Trinity In Touch

November 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

After the Voting comes the Neighboring

Prior to the 2024 presidential election, you may remember we spent the spring discussing the Mr. Rogers Effect. There were 7 secrets to bringing out the best in ourselves: Listen First, Validate Feelings, Pause and Think, Show Gratitude, Develop Empathy, Practice Acceptance, and Establish Security.

We did that because elections have a way of making us forget the greater truths in life. Like the morning after the election, win or lose, no matter whose sign was in someone's yard, we still have to share a street, a grocery store, a school pickup line, and a pew.

There is a tendency in our power-obsessed society to allow our ideas to become our identity. That inclination causes people to feel like any difference in ideology is a personal attack and that makes our interactions with our neighbors who think and vote differently become strained and contentious.

Right around that election in 2024 in worship we looked at the Greatest Commandment. We talked about how our highest allegiance is not to a party, a candidate, or a side. Our highest allegiance is to Jesus. And Jesus primarily talked about two kinds of people: neighbors and enemies and he told us to love them both.

To love our neighbors (or enemies) after an election doesn't mean we have to pretend to agree or act like the stakes were not real. It does not mean giving up our convictions, or smoothing things over with a plastic smile. It means something smaller, and harder. It means not letting a vote become the whole story of a person. Not allowing ourselves to see the other's ideology as their identity. It means learning a name again, asking how the week is really going, and showing up when someone needs a hand, even when you voted differently.

In Mark's gospel, Jesus tells James and John that to be great in his kingdom looks like serving, not ruling. The world measures winning by who gets the seat at the table. Jesus measures it by who is willing to pull up a chair for someone else. That is not a political strategy. It is the way we follow Christ.

You will be getting this newsletter just before the midterm election (or maybe just after, it's a busy season and Dani sometimes has to wait for me). I want to take this moment to encourage you to not identify your neighbors (or enemies) by their ideas. And I want to encourage you to think about how you will treat them in the days after the election. Wave first. Listen longer than feels comfortable. Make room at the table. If a conversation gets heated, remember, you do not have to win it to be faithful in it. Sometimes the most faithful thing is to stay in the room and remain kind.

We will not all vote the same way next time either. That was true before this election, and it will be true after the next one. The question is not whether we can agree on everything. The question is whether we can still be neighbors and still be a church when we don't.

Can we do it? Yes, we can!

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

November 1 - *OPEN*
November 8 - *Eve Ricketts & David Howard in memory of Pamela Howard and Peggy Ricketts.*
November 15- *Carolyn Miller in memory of what would have been Don & Evie Miller's 62nd wedding anniversary.*
November 22 - The *Myers, Giffords, & Mortensen families in memory of Allen Myers.*
November 29 - ADVENT BEGINS

PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayers of praise as Sue & Steve Sundheimer's son, AJ, has been released from the hospital. A huge thank you for your prayers.

Prayers and condolences to two Trinity families who had their loved one pass away in October:

Kerry Ryan, daughter of Judi Ryan.
judiione@gmail.com (Judi)

Bill DeBruyn, father of Gayle DeBruyn.
gayledebruyn@ferris.edu (Gayle)



The hard part of the holidays is not the absence of merry and bright. It is wanting that merry and bright while also carrying grief, anxiety, worry, loneliness, illness, or just plain weariness, all at the same time. That tension is exhausting. Holiday Blues is a quiet evening service for anyone living in the midst of it. No forced cheer, no pretending. Just honest words and room where both sorrow and hope can dwell together. So come as you are.





Outreach & Advocacy

Thanksgiving Holiday Offering
United Methodist Community House is the recipient of Trinity's Thanksgiving Holiday Offering. UMCH is in the process of positioning itself to strengthen and enrich Grand Rapids and Kent County neighbors for decades to come through a transformational $23 million expansion project. The expansion includes affordable senior housing and new space for childcare, offices, meals, and other programming. Our gifts will help them maximize the use of their new facilities. You may give online or through the worship offering or church office. Thank you for investing in Community House and the neighbors they serve!

Together West Michigan
Members of Outreach & Advocacy have been active for the past half year in Together West Michigan, a local community organizing group which works to influence and hold accountable public decision-makers on specific issues. What is community organizing and how is it relevant for Trinity? Come and learn more in Adult Faith Formation on Sunday, November 15 as experienced community organizers explain their approach to effective organizing.

Support for Local Family Affected by ICE Deportation
O&A is supporting a local Guatemalan family 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.

Thanksgiving Food Ingathering
Trinity will be bringing in food items on Sunday, November 15, for the food pantries of South End Community Ministries, North End Community Ministries, and the At Tahweed Islamic Center. Bring canned goods or fresh fruit/vegetables to the church narthex. Bags and food lists will be distributed after worship, November 8. If you prefer to give financially, you can do so online or through the worship offering or church office. Thank you for being a blessing to others.





The Trustees invite everyone to come lend a hand at Trinity's annual Fall Clean Up on Saturday, November 14, from 9 AM to noon. Many hands make light work, and all are welcome — come for an hour or stay the whole morning as we get our church home ready for the season ahead.

Opportunities to Engage

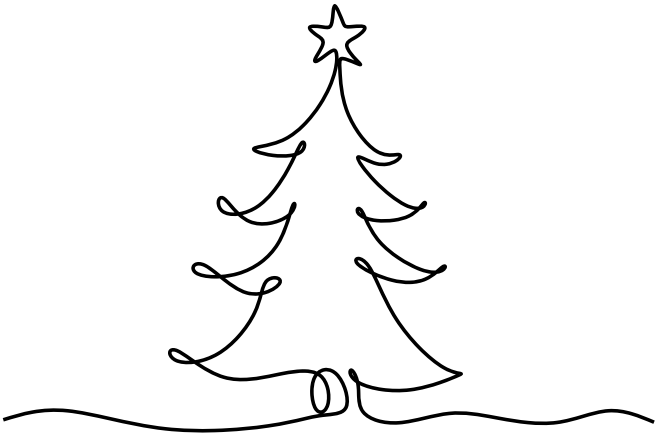




Designed for Trinity families & friends ages 18 & up, **God's Naturehood: Adult Edition** is a great opportunity to visit a new park, get to know members of your Trinity family better, and get your daily steps in. The details on our fall meet-ups are below.

Friday, November 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).

We're also planning ahead for our annual December meet-up at Meijer Gardens!

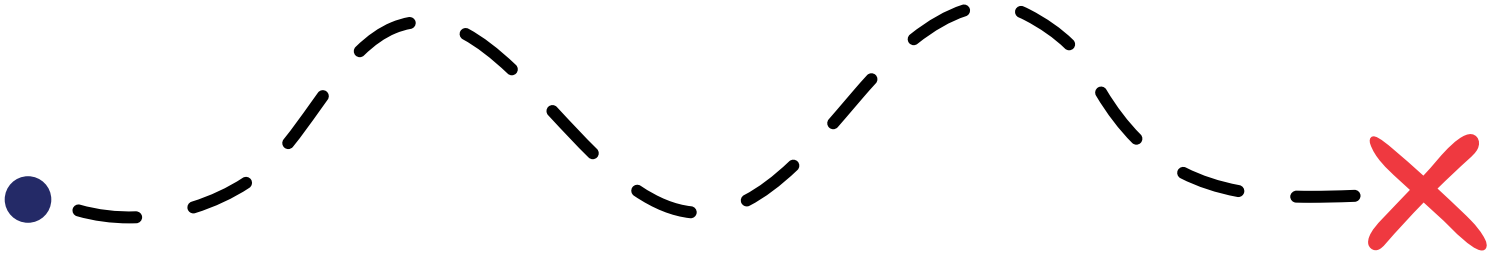




Friday, December 11 from 10:30am-2:30pm
Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park at 1000 E Beltline Ave NE, Grand Rapids, 49525.
Meet inside the Welcome Center but before ticketing.

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 to RSVP or to get added to the email list for additional details.

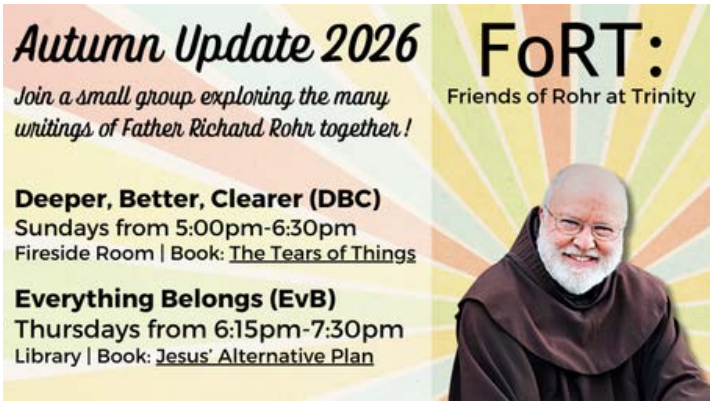


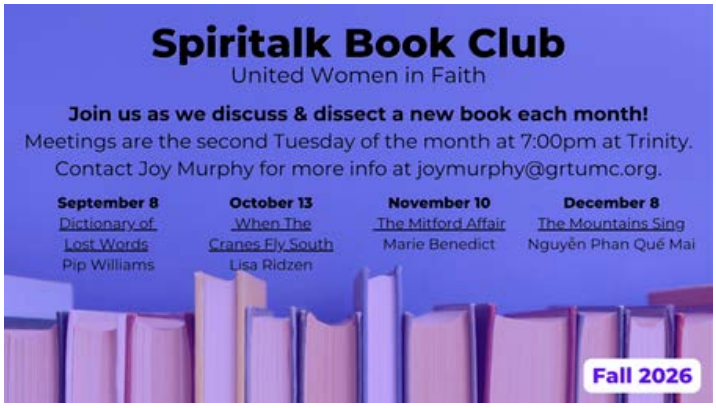
ADULT SMALL GROUPS

As the cooler weather settles in, come find warmth & fellowship with one of our many adult small groups. Check out...

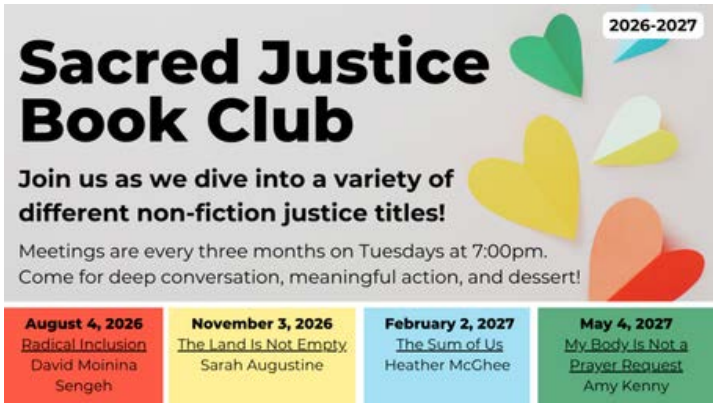
















ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Adult Faith Formation classes kicked off on September 13th and we've been having an amazing time growing together each week. A huge thank you to Pastor Mike who led us through our six week *The Deep End: Diving into Acts* class. Now we're into our guest speaker series and we couldn't be more excited to have you join us as we learn more about community partners, understand how to show up for all our neighbors, and have opportunities to discuss important issues. Join us for our remaining classes on:



November 1 - Allyship Best Practices
Our very own Dani Patrick will share a presentation on best practices for allyship with a focus on how we can show up for our queer neighbors & community. There will be time for discussion and Q&A.

November 8 - LGBTQ+ 101 with Equality Michigan
Ames Palson of Equality Michigan will offer a training that covers basic LGBTQ+ terminology, FAQs about pronouns, gender, and sexuality, barriers to safety that LGBTQ+ folks face, and more.

November 15 - Together West Michigan (TWM)
What is community organizing and more importantly, what is effective community organizing? This thought-provoking discussion will describe how we can influence local public policy decision-makers. Brock Grosso and Andy Ryskamp will share the TWM approach to broad-based organizing. Provided in partnership with the Outreach & Advocacy Team.



With the coming of Advent, plan to join us as we study Adam Hamilton's *Incarnation*. In it, he examines the names of Christ used by the gospel writers, exploring the historical and personal significance of his birth. His parents named him Jesus but the prophets, the shepherds, the wise men, and the angels addressed him by other names. Let's discuss why together! Books will be available by November 10th on the counter near the office with a suggested donation of $10 per book. We have been able to keep book prices lower by purchasing some used copies. You do not have to read to participate; video summaries will be available.

If you have questions about any of these opportunities, contact Laura Johns at l.johns@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 Greatest Advent(ure) is back! Join us on Saturday, December 5 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 special snack and a time of sharing!

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!

RSVPS requested to allow us to plan for supplies. Contact Laura Johns to RSVP or with questions at l.johns@grtumc.org.



This year our Faith at the Movies series will not include weekly watch parties. That said, everyone – and we mean everyone – is invited to join us for **Winter Family Night on Friday, January 8 from 5:00pm-8:30pm**. We'll celebrate surviving the holiday season and the first week back to school with dinner, activities, and a screening of *Coco* – the first Faith at the Movies film.

As with all "family" activities at Trinity, remember that you are welcome! Yes you. Family means all around here and you have a place with us! Our evening will include *Coco* themed crafts, music, gym time, dinner, dessert, and a film screening. Come explore *Día de los Muertos* traditions 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-WFN27.

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

The Youth Connection Corner

YOUTH EVENTS FOR THE MONTH OF

NOVEMBER

Well hi, Trinity Friends and Family!

It's Turkey Month! Not only am I really excited for our Thanksgiving Dinner and Hanging of the Greens this year (I always look forward to hanging out with the Youth during that time!), but we're also continuing our new series, *Why Church?* this month! We've finished our *Why the Bible?* and moving to a topic that the Youth know I am incredibly passionate about – *Why Grace?* where we'll ask why is grace important to God, our church (and community as a whole) and wonder together why it can be so hard at times. It's so simple, but at the same time so incredibly complicated. I'm truly looking forward to the discussions we'll have this upcoming month!

In the meantime, we've got some exciting stuff coming up for our Youth!

Check it out...

Our Fall Adventure – Mark your Calendars!
This year, our **Fall Adventure** will be a **Pottery Party at The Clayground** on **Saturday, November 7th - 4:00PM - 6:00PM**. We have rented the place and will have snacks and lots of fun making pottery! If you have RSVP'd already but haven't gotten your paperwork to me, please do so ASAP! It's going to be a great time!

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

Community Ministries

"In the Eye of the Hurricane"



In The Eye of the Hurricane is not only the title of a popular song in the famous Hamilton play...it's also a great way to describe the busy season in the Community Ministries Program.

From October through December, it is a very busy time for the Community Program. From starting our Wednesday evening program that has a waitlist for the second year in a row, onboarding a new Transitions Program Director, which is going great, creating new programming for the students, hosting My Life in Pieces, hosting guided Salmon fishing trips and planning monthly presentations for our Faith on the Fly Program, coordinating our Christmas Giving Tree for the CM Kids, planning for our "A Night to Remember" Community Ministries Program Dinner on Nov 6th and so much more. All happening at the same time as well as all the other stuff that gets done daily in the life of a church employee. Within all the crazy busyness, there are moments that you just breathe, look around and be proud of the work being done through our program and at Trinity UMC. With the hurricane swirling all around us, those moments are brief, but so wonderful to experience.

Truth is that even in the swirl of the hurricane...I LOVE it!

There is positive energy, optimism, joy and frustration all wrapped up in one time of year. That's programming for you. When you see the good that comes from the programming that our volunteers provide it makes it all worthwhile. The joy in a child's face, the "Ahh Ha!" moment from a speakers talk or simply the good feeling in your heart that lets you know that your presence on this earth has a made a difference.

"A Night To Remember" Community Ministries Program Dinner is Nov 6th 6-8pm!

If you haven't experienced this wonderful night of inspiring stories from our community partners and children in our program, theater music performed by youth from Trinity and their friends, and great food...you are missing out! This is an evening for adults to listen and learn about the great work being done through the Community Ministries Program from the participants perspective. They share what it has meant to them to work with our group and the church as community partners.

There is no cost and food will start serving at 5:45pm, so go tell a friend to join you and enjoy a wonderful evening out with a few surprises along the way. See you on Nov 6th!



