



# TRINITY

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

## *2023 Annual Report*

*292nd Annual Meeting  
Sunday, January 28, 2024*

## Agenda

**Brunch and Fellowship**

**Gathering Hymn**

**Jennifer Sisco**

### The Church's One Foundation



1. The Church - 's one foun - da - tion Is Je - sus Christ her Lord;  
2. E - lect from ev - 'ry na - tion, Yet one o'er all the earth,



She is His new cre - a - tion By wa - ter and the word;  
Her char - ter of sal - va - tion, One Lord, one faith, one birth;



From Heav'n He came and sought her To be His ho - ly bride;  
One ho - ly name she bless - es, Par-takes one ho - ly food,



With His own blood He bought her, And for her life He died.  
And to one hope she press - es, With ev - 'ry grace en - dued.

*Approval of Minutes of 2023 Annual Meeting*

**MINUTES OF THE 291<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
36 MAIN STREET, NEWTOWN, CT 06470  
JANUARY 29, 2023**

**Call to Order**

The 291st Annual Meeting of Trinity Episcopal Church as called to order at 11:08 AM by the Rev. Andrea Castner Wyatt. The meeting was opened with the singing of 'Praise To The Lord The Almighty'. The singing was followed by a prayer for the parish and a prayer for the meeting taken from The Book of Common Prayer.

**2022 Annual Meeting Minutes**

The meeting minutes were approved by the voting members of the parish.

**Reflections of the Rector, Officers and Staff**

**Robert Gardner (Warden)** – Bob thanked the Rev. Andrea for her leadership, outreach and executive skills.

**Francis Chamberlain (Children's Ministry Coordinator)** - A children's service is now being held every Sunday with twelve families being served. Two to Twelve children attend each week and are led by two teachers. The nursery is also operational and serves 6 young children.

**Jennifer Sisco (Music Minister)** - Jennifer thanked everyone for their support of her and her children. The choir was re-introduced to the service in June. The music program is developing and exploring how best to serve the parish. There are hopes to incorporate children into the service soon. The parish is enjoying its partnership with CT Choral Society and there are plans for more concerts at Trinity.

**Rev. Andrea Wyatt (Rector)** – Andrea thanked the leadership as the parish reopened after Covid. Her focus in year one was building the staff. Budget levels were changed so that Children's Ministry and Music Ministry had equal funding. Funding for staff was conservative and the parish is growing. The parish is developing partnerships and currently has them with the Connecticut Choral Society and the Interfaith Partnership for Refugee Resettlement. More programs are launching at Trinity such as Christian yoga. The parish continues looking for ways to reach into the community. For instance Stephen Ministry will be leading support groups for people in grieving and for those who are care givers that are open to the community. Rev. Andrea encourages ongoing growth and change.

**Election of new vestry members**

Rev. Andrea introduced the new state of officers:

Christina Lye- Children's Formation

Lisa Mages – Adult Formation

Nancy Cole – Mission and Outreach

Jean Maurice Calmels – Mission and Outreach Alternative

Bennet Leake – Delegate to the ECCT Convention

Kara Leake - Delegate to the ECCT Convention

There were no further nominations from the floor. The slate of candidates was approved by unanimous vote.

Andrea introduced returning vestry members and thanked Cathy Filiato for her service on the vestry.

**Returning Vestry members**

Robert Gardner – Warden  
Suzanne Roman – Warden  
Noel Bellesheim – Treasurer  
Tom Swetts – Clerk  
Cindy Anderau – Parish Life  
Patrick Corrigan – Property  
Patrick DeBrock – Finance  
Jessica O'Meara – Membership

All the leadership returning along with new members were commissioned by the Rev. Andrea. Chuck Wyatt was thanked for all his work during the year, in particular for his work on the tech guild.

**Adjourn**

Motion to Adjourn was made and seconded. The meeting adjourned at 11:51 followed by the singing of

'Here I Am Lord'

Respectfully Submitted,

Thomas Swetts  
Clerk

**Reflections**

**Andrea Castner Wyatt, Rector**  
**Sue Roman, Warden**  
**Robert Gardner, Warden**  
**Jennifer Sisco, Minister of Music**  
**Tom McMorran**

**Election of Parish Officers and Vestry Leaders**

**2024 SLATE OF NOMINEES**

**Vestry Member Nomination**

- Warden

Bennet Leake – Finance  
Karen Wojtowicz – Parish Life

**Thank you to our Vestry leaders who continue to serve:**

Bob Gardner - Warden  
Noel Bellesheim - Treasurer  
Tom Swetts - Clerk  
Patrick Corrigan - Properties  
Jessica O'Meara – Membership  
Bennet Leake – Delegate to the ECCT Convention  
Kara Leake – Delegate to the ECCT Convention

**Appreciation for Departing Vestry Members**

Sue Roman, Patrick DeBrock, Cindy Anderau

### ***Commissioning New Parish Leaders and New Staff Leaders***

We invite our newly elected leaders to gather in front of the congregation.

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**Rev. Andrea:** I present Bennett Leake and Karen Wojtowicz to serve as Vestry Leaders. Each of you has answered our call to help lead Trinity Episcopal Church into a future we create together. Each of you will offer invitation, welcome and inclusion; leading with joy and Spirit, as we follow the way of Christ together.

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**Celebrant:** (to new Vestry Leaders and Delegates) Bennet, and Karen: Do you prayerfully commit yourselves to carry out with joy the responsibilities of the offices to which you have been appointed?

**Leaders:** I do.

**Celebrant:** Do you reaffirm your commitment to follow Christ, to share the good news of the Gospel, and to serve this congregation in his name?

**Leaders:** I do.

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**Celebrant:** (to the congregation) Will you do all in your power to support these new Leaders with your prayers, with your trust and your honest and gracious communication, and with your willingness to help them carry out Christ's ministries in this church?

**Congregation:** We will.

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**Celebrant:** We affirm the good and faithful work our continuing Vestry leaders offer on behalf of Trinity Church, and we celebrate the gifts of Warden Bob Gardner, Treasurer Noel Belleshiem, Clerk Tom Swetts, Nancy Cole, Patrick Corrigan and Jessica O'Meara

**Congregation:** We celebrate our continuing Vestry leaders, we affirm your gifts to Trinity Church, and we commit to supporting your ministries with prayer, trust, and open and gracious communication.

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**Celebrant:** In the name of this congregation I commission you – new and continuing Vestry Leaders, Delegates, and Staff - for these ministries, and pledge you our prayers, encouragement, and support. May God's Holy Spirit guide and strengthen you, that in all things, you may do God's will in the service of the kingdom of Christ. Amen.

Let us pray. Almighty God, look with favor upon these persons who have now reaffirmed their commitment to follow Christ and to serve in his name. Give them courage, patience, and vision; and strengthen us all in our Christian vocation of witness to the world, and of service to others; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **Motion to Adjourn**

## Closing Hymn

# I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light



1. I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to fol-low  
2. I want to see the bright-ness of God. I want to look at  
3. I'm look-ing for the com-ing of Christ. I want to be with



Je - sus. God set the stars to give light to the world. The  
Je - sus. Clear Sun of Right-eous-ness, shine on my path, and  
Je - sus. When we have run with pa-tience the race, we



star of my life is Je - sus. In him there is no  
show me the way to the Fa - ther.  
shall know the joy of Je - sus.



dark-ness at all. The night and the day are both a-like. The Lamb is the



light of the cit - y of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Je - sus.

## Blessing

### TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH STAFF MEMBERS

#### PARISH STAFF as of January 28, 2024

Rector  
Music Minister  
Children's Ministry Coordinator  
Communications & Membership Manager  
Finance Manager  
Sexton

The Rev. Andrea Castner Wyatt  
Jennifer Sisco  
Frances Chamberlain  
Kim Merrill  
Paige Fischer  
John J. Qubick

## **2023 Rector Annual Report**

***The Rev. Andrea Castner Wyatt***

Beloved of Trinity Church,

I give thanks for you each day, and I thank God for the honor and privilege of serving as Rector in this exciting time of rebuilding at Trinity Church. I am fortunate to serve with amazing and faithful lay leaders and staff. It is incredibly gratifying to see the seeds of what we've been planting - every day since my arrival in the summer of 2020 - bearing such beautiful fruit.

I write this Annual Report with echoes of a glorious Christmas Eve in my heart. A full Sanctuary, beautifully decorated, candlelight and lovely music. And here we are in January, as opportunities for pastoral care and mutual support abound.

Looking back at 2023 ... it seems that each Sunday we see newcomers and guests. We have a steady increase in children discovering our new Church School, families seeking the Sacrament of Baptism, people of all ages finding a spiritual home. There is an enthusiasm and a warmth that is contagious at Trinity Church. Our philosophy of welcome and inclusion is effective. The Spirit is at work!

In our second year with Frances Chamberlain, Children's Ministry Coordinator, and Jennifer Sisco, our Minister of Music, we see our programs with Youth and Music both thriving! I remind us that their time with us is a mere 15 hours per week ... but look at the spiritual community both spirit-filled and faithful leaders are nurturing! We are blessed.

Kim Merrill, our Communications Director, is so creative and talented and dedicated to supporting the many ministries at Trinity. So many details, each important to our outreach. Every single day she supports our teams – and me! - in behind-the-scenes ways that are crucial to our success. I am so blessed to work with Kim.

And Jack! As our activities have increased, our Sexton Jack Qubick continues to faithfully offer hospitality through our physical space. I see him at all kinds of hours, and I celebrate his long service to this parish. We are delighted to welcome back Paige Barrett Fischer this year to our staff – in a new capacity as Bookkeeper. As I have told her ... we are not the same Church that she knew in the past!

Trinity has long been a venerable parish, and we see two things at our Annual Meeting this year that are reminders of the strength of the ministries at Trinity over the decades. First, a bequest, a financial gift from a long-time member, is a testimony to the impact this parish has on the lives of its members. Details to be announced on Sunday, January 28 th !

Secondly, our Vestry was delighted, in our December meeting, to endorse our own Tom McMorran as he embarks on a journey with the Episcopal Church in Connecticut towards ordination to Holy Orders. Priests are called to ministry by the nurture of their home parishes – churches are where ministers get born! It is gratifying to see this again at Trinity.

In addition to being his spiritual home, Trinity is Tom's 'Sponsoring Parish,' and I invite each of you to reach out to Tom as he explores a call from God. Tom has been an active member of Trinity for decades, and, again, we see the lasting impact in Tom's life and call of this parish's deep commitment to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We look forward to a few words from Tom at our Annual Meeting on 1/28.

Parishioners offering gifts of service and ministry, bequeathing gifts of financial support ... we see many indicators of spiritual health at Trinity Church. New generations, new disciples joining our ministry teams ... but don't worry – there is still room for YOU to jump in! What team are you curious about?

It seems there is always something going on! Much activity with children and youth, with mission and outreach, with music and Creation Care. Events that invite our wider community, using our space as 'God's Living Room.' What more can we do in 2024?

We celebrate our financial health, in a time that challenges many parishes. In December, our Vestry voted for a balanced budget. Our Finance team shows a prudent sense of fiscal responsibility that goes beyond what many parishes are capable of.

Our professional financial advisors urged us to take an even lower percentage of income from our inherited funds, beginning in 2024, and we rose to the challenge! We are profoundly grateful for your gifts and pledges of financial support, which enable us to save our endowment holdings in perpetuity.

I give thanks for your care this past year as I recovered from surgery in May. I did not expect my hip to fail during Holy Week ... but we endeavored to share the story of Christ's passion and resurrection nevertheless, and we continue to offer each other flexibility as we adapt to ever-changing circumstances.

Flexibility and adaptation are hallmarks of our ministry right now, and I think people find it comforting. Not one of us is perfect – and we don't have to be! Worship is not performance. Ministry is an offering of love – in a context of trust, acceptance, and inclusion.

People come to us hungry for the grace of our inherited Anglican worship; thirsty for how ancient scriptures might speak to the challenges of today's world. Let us work together to offer these gifts to people we have not even met!

There is so much pain around us. We continue to encourage Creation Care, as climate changes due to exploitation of our fragile biosphere. We continue to advocate for sensible gun policy, as mass shooting soar. We continue to widen our welcome to those not yet part of our fellowship; there is sanctuary, here.

Experimentation is also a crucial virtue in church life these days. Our 'Little Pantry' – offering emergency food - is our most recent experiment, brought to us by members of our Mission and Outreach Team. Our wider community is seeing our commitment to caring for our neighbors. Another experiment this past year – our Grief Support Group – continues to draw folk from the wider community and has grown to be a powerful testimony to healing in community.

We rejoiced in the presence and ministry of the Rev. Alan Dennis, who served as Priest Associate in retirement, and his spouse Jenny Dennis. As their family life evolves, Alan and Jenny have found another home quite close to their children, back in New York City, and they moved house late this fall. We hope to welcome them back for a time of farewell once they are settled.

A healthy parish is a living, changing, ever-evolving organism. Some folk come in, some go home to God at the end of their days, some move on to other spiritual homes. Let us be at peace with change – and always open to new life.



I celebrate the wisdom and collegiality of our Wardens Sue Roman and Bob Gardner! Wow, I am one lucky Priest to serve with such leaders. As Sue steps back, finishing her 3-year term, let us celebrate all that she has given during such a period of re-gathering and re-development. Bob's view of history continues to enrich us all, as we look back on a parish that has learned to adapt since 1732! Look at what we have already survived – and we're going strong.

We thank Patrick DeBrock and Cindy Anderau, also completing their service as Vestry Members. We offer our gratitude to those Vestry Leaders continuing their terms – Patrick Corrigan for Property; Tom Swetts, as Clerk; JeanMaurice Calmels and Nancy Cole for Mission and Outreach; Jessica O'Meara, for Membership; Christina Lye, for Christian Formation for Children; Lisa Mages, for Adult Christian Formation; and Noel Bellesheim as our excellent Treasurer.

We are so grateful that Kara and Bennett Leake offered themselves as Delegates in 2023. We look forward to electing and incorporating new Vestry members as well.

Enough looking back! I look forward to 2024. I am blessed to serve with such disciples of Jesus Christ.

God Bless You,  
Rev. Andrea Castner Wyatt

## **2023 Warden's Annual Report**

**Bob Gardner, Sue Roman**

2023 was a strong year for Trinity, one in which the parish demonstrated its ability to honor its traditions, while at the same time, reinforcing its commitment to an evolving future. Once again, the outstanding leadership of Rev. Andrea, the high quality of work produced by a spirited staff, and the great outpouring of support from a growing congregation made this possible.

Since its founding in 1732, an important part of Trinity's story has been its willingness to look beyond its walls and to engage with the Newtown community as well as with the greater world. That engrained spirit continues and was clearly evident in 2023. The church's fiscal sponsorship of the Interfaith Partnership for Refugee Resettlement continued as did its support of a family from Ukraine. In alignment with that theme, in December Trinity hosted an interfaith service in memoriam of the Sandy Hook tragedy.

When considering both Trinity's outward vision and its concern for its own properties, the Creation Care team continues to play an integral role. In last year's Warden's Report, it was noted that the team had "launched an examination of the most effective ways to be prayerful and effective stewards of what we own." In 2023, that examination bore fruit, especially in the parish's move to eradicate Japanese Knotweed on all of its properties. That effort enabled Trinity to play a significant role in helping with community wide education about the seriousness of the knotweed scourge, and also set an example of a prominent local institution's willingness to take action itself. Another activity emanating from Creation Care was the building of a pollinator garden which will lend beauty to our property as well as supporting its stated purpose.

Trinity has also continued its tradition of playing a role in wrestling with the issue of food security in the greater area. The parish has maintained its long term engagement with the Dorothy Day Hospitality House in Danbury where a Trinity team is dedicated to serving meals to those who need them. A significant addition to that overall effort has been the construction and support of a "Little Pantry" on church grounds where anyone has access to food at any time of day or night.

Serving the spiritual and human needs of the Trinity community and beyond has always been the core of the Trinity ministry. The Trinity Care Team and Stephen Ministry continue to play a vital role. In addition, in 2023 Rev. Andrea instituted a Grief Support group which meets regularly. Of note is that anyone regardless of religious or non-religious affiliation is welcome, and individuals who have no connection with Trinity are part of the core group.

Central to Trinity's spiritual life are the music and children's ministry programs. Last year we welcomed Jennifer Sisco and Frances Chamberlain as new staff members and were enthusiastic about the anticipated growth of their programs. That enthusiasm was well founded. Both Jennifer and Frances have brought expertise and great vitality to their respective areas which are flourishing.

Trinity is also in sound financial condition. As the church's numbers grow, it is gratifying to see how new members continue to join with longer-term parishioners in supporting the parish. Again, we are fortunate to have endowments emanating from generations past, and these professionally managed funds continue to allow us to build budgets which meet our needs. Of special note are the tremendous efforts of Patrick DeBrock, our Finance Chair and Noel Bellesheim, our Treasurer. Their expertise and commitment to Trinity cannot be overstated.

In 2023 Trinity received a generous bequest from Dorothea LaBelle of \$652,000. Dorothea was a long-time member of Trinity who died in 2020 at the age of 98. She lived a life of service, first in the Navy during World War II and later as a social worker at Southbury Training School. Her bequest will help Trinity update our facilities and continue strong financially in the future.

In this report's initial paragraph, we noted the outstanding leadership provided by our Rector, the Reverend Andrea Castner Wyatt. In conclusion, we wish to state that again with even more emphasis. Rev. Andrea continues to lead Trinity with wisdom, humor, sensitivity, vision, and great spirituality among other qualities. We continue to be blessed to have her as our guide.

# **Worship & Formation**

## **Music Program**

**Jennifer Sisco**

What a wonderful year it has been in the Music Ministry at Trinity! Our choir has settled into our own dynamic (pun intended), and we are having a marvelous time in our weekly rehearsals. The atmosphere is light and collaborative, and the singers know that their voices truly matter here. The choir faithfully leads each week as your music ministers, and they take that job seriously. It is such a privilege to be their director.

We have been deepening our relationships with our collaborative partners such as the Connecticut Choral Society. It was standing-room-only for the spring concert of Mozart's *Requiem*, and this year promises to see some exciting concerts as well. The greater community is beginning to see that we are their church, that our doors are open for all, and that music is a unifying art form. We are blessed to have arguably the most acoustically perfect space in the area, one that, combined with the stunning beauty of our sanctuary, is becoming a draw for musical groups and community members looking for spiritually moving and artistically excellent musical experiences.

We have seen more of our Trinity members bringing their musical gifts to our worship services this year, which is very exciting! I encourage anyone who would like to share their gifts to chat with me about it. There is a place for you in our ministry!

Running a thriving music program, of course, costs money, and we are blessed to have a healthy budget that allows us to bring quality music to our worship and to our community. The music budget has been utilized to care for our music program in numerous facets, including:

- Our renowned Austin Pipe Organ and Baldwin Grand Piano are maintained in the form of bi-annual tunings as well as repairs and maintenance as needed during the year.
- The music library is regularly augmented with fresh new choral anthems. Additionally, last year we purchased some great new choir folders to replace the decades-old folders that were literally hanging on by threads!
- Our choir section leaders are a vital part of the success of Trinity's choir. The section leaders, who have years of professional singing experience and music-reading knowledge, provide leadership and stability within the choir. It's much easier to learn a new piece of music when you're sitting next to a professional who can already sing it! We are grateful to our current section leaders Carolyn Fagerholm, Cristina DiMuro-Trnik, and Tim Koch for their consistent leadership and exceptional musicianship.
- For special services, we often welcome visiting musicians. Examples of this in 2023 were: A harpist & flutist on Christmas Eve, an oboist on Ash Wednesday, a cellist on Maundy Thursday, trumpets on Easter, violin soloist on the first Sunday back from the summer, and a roster of capable guest organists. We've also welcomed extra singers to bulk up our already wonderful choir on Christmas Eve and Easter, and on Good Friday last year our choir was massive with the addition of the visiting CT Choral Society (and they'll be back this year!).

I have appreciated your prayers, support and feedback this past year. I have also appreciated your participation in the musical worship at Trinity. The sound of the congregation singing on Sunday morning makes MY heart sing, and I continually thank God for placing me at this very special church. I look forward to what the coming year has in store!

The following programs were held at Trinity in 2023:

- Lenten study using Amy-Jill Levine's book "Entering the Passion of Jesus," led by Rev. Andrea
- Bible study on the Passion as set for in the Gospel of John, led by Tom McMorran
- Overview of the work of modern day mystic, Episcopal priest, and writer Cynthia Bourgeault, led by Sue Roman
- Overview of the work of Meister Eckhardt, led by Tim Jaeger
- Trinity's early history with a focus on our founder the Rev. John Beach, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (e.g., the American colonies), led by Bob Gardner
- Discussion of Robin Wall Kimmerer's book, "Braiding Sweetgrass," led by Lisa Mages and Rev. Andrea
- Advent study using "The First Christmas: A Story of New Beginnings" by Stephen Mitchell, led by Lisa Mages

In addition to these programs held at Trinity, parishioners were invited by our neighbors at Newtown Congregational Church to attend their bi-monthly "Thoughtful Film Series." Several parishioners joined NCC to watch and discuss documentaries on climate change and on discriminatory housing practices in the U.S. Next up in February will be a documentary on events leading up to the current conflict in Israel and Gaza.

Trinity continues to experiment with finding adult formation topics and formats that best suit the needs of the parish. A digital survey was made available via the Trinity eNewsletter in April 2023. Five parishioners responded. They all preferred having adult formation programs on Sundays after the 9:30 service, and they offered a dozen or so potential topics.

Looking back on the programs that were offered, attendance varied substantially. Those that featured a presenter on a topic (Bourgeault, Eckhardt, and Beach) had 10-20 people in attendance. With the exception of the Lenten study, those that were more of a book group format had far fewer attendees (sometimes as few as one). We will continue to experiment with what works best for people. (Perhaps book groups are largely a thing of the past and people no longer have time to read as much?) The Adult Formation team encourages parishioners to consider what would serve them and what knowledge they may themselves have to offer to the congregation. Please share your thoughts with Lisa Mages or Rev. Andrea.

## **Youth**

**Noel Bellesheim, Julie Dunn**

2023 continued to have Julie Dunn and Noel Bellesheim as co-chairs. The youth commission plans, prepares and executes many of the activities Trinity's youth participate in as well as supports their formation.

For 2023, the YAC continued to meet monthly discussing our Kiva activities and monitoring the progress our loans had made.

During June, Trinity's seniors were able to be recognized for their commitment with senior Sunday. It was an opportunity for Trinity parishioners to offer thanks and best wishes to our 2022 graduating class as they go off to college in the fall for the first time.

The fall has continued the growth journey for our youth. The youth for the third year have been working on making loans to underbanked communities around the world through Kiva.com. Some statistics from our Kiva lending, with funding of \$728 dollars, the YAC has been able to: □ Make a total of 52 loans, totaling \$2,075 dollars - after the initial funds was lent out and repaid, those funds were lent out again and again.

- The funds supported 52 individuals in 23 countries.
- Of the 43 individuals: 67% were female business owners, 33% were male.

Also during the fall, Youth Commission sponsored events took place as follows:

During October: The Great Pumpkin Challenge during the week leading up to Halloween, with pumpkins on four sections of scaffolding on the front lawn outside the Parish house, which raised approximately \$1600 for the Hole in the Wall Gang for the sixth consecutive year. Hopefully you were able to view the after Halloween feeding of the cows that was sent out. In addition to this, the Youth hosted an all parish pumpkin carving after church that were placed on the scaffolding. Thank you to all that participated!

During December: The youth partnered with Mission and Outreach to make over 100 sandwiches and participated the same day on Chapel on the Green in New Haven where they handed out a hot meal and the sandwiches and cookies that were made. Also during December, the youth helped the church school age during the advent festivities and manned different stations for the children of the parish.

## ***Children's Ministry***

***Frances Chamberlain***

2023 was a great year of building the Children's Ministry Program at Trinity. We welcomed wonderful new and returning faces and filled Sunday mornings with engaging activities that will hopefully foster deep connections and community in the church. My heartfelt thanks are offered to Rev. Andrea and Trinity Church for the opportunity to serve the Lord in this good work.

One goal this past year was to thoughtfully weave the church school program into the larger church. It is important for kids to be known and seen not just by me but also by the wider congregation. It truly helps them develop a sense of belonging and makes them want to attend church more regularly. It also helps adult congregants to feel that their church is a vibrant and growing community. Kids participated in worship during the Blessing of the Backpacks, Blessing of the Stuffedies, and the Christmas pageant. I also invited congregants into the church school classroom to share their God-given gifts with the young people of the church. These visits added much joy (singing with Barbara Chamberlain, Jennifer Sisco, and Cristina Trnik; making art with Nancy Cole), peace (practicing yoga with Erin Lutz), and enthusiasm (taking photo portraits with George Duncan; learning about animals with Spencer DeBrock and Deanna Myskiw).

Another goal in 2023 was to try on some new program elements. As I get to know the rhythms of Trinity and its wonderful families, I hope to better serve them. This fall we introduced a new curriculum entitled, Spark: Activate Faith. This is a rotational curriculum which means that participants will hear the same Bible story over multiple weeks, and it will be reinforced with different activities that appeal to various learning styles. Our goal is to create a firm base of collective Bible knowledge in the students that can be built on from year to year. This encourages kids to engage further with each story and allows them to discuss Bible teachings with each other. In addition to the new curriculum, we started using a new space for our classroom. This dedicated space will allow the kids to have consistency from week to week and a place to call their own. Many new supplies were added to the church school closets, allowing me to offer fun and varied programming. A good number of children's Bibles were able to be purchased as well.

The scope of the Children's Ministry Program is directed by me, Rev. Andrea, and by the Children's Ministry Team. The team meets a few times per year to discuss past endeavors and to plan. Together we hosted a special Lenten coffee hour, the fall Ice Cream Truck Social, and Advent Merriment events. Many thanks to the team's devoted members: Christina Lye, Barbara Chamberlain, Kara Leake, and Jessica O'Meara!

I continue to recruit church school helpers and other collaborators. Church school meets on Sundays during worship, and we need helpers each week. Outside of that there are special events held seasonally, such as a pancake supper to kick off the season of Lent, a pumpkin painting event around Halloween, and an Easter Egg Hunt to celebrate Christ's resurrection on Easter morning. I also collaborate with other organizations. Church school students painted shopping bags for Trinity's Little Pantry in collaboration with Mission and Outreach. We also donated a Christmas tree decorated by church school students to be auctioned off at Newtown Youth and Family Service's yearly Festival of Trees fundraiser. If you would like to be a church school helper, volunteer, or collaborate with the Children's Ministry Program in any way please contact me.

Many thanks also to Noel Bellesheim and Julie Dunn who direct the youth programs at Trinity. Your leadership and commitment in this area is invaluable. Please see their report for more information.

## **Creation Care**

**Lisa Mages**

During 2023 the Creation Care Team led Trinity in undertaking three-long term projects on our property. These projects will not only benefit Trinity directly, but will help connect us to both the wider Newtown community and to nationwide efforts to support local ecosystems.

**Creating a pollinator garden:** This summer a small group of parishioners began working with local landscape designer Sarah Middeleer to transform part of the grass in the parking lot at the back of the church into a space for native plants to support pollinators. Volunteers Sue Roman, Marcia DeBrock, and Lisa Mages gathered in September to plant 120 pots of native species, following the design created by Middeleer, in partnership with master gardener Joan Cominski. In planting a pollinator garden, Trinity joins the nationwide conservation project, [Homegrown National Park](#), to regenerate biodiversity and ecosystem function by planting native plants and removing most invasive species (see below). Trinity hopes that the garden will be a source of enjoyment and education for the many people who walk through their parking lot, including the children of Trinity Day School whose playground is nearby.

**Tackling knotweed:** Trinity has approximately two acres of invasive Japanese knotweed, spread between the church grounds and the rectory. Knotweed spreads rapidly to form tall dense clumps that crowd out natural ecosystems. This summer Trinity joined the ["Newtown Knotweed Initiative"](#) and contracted with a private company to begin a three-year process of controlling the knotweed as much as possible so that it can eventually be replaced with native species.

**Reducing light pollution:** Trinity has linked up with a third group, [Lights Out Connecticut](#), to reduce the risk of light pollution to migratory birds. Connecticut is part of the Atlantic flyway with peak bird migration from August 15-November 15 and April 1-May 31. Trinity has pledged to turn off the spotlights illuminating its tower during those periods.

In an article in the Newtown Bee this autumn, Rev. Andrea summed up the motivation for our efforts: "Trinity is learning and praying about 'Creation Care' - the spiritual practice of seeing and loving God in all creation. While we learn about the climate crisis, loss of biodiversity ... we are also finding ways to care for our own historic properties on Main Street. Studying global 'tipping points,' we also see our own land with new eyes - invasive species need to go, pollinator gardens need to arrive!"

In addition to these actions involving our property, the Creation Care Team supported several other efforts:

- The [Season of Creation](#), September 1st through October 4th, is celebrated by Christians around the world as a time for renewing, repairing and restoring our relationship to God, one another, and all of creation. With the approval of our Diocesan Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Jeffrey Mello, Trinity joined this international effort by experimenting with alternative creation-focused prayers in its Sunday liturgy during the appointed season.
- Three members of Trinity attended a day-long workshop at Mercy By The Sea retreat center on "Spiritual Resilience in a Time of Climate Crisis" with [The Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas](#), Missioner for Creation Care for the neighboring Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts.
- The team contributed frequently to the Trinity eNewsletter with curated creation-related news of note.

If you are passionate about ecology, join our Creation Care Team - open to all! Contact Rev. Andrea or Lisa Mages for more information.



	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Holy Communion (Number of Services)</b>		
Sunday	50	53
Weekday (includes LEV & other services)	64	41
<b>All Other Sacraments &amp; Services</b>		
Special Services (Interfaith, Holy Week, Taize)	11	10
Marriages	0	0
<b>Attendance</b>		
Average Attendance Sunday 9:30 a.m.	67	88
Christmas Eve & Day Totals	215	221
Easter Day & Easter Vigil Totals	196	198
Average Online Viewers	32	31

**2023 Membership Report****Kim Merrill**

“Member in Good Standing” can be defined as someone who contributes regularly, has taken communion at least 3 times a year, and that is active in the life of the parish. “Member Active” is for new members, children under the age of 16, and family members of “Good Standing” who only attend occasionally.

We were open all year, closing our doors because of a pandemic seems to be behind us. Our lowest attendance was 47, with our highest being Easter (153), the Christmas Pageant (157), Christmas Eve (192) and the highest regular Sunday was 150. We continue to attract visitors and new members and are excited to be a part of a thriving faith community.

**Parish Membership Statistics 2022 & 2023**

		<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b><u>Increases during year</u></b>			
Baptisms 16 years and older		1	0
Baptisms under 16 years of age		4	4
Baptisms recorded by reason of transfer		0	0
Received by Bishop		0	0
Restored from Inactive Status		0	2
Confirmed by Bishop		0	0
Transferred in		2	2
New to Trinity		25	25
	<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>33</b>
<b><u>Decreases during year</u></b>			
Lost by death		3	1
Transferred out		0	1
Inactive/Moved, etc. (this number was not calculated for a few years due to the pandemic)		0	27
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>29</b>
<b><u>Baptized members (those who are recorded)</u></b>			
Members 16 years and older		52	58
Members under 16 years of age		20	10
<b>Present Baptized Members</b>		<b>72</b>	<b>68</b>
<b><u>Members in Good Standing &amp; Active Members</u></b>			
Members 16 years and older		<b>194</b>	<b>215</b>
Members under 16 years of age		<b>49</b>	<b>40</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>255</b>

## **Altar Guild**

**Ruth Garrett**

Your Altar Guild continues to perform its responsibilities in the preparation of all Eucharistic Services, as well as preparing and assisting at baptisms, weddings and funerals.

We order flowers and supplies and direct holiday decorating at Christmas and Easter, as well as other special occasions when warranted.

Our objective is to continue the caring of the Altar with all the silver and brass vessels being polished, all candles replaced when needed and all linens washed and kept in perfect condition.

There are presently ten active members involved in this ministry divided into four teams (two teams of three and two teams of two).

We hope to spread the joy of serving faithfully, while enjoying the fellowship of our members and encouraging more parishioners to join the Altar Guild ministry.

## **2023 Lay Worship Ministry Report**

**Kim Merrill**

In the Episcopal tradition, worship is a work of the people. Worship is at the heart of what we do and participation in our worship services is strongly encouraged. A corps of lay worship leaders, both Adults and Youth, joins the clergy in providing leadership. The Tech Guild was created this year to accommodate the need to livestream worship. One or two people are required for every worship service. Training is available for all these lay ministries. Let us know if you are interested in serving as:

**Acolyte** - Leads the processional, Gospel presentation and recessional; carries the cross, candles.

**Altar Guild** - Sets up altar area for services, clean and maintain altar vessels, candles, and crosses, decorate the church for holidays, sets up for weddings, baptisms, funerals, special services, etc.

**Intercessor** – Reads aloud the Prayers of the People.

**Lector** - Reads assigned scriptures during church services - Old and New Testament.

**Lay Eucharistic Ministers (LEMs)** - Administer the sacraments to persons receiving Holy Communion, most often as chalice bearers.

**Lay Eucharistic Visitors (LEVs)** - Take Holy Communion to those who are sick or otherwise homebound.

**Ushers**- Welcome people into the service, hand out worship booklets, orient newcomers to the church, collects and presents the offering, directs the movement of the congregation during the Eucharist.

**Tech Guild** – Tech Guild is responsible for operating the video camera and associated controls used in the streaming of services and other events that are held in the sanctuary. Five church members have been trained to date. Additional operators are needed. Anyone interested should contact Floyd Higgins, 203-577-7540.

## **2023 Ministry Membership Count**

<b>Acolyte - Crucifer</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>LEV</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Chalice Minister</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Cafe</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Altar Guild</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Driving</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Intercessor</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>Usher</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Lector</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>Tech Guild</b>	<b>8</b>

***Silence is God's first language, everything else is a poor translation.***

*Father Thomas Keating  
(founder of Centering Prayer)*

Looking for a new prayer practice? Or wanting to rekindle an old one? Are you looking for a deeper connection to God? Consider joining the Centering Prayer group. Centering prayer is silent prayer. The goal of this prayer practice is to “Be still and know that I am God” as the Psalmist says (Psalm 46:10). It is a simple prayer practice which has really only one rule to follow – show up and do it. When you show up, you simply sit in silence (20 minutes) and let your thoughts go and let God in. The true gift of the prayer practice is seen over time as you find yourself developing in the fruits of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

The Centering Prayer group at Trinity has been around for 19 years and we currently meet to pray together on the second Saturday of each month from 10:30am – 11:30am in a hybrid fashion with some in the Johnson room and others via Zoom. There are currently 15 active members of the group and anyone is welcome to join us at any time. If you are new, we will give you an introduction to the practice before we start.

The group also participates in self-led retreats. This past year, we had a one-day Centering Prayer Retreat on May 18 at Trinity Retreat Center in Cornwall, CT. The group also led a weekend Centering Prayer Retreat at Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, NY (Nov. 17-19). Retreats like these will be offered again this coming year. If you have any questions about this prayer practice or the group, contact Cindy Anderau, 914-582-3816 or [cindyanderau@gmail.com](mailto:cindyanderau@gmail.com).

***Tech Guild******Floyd Higgins***

The Tech Guild is completing its fourth calendar year Live Streaming the services at Trinity Church. The current and past services and other events can be found on the Trinity Website or on Facebook. Thanks go to Nancy Cole, Phil Cruz, Marcia DeBrock, Patrick DeBrock, Floyd Higgins, Cherie Sweets (new this year), and Chuck Wyatt, all the Sunday and special services have been streamed live this past year. Thanks to Sue Roman for sharing her video knowledge and experience. The Tech Guild coordinates its efforts with members of the Trinity Staff, in particular Reverend Andrea and Jennifer Sisco, Music Minister.

The Sunday Services will find two Tech Guild members operating the camera and the sound system. The goal is to provide the viewers with an “Easy-to-view audio and video presentation” so they have the sense of being present. Realizing the limits of only one camera and a few gaps in microphone coverage, we are currently reviewing options for addressing those issues.

While the initial emphasis for “Streaming” was to provide our regular parishioners the opportunity to “attend” the church services during the Pandemic, we are please to discover that some families new to Trinity “discovered” Trinity online. We will continue to reach out to the community by sharing our services and other events of potential interest and benefit.

Tech Guild is open to new members. If you think you might be interested, please contact Floyd Higgins, Coordinator, or any of the Guild members. New folks begin by observing the operation during a service, followed by individual and/or group training. Scheduling assignments of the operators is flexible; each of the current members average two services per month. The Tech Guild members appreciate the Vestry support in the continued development and upgrade of the system. We also appreciate the cooperation from Reverend Andrea, Music Minister Jennifer Sisco, and Communications Manager Kim. Finally, we are encouraged by the positive comments and feedback from parishioners and others who have shared their viewing experiences and thoughts about the “Trinity Stream.”

## **Trinity Care Team**

**Cindy Anderau**

*Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

*Galatians 6:2*

The Trinity Parish Care Team began its ministries in May 2021. There are currently 24 active members. Our mission is: To be prayerful in all that we do as we offer support to our parishioners and beyond. We strive to achieve this mission by offering meals, rides, calls, and prayers for those in need. To equip members for these ministries, we provide training in: Confidentiality, the Art of Listening and Maintaining Boundaries.

This past year we changed our name from Trinity Care Team to Trinity Parish Care team so that we would not be confused with the Creation Care Team.

For 2023 we provided the following:

**Meals:** 12 volunteers made 59 meals for nine different families. This team also made "Thinking of you Cookies" that were given to parishioners who we haven't seen in a while or who are new to Trinity. Eight bakers made 17 bags of cookies for 18 recipients delivered by 4 volunteers.

**Rides:** 6 volunteers have provided 10 rides for two parishioners for doctor visits. 4 volunteers are driving one parishioner to church each Sunday.

**Calls:** 4 volunteers have made 79 calls to 44 people. These calls have led to further support for these parishioners either through this team or by Rev. Andrea.

**Prayers:** Intercessory prayer team: 9 members have been praying for all those in the bulletin and another confidential list of 30-40 people.

**Emergency prayer team:** 16 members have prayed immediately on 14 occasions.

**Birthday and Anniversary postcards:** Two people send out anniversary and birthday cards every month to all parishioners that we have that information for. They sent out 261 cards.

The team took on a new ministry this year: Yoga led by Erin Lutz, certified yoga instructor. 5-10 people attend the twice per month (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, 7-8pm) sessions which are open to anyone.

Anyone is welcome at any time to join the Trinity Parish Care Team. We meet via Zoom every other month on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 6:15-7pm. We meet in person once or twice per year. Training is easily accomplished using the PowerPoints and video recordings. Members decide how much they want to participate and which ministry is right for them. If you know of a need out there that this team can fulfill, please reach out to us. Cindy Anderau, 914-582-3816 or [cindyanderau@gmail.com](mailto:cindyanderau@gmail.com).

### **Lay Eucharistic Visitors (LEV)**

**Ruth Garrett**

Trinity's five trained LEVs find it a joy and privilege to spend time with those individuals who are homebound, hospitalized or in nursing homes, offering a prayer service and sharing the bread and wine of Holy Communion. The LEVs are readily and happily received by these individuals who so look forward to the LEV's visit.

Every other Sunday an LEV is sent out in prayer. The five LEVs are Martha Dayton, Ruth Garrett, Teddy Jameson, Joan King and Glenda Strother.

We welcome all who are interested in this rewarding ministry to please speak with any one of the five LEVs. You are needed.

### **Prayer Partners**

**Gordon Strother**

**The Prayer Fellowship** comprises a couple of dozen (or more, depending on you) parishioners who use the **Prayer Fellowship Letter** as part of their prayer practice; no dues, no meetings, no requirements other than to ask to be a subscriber. It has persevered, month by month, for several decades at least. The hokey hype below offers a few more details.

**Win a free subscription!** Each month, you'll receive your **Prayer Fellowship letter**, with fresh suggestions for your prayers. And . . . you'll receive a new Prayer Partner, a fellow Fellow you can pray for in the privacy of your bed, bath or living room. And for dessert – get this – someone new will be praying for you. In the center of this little prayer sandwich may be the letter within **the letter**. Or a poem, a quote, a reprint from the archives; or maybe not.

You may nod to one of your fellows on a Sunday morning, but that's as close as you'll get to a *meeting* in this fellowship. No meetings and no dues. Ready? Just send your name, phone number, and email address to editor Gordon Strother at [gordonstrother87@gmail.com](mailto:gordonstrother87@gmail.com) or 203-304-9161. No email? Your address will get you a copy each month.

## **Stephen Ministries**

**Ron Dukenski**

**Mission:** *Stephen ministry at Trinity recruits, trains, and supports lay volunteers to be present for, and bring Christ's love to, people going through transitions and challenges in their lives.*

Trinity's Stephen Ministry continues to be a steadfast component of pastoral care for Trinity Parish and, starting in 2023, for the larger community as well.

We are very pleased to have Judy Rowley and Teddy Jameson as dedicated new members of the Stephen Leaders group. They have completed requisite online courses to step into their roles and have contributed greatly, along with ongoing Leaders Team members Andrea Wyatt, Cindy Anderau and Ron Dukenski. Filling out the SM presence at Trinity are our Stephen Ministers (Care-Givers): Carol Bigman, Joe Bojnowski and Erin Lutz.

Although the core work of offering one-on-one care-giving to parishioners-in-need remains at the centerpiece of our activities, an important adjunct to our ministry took place in 2023, with the creation of a 'Bereavement/Grief Group'. This has become an important vehicle for community outreach, meeting twice monthly over much of this past year, with an expanding and recurring number of participants coming from beyond the parish. We know this to be a rather unique offering to the Newtown area. Few, if any, local churches are engaged in this kind of effort. We are blessed by the facilitation of Reverend Andrea, Judy, and Teddy—with a hearty and welcome assist by Bob Gardner. Plans for the coming year include the creation of a "Care-Giver Support Group", again to be made available to parishioners as well as an additional form of community outreach, facilitated by members of the Stephen Ministry Team.

Our pastoral care to parishioners-in-mourning continues in the form of the series of "Grief Booklets" that we distribute. Although there are no plans to expand the Stephen Ministry team base at the moment, we continue to check on the interest of other parishioners who may wish to join us. We remain in dialogue with other nearby Stephen Ministry parishes to partner in offering the requisite training when the time comes. And we will further explore continuing education and awareness-building activities to the parish via Sunday Forums and other gatherings in the coming year.

We continue to be grateful for the ongoing support of our Vestry and parish leadership and their willingness to "be on the lookout" for people who might have a need for the special kind of Christ-centered care-giving that Stephen Ministers provides. We will continue to promote awareness with periodic updates to the Vestry and other promotional materials to the parish as a whole.

Stephen Ministry is about "Christ Caring For People Through People. As always, we emphasize the standard of confidentiality and anonymity for all that we do for anyone who chooses to work with a Stephen Minister. We encourage all parishioners to assume the "be-on-the-lookout" role and keep Reverend Andrea in the loop to match potential Care-Receiver with Stephen Ministry Care-Givers.

Finally, again, and as always, we ask all who read this report to continue to ask for God's blessing on Stephen Ministry in the life of Trinity Church, Newtown.

## **Mission & Outreach**

**Nancy Cole, Jean Maurice Calmels**

Outreach is at the heart of our Mission.

During 2023 the Mission and Outreach commission adopted a co-chairperson partnership model to divide the tasks and responsibilities of leadership.

This year we have participated in hands-on activities as well as disbursed funds for local and international needs. In March, an online document was created to highlight volunteer opportunities addition to what we are currently doing and open to all.

<https://www.trinitynewtownct.org/serve-our-community.html>

During Easter and Christmas seasons, M&O nominates, with vestry approval, a special cause or organization for the Special Offering. We are so grateful for the generous offerings received each year. This year we gave \$3111.76 to Laundry Love from the Easter collections and \$4641 to the Newtown Fuel Assistance program from the Christmas collections.

**Laundry Love of Greater Danbury** - As a chapter of the national non-profit Laundry Love, LLGD funds the washing of clothing and bedding for low/no income families in Danbury. LLGD hosts an on-site event once a month to distribute laundry cards at White's Wash in Danbury. Each card, which is worth \$10.00, provides 2 washes, 2 dries. Cards are carefully monitored so we only pay for the cards that are used. Currently, LLGD is distributing 275 cards a month with varying monthly rates of redemption. In 2023 LLGD provided 4,600 loads of wash. M&O has 3 active members who participate in the monthly events.

**Dorothy Day Hospitality House** - The Trinity team of volunteers continues to provide meals for those in need on the third Tuesday of the month. Since the Covid Pandemic, service has been to-go meals which are prepared by the team at the facility. Our team has served between 90- 150 meals each month during the 2023 year. The number for all the teams (including Morning Glory breakfast service) is 54,850 meals served over the past 12 months (14% increase over prior year) The Trinity team of 7 people is dedicated and trained to serve efficient and nutritious meals.

**Chapel on the Green** - In November, Trinity Youth and several M&O parishioners went to New Haven to attend the outdoor service at Trinity on the Green and serve soup and sandwiches. This weekly service is always well attended and the meals appreciated by those in need in New Haven.

**IPRR** - The Interfaith Partnership for Refugee Resettlement, founded in 2016, has successfully resettled six families in the greater Danbury area. Volunteers from numerous faith communities including Trinity and unaffiliated individuals have worked to secure employment, help families learn English, register children for school, drive to medical appointments and find housing. Having secured permanent housing for our 6th family, we are currently in a pause mode, discerning our next steps. We had 3 active members who participated in many of the resettlement activities in 2023.

The newest Project for M&O is the **Little Pantry at Trinity**. Planning and approval for the project began in March of this year. It was constructed, installed and on October 22, blessed by Rev Andrea with Congregation participation. The Little Pantry in a free standing structure in the parking lot at Trinity that provides non-perishable food items to the community. Thirty parishioners participate in the project, from restocking and inventory to donations and publicity. The donations have exceeded 400 and items being taken at about 95 from October till end of year.



Our partnership with the **Sister Parish/Companion Parish** has been a long and successful endeavor. In November, in consultation with David Ericson and Rev Andrea, M&O members voted to discontinue our participation as of 2023. We have assisted the people of San Jose de la Montaña in El Salvador with scholarship funds for higher education as well as travel between countries. The friendly relationships will continue with those at San Jose de la Montaña.

In addition to our hands-on activities, we also make financial donations:

- The Newtown Department of Social Services for gas and grocery cards.
- Off the Streets - an agency in Danbury that provides the means to get individuals ready to live long-term on their own.
- Laundry Love - Trinity was the largest financial donor this past year including donations from Trinity parishioners. Other sources of revenue include corporate and private donations. Mission & Outreach has 3 people who are active members of LLGD.
- Newtown Fund for Adopted Family at Christmas
- Feeding Thanksgiving Family for WIN
- Center for Empowerment & Education of Greater Danbury
- Newtown Fund Heating Fuel Assistance
- Sister Parish for San Jose de la Montaña
- Our Emergency and Relief budget went to the American Red Cross and The World Central Kitchen, Episcopal Relief & Development for wildfire relief in Hawaii.

The M&O Commission includes: Nancy Cole and JeanMaurice Calmels, co chairs; Carol Bigman, Mark Benedict, Jeanne Benedict, Martha Dayton, Joan King, Ben Toby, Kara Leake and David Ericson.

### **2023 Communications Report**

**Kim Merrill**

Trinity's relationship with the Newtown Bee continues to be positive, and we appeared in the paper at least 31 times over the course of the year. Some of the more notable coverage we received included the Newtown Interfaith Council, Great Pumpkin Challenge, the Service of Remembrance, and the Newtown Youth & Family Services Annual Holiday Festival. In addition, in August, a "hate crime" involving removing our inclusive flag from our exterior signs received a great deal of attention, including the Bee, the Danbury News Times, Newsbreak and NBC.

We have a solid presence on social media. On Facebook, we have 880 followers (up by 60 from last year), Instagram has 401 (up 48 from last year), and the enews is sent out to 462 (up 61 from last year) people every week, with a 66% open rate, compared to an industry average of 40%..

**Fellowship****Patrick DeBrock**

In 2023, we continued efforts to include fellowship and community engagement as we moved further beyond those pandemic-impacted years.

The Sunday Breakfast continued, and we offered an opportunity to come together in a ministry for multi-generational fellowship and to share a delicious meal. We continued efforts to recognize Mother's Day and Father's Day with special celebrations by expanding Mother's Day breakfast to include quiche as well as strawberries and shortcakes. Father's Day celebration returned with Root Beer floats and included a picnic brunch of grilled chicken and salads.

Major fellowship celebrations included a Mardi Gras event in February serving over 80 participants Cumbo, Crayfish Etouffee, Red Beans Sausage, and Shrimp Jambalaya. In November, we held a Stewardship celebration breakfast offering quiche and chicken crepes.

In 2024, the fellowship team will be planning new events and additional grilling adventures later in the warmer months as well as returning to old classics such as Mardi Gras in February.

The people who volunteered to make this happen are truly special and I thank all of them for helping. I also think it is important to recognize the entire parish of Trinity. It is because of you and your love for this ministry and your willingness to try new adventures that this ministry thrives. It warms our hearts to see all the tables full and people having a lively conversation as they enjoy whatever meal is provided.

**ECCT Convention Report****Bennett & Kara Leake**

The 239th Annual ECCT Convention took place on October 27th and 28th at the Hartford Convention Center. Trinity Newtown delegates, Kara and Bennett Leake, were accompanied by Rev Andrea Wyatt on the two-day event. The event was led by Bishop Jeff Mello & Bishop Ahrens. Over 500 Episcopalians from throughout Connecticut were present.

Most of the weekend centered around the passing of eight resolutions. Each resolution was proposed, discussed, and debated. All resolutions were passed, which included the budget, clergy compensation, and merging two parishes. Other resolutions regarded equality and inclusiveness, such as setting up a reparations fund and repudiating discriminatory legislation and harmful rhetoric targeted at transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming persons.

Additional information about the convention and resolutions can be found at the ECCT website: [EpiscopalCT.org](http://EpiscopalCT.org), including Bishop Mello's address.

## **Newtown Youth & Family Services**

**Candace Bohr**

*History of Newtown Youth and Family Services and its partnership with Trinity Church.*

Trinity Church saw a need for a local counseling center and acted upon that need in 1983. The Trinity parishioners provided \$15,000 in seed money, which, together with a \$5,000 special grant from the United Way, established the agency that provided counseling, support groups, educational workshops, and other services. This original agency was called the Family Life Center. In 1997, the agency changed the name to Family Counseling Center.

Newtown Youth Services (NYS) began in Newtown in 1979. Its mission was to improve the quality of life in the community through programs and services for young people and parents with a philosophy reflecting the enthusiasm, hope, and creativity that are the promise of children.

In 2007, FCC and NYS merged to form Newtown Youth and Family Services. NYFS has been committed to providing high quality human health services to promote individual and community wellness. Specialized services include: outpatient individual, couples and family counseling, substance abuse treatment services, Autism and social skills programs, prevention initiatives and support groups. Mission: We are dedicated to helping children and families achieve their highest potential.

- 90% of client/participate population are Newtown residents (up 7%)
- Increase of 138 service requests between FY 21-22 and FY 22-23
- Highest request for services continue to be for clients ages 11-17, with 49% of the total requests for services in this age group.
- Diagnostic Trends: Youth and Adults: most ): most prevalent diagnosis was Generalized Anxiety Disorder

NYFS is grateful that the Festival of Tress has found a new home at Trinity Church due to Ms. Merrill and Rev. Andrea Wyatt warm welcome and hospitality. The Festival of Trees is a very large piece of the Holiday Festival which just completed its 38th success year. NYFS looks forward to our continued partnership and encourage the congregation to reach out if they need support.

## **Trinity Day School**

**Michelle Macey**

Trinity Day School began as Trinity Church outreach program in the early 1970's. Now incorporated, Trinity parishioners continue to receive priority for early registration each January. Many Trinity parishioners over the years have been first introduced to the church through their Trinity Day School experience, and vice versa.

Trinity Day School is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit preschool, funded completely through tuition and fundraising efforts. The school is governed by a Board of Directors. TDS is serving 47 families this year.

Many of the nine TDS staff members have been with the school for many years. The current director began as a teacher in 1995, having been a TDS student herself. Other teachers have worked at TDS for as many as 20 years. Six of our staff have sent their children through Trinity Day School.

Trinity Day School is an important part of the Newtown community. The majority of families reside in Newtown, with a handful of students from neighboring towns attending. All staff members are current Newtown residents, which helps them to understand the community they are serving.

TDS is licensed by the State of CT Office of Early Childhood and nationally accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Accreditation is a five year cycle, and our reaccreditation visit occurred in November. TDS passed with exceptionally high scores, earning 100% in our classroom scores and 97.32% overall across ten standards. The school offers quality education for children ages two through five, with music, gym, and science enriching the classroom experience. TDS also brings community experiences into their classrooms. The children visit local community resources such as the Newtown Hook & Ladder fire department and enjoy monthly in-house visits from the CH Booth children's librarian. Other opportunities include dental education from our pediatric dentist and enrichment from family members who share their interests with the children.

TDS continues to follow all guidelines put out by the local health department, CT Office of Early Childhood, and NAEYC. The health and safety of the TDS and all Trinity communities is very important to us. TDS is working hard to provide a safe place where children can benefit from a quality education.

There continues to be a significant, caring connection between Trinity Church and Trinity Day School. Together there is much we can do as partners to serve the needs of our community. We look forward to fostering this relationship as we look to the future.

## **Properties**

**Patrick Corrigan**

The mission of the Property Commission is the stewardship of all Trinity's properties and facilities for the benefit of our Parish Community and those who use them as our guests. The primary focus of the commission is to ensure the efficient, sustainable, responsible, and most importantly, safe use and maintenance of the Church, Parish House, Rectory, Curate House, Memorial Garden, and the adjoining properties. In addition to being responsible for the use and maintenance of all the Trinity properties, we are also charged with planning for and responding to the ever evolving needs and expectations of our Parish, the Newtown community, and the wider world. Ultimately, the purpose of our properties is to foster Christian fellowship and serve as a symbol of welcome to all.

While specific projects may vary from year to year, the overarching goals for the Property Commission remain the same. Maintain all parish properties in a manner which will allow our parishioners and guests to use them safely, equitably, and comfortably. Consider ways in which the properties and facilities may be used to either assist or enhance projects initiated by the Vestry. Plan, measure, monitor, and report upon the spending necessary to maintain our properties, including monthly utility bills, maintenance contracts, repairs, and equipment replacement. Proactively monitor the state of all Trinity properties in an effort to advise the Vestry of future needs and opportunities.

Over the course of 2023, the Property Commission explored and completed several projects which included the following:

- Repaired portions of the Sanctuary slate roof
- Repaired exterior cornice molding
- Spring and Fall property clean-up
- New Pride Flag sign added to Main Trinity Sign
- New Handicap Accessible Door
- New Handicap entrance sign in parking lot
- Stopped the use of pesticides on all Church properties
- Replaced side exit door
- Replaced undercroft windows
- Repaired foundation leak in Utility Room
- Improved drainage and waterproofing at foundation
- Plumbing waste line repairs
- Stained Glass window evaluation
- Elevator 5-year Load Test
- New washer and dryer at Rectory
- New dishwasher at Rectory
- Japanese Knotweed Remediation on all Church properties

Finally, none of this work would have been possible without the dedication and hard work of the entire Property Team: Kristin Peterson, Walt Streett, Chuck Wyatt, Mark Benedict, Brian Dirschel, Chris Gibson, and Bob Gardner. Although not technically members of the Commission, I would like to offer my special thanks Tom Swetts, for his work on the undercroft windows, exit door, and Pride signage, Rev. Andrea who attended the vast majority of our meetings, generously providing her insight and support, Kim Merrill, our Communications and Membership Manager, for her tremendous organization and help, Both Lori Rohrbacher and Paige Fischer for all accounting support, and finally Jack Qubick, our Sexton. His knowledge, dedication, and hard work are truly indispensable. They all have my sincerest thanks and gratitude.

Respectfully and faithfully submitted,  
Patrick Corrigan, Chair

## **Finance Commision**

### **2023 Trinity Finance Commission Annual Report**

**Patrick DeBrock**

Our Role, as the Finance Commission, is to support the ministry of Trinity Church by...

*...taking care of our gift of holy currency – money*

*Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." At this, the man's face fell. He went away sad because had had great wealth (Mark 10:21-22)*

*... preparing and managing the overall budget*

*... overseeing the management of the endowments and trusts, including disbursements,*

*... providing accurate and timely, current and projected financial information to Vestry for decision-making.*

*... developing and implementing ideas to improve our financial stewardship.*

### **2023 Overview**

2023 was a strong financial year for Trinity's operating fund despite the changes in long-term investments due to the stock market. Contributions (pledged and unpledged) ended the year at \$320,038.73 or 10.5% change from 2022. Total revenue of \$615,841.36 was 7.8% change from 2022 levels as efforts continued to not draw from Johnson or General investment income. Trinity's ministry programs tracked a small increase in spending, with total expenses of \$622,109.11 (\$62,849.99 change) from the prior year. Overall, Trinity closed out 2023 with a net Expense position of \$6,267.75. The 2023 net expense position was due to additional repairs to the Parish house.

### **Glover Trust, Johnson & General Endowments**

The Glover Trust's long-term investment value only decreased by 1% (November 2023), even with the operating fund withdrawal of 4.5% (\$268K) for the year. It is important to note that fund managers have instructed us to lower the drawdown percentage in 2024 to 4% and again drop to 3.5% by 2025. The drawdown decrease is required to maintain the long-term investments for perpetuity. For the seventh year in a row, Trinity did not require withdrawals from the Johnson and General endowment for the entire year. As of 11/30/2023, the Glover Trust had an investment balance of \$5,825,126 and the remaining long-term reserve funds (Johnson, General, and Capital Reserve) totaled \$1,069,508.

### **Finance Commission Processes**

The Finance Commission meets on a monthly frequency to analyze and discuss the income and expense condition, expected cash flows, and any financial issues that need to be addressed. The meetings also enabled a review of the current strategies employed by our money managers in terms of suitability from a risk management standpoint, market conditions, and long and short-term parish capital requirements. The Investment sub-committee continues to conduct periodic meetings with our money managers to discuss financial performance as well as the market strategies and stance for short and long-term investments. The investment sub-committee was created to ensure the strategies were aligned with our target of growing the portfolio faster than our 4.5% withdrawals adjusted for cost-of-living adjustments but still maximizing portfolio safety..

Respectfully & Faithfully Submitted:

by the Finance Commission Chair Patrick DeBrock

**Trinity Episcopal Church**  
2024 Budget Summary

Description	2021 Act	2022 Act	2023 Budget	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	2024 Bud to 2023 Bud	%
<b>Income</b>							
<b>PLEDGES / CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	307,583	289,551	298,670	320,039	300,000	1,330	0.4%
<b>INVESTMENT INCOME</b>							
Glover Trust	249,470	265,951	278,578	278,579	248,114	(30,464)	-10.9%
Johnson Fund	-	-	11,821	-	11,002	(819)	-6.9%
General Fund	-	-	18,541	-	17,292	(1,249)	-6.7%
<i>Total Investments</i>	<i>249,470</i>	<i>265,951</i>	<i>308,940</i>	<i>278,579</i>	<i>276,408</i>	<i>(32,532)</i>	<i>-10.5%</i>
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>	12,322	15,792	15,601	17,224	53,400	37,799	242.3%
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>569,375</b>	<b>571,293</b>	<b>623,211</b>	<b>615,841</b>	<b>629,808</b>	<b>6,597</b>	<b>1.1%</b>
<b>Discipleship Expenses</b>							
<b>Worship</b>	37,436	26,627	42,055	44,557	42,870	815	1.9%
ALTAR GUILD	6,963	7,125	6,265	8,284	7,000	735	11.7%
MUSIC & CHOIR	28,447	17,521	33,890	33,395	33,870	(20)	-0.1%
WORSHIP	2,025	1,981	1,900	2,878	2,000	100	5.3%
<b>Formation</b>	2,362	5,212	6,725	5,006	4,700	(2,025)	-30.1%
CHRISTIAN FORMATION	1,122	280	1,500	404	1,000	(500)	-33.3%
CHURCH SCHOOL	164	3,176	3,400	3,382	2,050	(1,350)	0.0%
YOUTH	766	1,683	1,500	986	1,500	-	0.0%
LIBRARY	310	74	325	235	150	(175)	-53.8%
<b>Parish Life</b>	1,337	7,160	5,307	802	3,595	(1,712)	-32.3%
MEMBERSHIP	179	677	800	205	700	(100)	-12.5%
FELLOWSHIP	(39)	2,458	2,162	324	1,725	(437)	-20.2%
PASTORAL CARE	303	189	1,110	105	610	(500)	-45.0%
STEPHEN MINISTRY	893	3,835	1,235	169	560	(675)	-54.7%
<b>Total Discipleship Exp</b>	<b>41,135</b>	<b>39,000</b>	<b>54,087</b>	<b>50,365</b>	<b>51,165</b>	<b>(2,922)</b>	<b>-5.4%</b>
<b>Apostleship Expenses</b>							
<b>Finance / Office</b>	109,636	102,929	105,229	102,870	100,419	(4,810)	-4.6%
COMMUNICATIONS/TOWER	5,001	6,871	9,269	9,198	7,724	(1,545)	-16.7%
STEWARDSHIP	470	230	700	292	200	(500)	-71.4%
VESTRY	654	414	2,000	868	1,250	(750)	-37.5%
OFFICE EXPENSE	43,006	35,786	34,085	33,353	32,245	(1,840)	-5.4%
COMMUNITY & WORLD MINISTR	60,504	59,628	59,175	59,157	59,000	(175)	-0.3%
<b>MISSION &amp; OUTREACH GRANTS</b>	16,999	17,000	18,300	21,798	18,700	400	2.2%
<b>PROPERTY &amp; MAINTENANCE</b>	81,862	102,234	101,973	102,497	109,237	7,264	7.1%
<b>Clergy / Staff Comp</b>	306,830	306,432	343,524	344,578	349,189	5,665	1.6%
Clergy WAGES & BENEFIT	165,405	170,654	181,378	179,395	183,219	1,841	1.0%
LAY STAFF WAGES & BENEFIT	141,425	135,779	162,146	165,184	165,970	3,824	2.4%
<b>Total Apostleship Exp</b>	<b>515,329</b>	<b>528,596</b>	<b>569,026</b>	<b>571,744</b>	<b>577,545</b>	<b>8,519</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>556,463</b>	<b>567,596</b>	<b>623,113</b>	<b>622,109</b>	<b>628,710</b>	<b>5,597</b>	<b>0.9%</b>
<b>NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)</b>	<b>12,912</b>	<b>3,698</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>(6,268)</b>	<b>1,098</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1020.1%</b>

