save our kindest words for a eulogy, when the person who most needed to hear them is no longer here to receive them.

Paul told the church in Thessalonica to encourage one another and build each other up and then he added something wonderful: as indeed you are doing. He noticed they were already good at this and he told them to keep it up. I see the same thing here. You are a people who encourage. So let's be even bolder about it.



This month I invite you to try something. Think of three people who have made a difference in your life, big or small, and tell them. Write a note. Send a text. Make a phone call. Say it out loud, in person, after worship. Be specific: "When you said this, it helped me." "When you did that, I felt seen." Specific gratitude is a gift people carry with them for years.

Grace isn't only something we receive from God. It's something we're called to pass along. And sometimes grace looks as simple as telling someone, "You matter to me and here's why."

So, **thank you**. For your kind words, your faithfulness, and for being a church that builds each other up.

Grace and peace,



Pastor Mike

Hospitality Statement



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.

Church Family

ALTAR FLOWERS

October 4 - OPEN

October 11 - OPEN

October 18 - VLB in honor of Trinity's laity and all of their hard work!

October 25 - Deb White in honor of Tim White's birthday.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please join us in prayer for Kerry Ryan, daughter of Judi Ryan, who is currently in the hospital receiving care. Please pray for Kerry's healing and strength, for wisdom and guidance for her doctors and care team, and for comfort and peace for Judi during this difficult time.



Coming! October 18 is being recognized as Laity Sunday. This Sunday is set aside to recognize the dedication and work done on a daily basis by members of the congregation. Did you know you are one of those who shares in God's community by extending God's "world-repairing love"? Trinity is blessed to have so many members who live out their faith daily by showing up for each other.

Outreach & Advocacy

Together West Michigan Candidate Accountability Session

Together West Michigan is a community organizing non-profit that includes 29 local churches including Trinity. Join us to see relational power in action as TWM asks for commitments from city, county, and state candidates on its positions on Immigration, Housing, Childcare, Public Transportation, Police & Community on Saturday October 10 at 10:00 am to noon at Calvin Church, 700 Ethel Ave SE (right next to Clark Home).



Together
— WEST —
Michigan

Local Family Affected by ICE Deportation

O&A is supporting a local Guatemalan family of a mother and two children whose husband/father was deported by ICE. If you'd like to help with tutoring or other assistance (transportation, shopping, financial), contact Natalie Wiersma or Kathy Zeichman.

United Campus Christian Fellowship Lunch for Students

Many college students struggle with affordability and food insecurity. O&A will be preparing and serving a meal for students at St Marks Episcopal church as part of UCCF's ministry to students at GRCC, Kendall College of Art & Design, and GVSU on Wednesday October 28 from 10:00 am to 1:30 pm. If you'd like to help prepare, serve, or just talk with students, contact Clarice McKenzie or Kip Smalligan



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, October 23 from 1:00pm-2:00pm

East Paris Nature Park at 5995 E Paris Ave SE, Kentwood, MI 49512.

Park in the spots on the south end of the Endeavor Elementary School parking lot. Gather near the trail signs just inside the fence (near the picnic pavilion).

Friday, November 13 from 1:00pm-2:00pm

Pickerel Lake Park at 6001 Ramsdell Rd NE, Cannonsburg, MI 49317.

Park in the main lot off Ramsdell. Gather near the trailhead on the western side of the parking lot (near the long boardwalk). This park is a little further out of town, so plan extra travel time (25 minutes).

RSVPs are requested but not required. Contact Laura Johns at ljohns@grtumc.org to RSVP or to get added to the email list for additional details.



Sign Up Your Acolyte Today

Fall 2026:
August to December

SignUpGenius Now Available at:
<https://tinyurl.com/TUMC-AcolyteFall2026>
 or Scan the QR Code Below

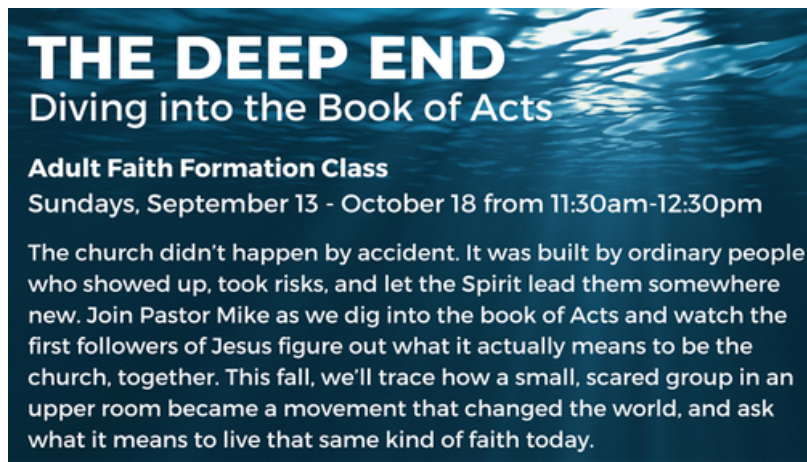


Is your child interested in helping to light the candles on Sunday mornings? Sign them up for fall using our SignUpGenius: <https://tinyurl.com/TUMC-AcolyteFall2026>

Questions? Email Laura Johns at Ljohns@grtumc.org.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Adult Faith Formation classes kicked off on September 13th and we've been having an amazing time growing together each week.....Join us through October 18 as we continue diving into the book of Acts with Pastor Mike...



THE DEEP END
Diving into the Book of Acts

Adult Faith Formation Class
Sundays, September 13 - October 18 from 11:30am-12:30pm

The church didn't happen by accident. It was built by ordinary people who showed up, took risks, and let the Spirit lead them somewhere new. Join Pastor Mike as we dig into the book of Acts and watch the first followers of Jesus figure out what it actually means to be the church, together. This fall, we'll trace how a small, scared group in an upper room became a movement that changed the world, and ask what it means to live that same kind of faith today.

Then don't miss our next exciting opportunity as welcome a series of guest speakers...



Adult Faith Formation

Join us this fall as we explore a variety of justice topics with amazing guest speakers!

- Week 1: October 25
United Methodist Community House Update
- Week 2: November 1
Allyship Best Practices
- Week 3: November 8
LGBTQ+ 101 with Equality Michigan
- Week 4: November 15
Exploring Community Organizing with Together West Michigan

Guest Speakers & Conversations

Adult Faith Formation Series
Sundays at 11:30am in Discovery Room



And, make sure you're keeping an eye out for our Incarnation Advent Study. Books will be available in early November.

A detailed class schedule for September to December can be found [HERE](#). If you have questions about any of these opportunities, contact Laura Johns at Ljohns@grtumc.org.

ADULT SMALL GROUPS

It's time for kick off and the return of many of our program year small groups. Join us for...



Gophers

Tuesdays from 9:15am-10:00am
Most Tuesdays from October 6, 2026 thru May 4, 2027

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!



Coffee & Conversation

Tuesday Mornings
10:00am-11:00am

Need a bit of social time with your Trinity friends and staff? Join us year-round on Tuesdays at 10:00am for fellowship in the Parlor. Come at 9:15am if you want to join the Gophers exercise class before Coffee!

Autumn Update 2026

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

Everything Belongs (EvB)
Thursdays from 6:15pm-7:30pm
Library | Book: Jesus' Alternative Plan

ForT:

Friends of Rohr at Trinity



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.

September 8 <u>Dictionary of Lost Words</u> Pip Williams	October 13 <u>When The Cranes Fly South</u> Lisa Ridzen	November 10 <u>The Mitford Affair</u> Marie Benedict	December 8 <u>The Mountains Sing</u> Nguyễn Phan Quế Mai
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Fall 2026



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!



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 4, 2026 <u>Radical Inclusion</u> David Moinina Sengh	November 3, 2026 <u>The Land Is Not Empty</u> Sarah Augustine	February 2, 2027 <u>The Sum of Us</u> Heather McGhee	May 4, 2027 <u>My Body Is Not a Prayer Request</u> Amy Kenny
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Pints with the Pastor

Select Sundays at 6:30pm at Taco Borracho

Fall 2026

Sept. 27	Oct. 25	Nov. 29	No December Gathering
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Join us at Schwallier's Country Basket in Sparta for another daytime outing on Saturday, October 17th from 3:30pm-5:30pm.

We've rented the upstairs of the big red barn again 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 with our amazing photographer Randy ready to take a perfect fall family pic? We'll reconvene in the barn for a time of sharing with cider & donuts.

The cost is \$15 per person and includes the barn rental, cider, donuts, cow train passes, goat food, and other Trinity supplies. Free activities around the barn include petting zoo, duck races, straw pile, corn crib play area, slides, swings, and more!

Additional food items, apple picking, pumpkins, and access to the Back 40 (where we met for evening bonfires in years past) are not included in what you're paying to Trinity. The Schwallier's website has information on apple ripening, other activity pricing, and more!

But Laura, why aren't we doing an evening bonfire again? I thought we were going to try to alternate these fun daytime adventures with the more daring evening ones? You're right, friend and I'm sorry to report that unfortunately, Schwallier's is no longer offering evening bonfire events. We may look at autumn adventures at other sites in future years if there's enough interest.

For more information and to sign up, use our online registration form at: tinyurl.com/TUMC-Orchard2026

If you have questions about this opportunity, contact Laura Johns at ljohns@grtumc.org.



This program year instead of monthly Popcorn Party Time movie & game nights, the Discipleship Team has decided to try a few bigger "Family Nights." Similar to the Fall and Winter Break Family Nights hosted recently, these themed events will feature opportunities for all ages!

Hop on over to our first Family Night of the 2026-2027 program year on **Friday, October 2nd from 5:00pm-8:30pm**. You don't want to miss "Hoppers" themed activities, dinner, dessert & a mini creation justice service project. Plus, we'll close our time with a screening of the film!

As Grandma Tanaka says, "It's hard to be mad when you feel like you're part of something big." And this, my friends, will be big! So join us and remember that you are welcome at this event. Regardless of your age, whether you have kids, whether the idea of talking beavers freaks you out, or whether you have never seen a Pixar film – 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-FN26>.

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



Join your Trinity family for our annual Thanksgiving Dinner on Sunday, November 22nd 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 <https://tinyurl.com/MWCF-Turkey-Volunteer26> or contact Laura Johns at l.johns@grtumc.org.

RSVP:

Contact Laura or use our online form at: <https://tinyurl.com/MWCF-Turkey-2026>! Advanced registration is appreciated.

The Library Team is excited to announce that we've completed a rehaul of our Library! The collection has been cataloged and organized, a new kids area added to the 2nd floor space, and a Library Kiosk with rotating displays added to the Parlor.

The Trinity Library exists to provide resources that nurture your faith, encourage personal growth, and support theological development. The collection has been curated by the Library Team to focus on topics of interest to our community: social justice, progressive theology for adults & children, biblical reference, group studies, etc. The goal is not to create an exhaustive collection, but rather to give you a place to start your reading journey.

Signage in the Library and on the Library Kiosk provide information on our lending & donation policies, our catalog, and more!

Interested in a sneak peek at the collection? A digital catalog has been created for you to browse and search. It is a Google spreadsheet and can be accessed using the link below. It is "view only" so you cannot edit it. A paper copy is available in the Library (2nd Floor). The Library Team plans to update the digital copy 1-2 times a month, but the paper copy will not reflect current availability.

Library Catalog: <https://tinyurl.com/TUMC-LibraryCatalog>.

Questions about the Library?

Stop by the Church Office during office hours (Monday to Wednesday from 9am-4pm) or contact the Library Team: Laura Johns, Hannah Marshall & Dani Patrick.

Want to join the Library Team?

There's a place here for you! The team facilitates the Sacred Justice Book Club and curates & manages the collection. Contact us for more information!



The Youth Connection Corner

YOUTH EVENTS FOR THE MONTH OF

OCTOBER

Well hi, Trinity Friends and Family!

It finally feels like fall—my favorite season! Along with the changing leaves that always come around this time, we'll be starting our discussions for our Youth Group series this program year, *Why Church?* For the month of October, we'll be asking *Why the Bible? Is it Relevant today?* I'm really looking forward to asking these questions and more as we wonder together.

In the meantime, we've got lots of stuff coming up for our Youth!

Check it out...

The Slabaugh Family will be at **Fall Break Family Night on October 2nd** as well as the **Trinity Orchard Outing on October 17th!** More details can be found in this newsletter, but we hope to see you there!

Our Fall Adventure – Mark your Calendars!

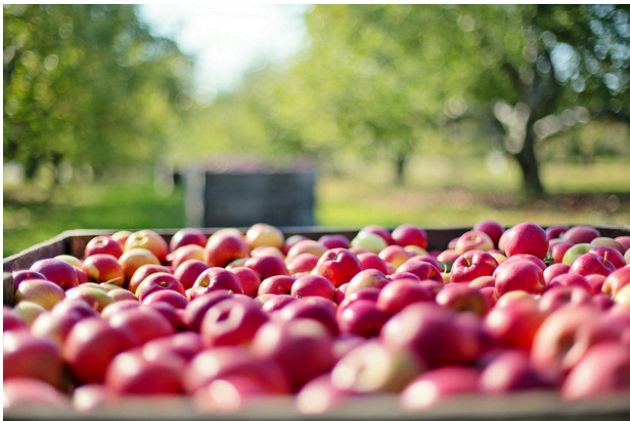
Technically, our Fall Adventure falls in November - but I'm too excited not to share! This year, our Fall Adventure will be a **Pottery Party** at The Clayground on Saturday, **November 7th from 4:00PM - 6:00PM**. If your youth is interested, keep an eye out for an informational email from me soon!

If you have a youth-aged child and do not receive our weekly youth emails, please reach out to me directly so I know you are interested so I can send you the details!

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



Good
things
are
coming



Community Ministries

What You Can't Miss... At Community Ministries Program This Fall.

Oct 7th

Wednesday Evening Programming Begins

The Community Ministries Wednesday evening programming begins with students and families from Congress Elementary School. We are always looking for wonderful volunteers who are positive, energetic and love working with kids to join our team. If interested, send an email to m.witkowski@grtumc.org to start a conversation and learn more about the work that we do! Can't volunteer but love what we do? Become a financial supporter that allows us to bring quality programming to children and families in our community with no financial barrier.

Oct 20th

"My Life In Pieces" Speaker Series

This is an intimate conversation about very difficult conversations with a speaker who pulls back the curtain and tells you their inspirational story. Forget what you saw on the news or what's flying around social media, this is a firsthand account of the journey and experiences they have faced. This year's topic is "Addiction and Recovery". Our speaker had a back pain, became a heroin addict, then a pastor and now does addiction and recovery ministry in the church and community where he resides. This will be a powerful night of story you won't want to miss. Please let us know if you plan to attend this free evening program by emailing m.witkowski@grtumc.org and how many may be coming with you. This is not required, but helpful in planning the spaces we will use.

Nov 6th

"A Night To Remember" Dinner

If you have not been to one of these exciting evenings, you've been missing out. Don't let this opportunity pass you by again! "A Night To Remember" is a celebration of the work that the Community Ministries Program and Trinity UMC is doing our community. The twist... it's our community partners sharing about the connection with our program and Trinity itself. We even have students and parents share about their time with our Wed evening programming. You will also be treated to a great meal and wonderful entertainment from youth involved in musical theater all over the city who also go to Trinity UMC. This is a fun evening you will not want to miss and we hope you bring a friend! Please register for the free event by emailing m.witkowski@grtumc.org and put "A Night To Remember" in the subject line.

Nov 13th - Dec 13th

Community Ministries Christmas Tree

Every year we ask the children in our program what they might want for Christmas and they fill out a worksheet listing their needs, wants, and their favorite book. We then take this info and try to come up with one gift and one book for each child to open at our Community Ministries Program Christmas Dinner during our last program before the Christmas and New Years Holidays. We will have a Christmas tree outside the sanctuary in the hallway with these items on a white paper ornament for Trinity members to select and bring back the gift unwrapped to the CM Office by Dec 13th. We will also be having a wrapping party during the day on Dec 14th from 1-2pm. For those interested in joining please email Matt Witkowski, CM Program Director, at m.witkowski@grtumc.org.

