



# TRINITY

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

## *2024 Annual Report*

*293rd Annual Meeting  
Sunday, January 26, 2025*

## Agenda

### **Brunch and Fellowship**

### **Call to Order and Gathering Prayer**

**Rev. Andrea Castner Wyatt**

*Children's Song                      He's Got the Whole World in His Hands*

*Blessing of the 'Kids Klub'*

### **Approval of Minutes of 2023 Annual Meeting**

## **MINUTES OF THE 292ND ANNUAL PARISH MEETING TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH 36 MAIN STREET, NEWTOWN, CT 06470 JANUARY 28, 2024**

### **Call to Order**

The 292<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of Trinity Episcopal Church was called to order at 11:11 AM, on Sunday January 28<sup>th</sup> 2024, by Rev. Andrea Castner Wyatt. The meeting was opened with the singing of "The Church's One Foundation". Rev. Andrea led the congregation in a prayer after the hymn.

### **2023 Annual Meeting Minutes**

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

### **Reflection of the Rector, Officers and Staff**

Rev. Andrea Wyatt (Rector)

Rev. Andrea presented a church that has been given a new life, including the variety of new plantings outside and the new growth inside. There was and is a rebuilding after covid led by strong lay leadership and support from all of the parishioners. The energy of the church, the children and the continuous great work of the commissions created an attractational quality of the church. She welcomed new ideas like creating incubators for new ideas with the support of dollars from Trinity. The church is in a good place financially with less taken from investments but still having a balanced budget. Rev. Andrea thanked Sue Roman for her leadership as Warden as she passes the baton to someone else.

Sue Roman (Warden)

Sue is ending her third stint as Warden. She announced the receipt of a new bequest from Dorth LaBelle for \$652,000. Sue painted a picture of Dorthea as a Wave in WW2 and a Yale educated person that ended her career as a social worker at Southbury Training School. Sue continued with a description of the person the discernment team was looking for when hiring Andrea and how she was an exact fir for the parish. She also announced the sunseting of our relationship with our sister church in San Salvadore and how we helped five parishioners from that parish attend college and a picture of a church rebuilt, with Trinity's help, after a civil war in the country. She thanked Miss Francis and Jennifer Sisco for their dedication in rebuilding the church school and music programs.

Bob Gardner (Warden)

Bob thanked Sue for her extraordinary service as a leader and for guiding and educating him in his role as a new warden. He thanked Rev. Andrea for her leadership and the parish for educating him.

Jennifer Sisco (Music Director)

Jennifer felt that Trinity was a very special place. She recommitted Trinity to a partnership with the CT Choral Society and hopes to create more relationships between the church and the community. Jennifer thanked the choir members and invited other parish members to join. She hopes to see the children’s music program grow and hoped everyone enjoyed the video that is online created by a her and Sue. Jennifer thanked Rev. Andrea, Kim and the parish for their great support.

New Business

Rev. Andrea introduced Tom McMorran as a parishioner that is beginning the process of Holy Orders. Trinity will be supporting him both spiritually and financially as he follows this arduous path. Tom spoke of his lifetime path that led to this day and thanked the entire Trinity family for their guidance and support.

Election of new vestry members

Rev. Andrea thanked retiring vestry members Patrick DeBrock, who served as head of finance, and Cindy Anderau as head of Parish Life Commission. Cindy will continue as a member of that commission. She thanked Kim Merrill for all her work as office manager and announced that Christina Lye, a teacher and a mom, will replace Sue Roman as Warden if elected by the parish.

Election of new vestry members

- Christina Lye – Warden
- Bennett Leake – Finance
- Karen Wojtowicz – Parish Life

A motion was made to accept the slate as proposed and seconded. The parish voted to accept the slate.

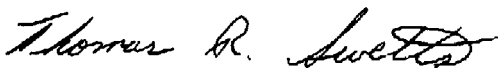
A motion was made to elect the slate to their respective offices and seconded. The motion was passed by the congregation.

Closing Comments – Rev. Andrea

The past year was spent developing the new children’s program and music program as well as supporting the commissions as they build out their roles. This coming year will be the year of property, its use and maintenance. She thanked Miss Francis for her leadership in developing the children’s program.

Motion to Adjourn

A motion was made to adjourn at 12:11. The motion passed followed the final song “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light”.



Tom Swetts

**Reflection from Reverend Andrea**

**Reflections on Proposed Sale of Residential Properties**

**Sue Roman**

**Reflections on Upcoming Property Projects**

**Patrick Corrigan**

**Rector Continuing Education / Sabbatical**

**Andrea Castner Wyatt, Rector, Bob Gardner, Christina Lye, Wardens**

***Election of Parish Officers and Vestry Leaders***

***2025 SLATE OF NOMINEES***

**Vestry Member Nomination**

Anne Calmels – Music & Choir  
Rosemary Gallant – Membership  
Beth Murphy – Children’s Ministry  
John Sullivan – Stewardship & Development

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

Bob Gardner – Warden  
Christina Lye - Warden  
Noel Bellesheim - Treasurer  
Sue Roman – Clerk  
Nancy Cole – Mission & Outreach  
Patrick Corrigan - Properties  
Bennet Leake – Finance  
Karen Wojtowicz – Trinity Parish Care Team & Stephen Ministry  
Bennet Leake – Delegate to the ECCT Convention  
Kara Leake – Delegate to the ECCT Convention

***Appreciation for Departing Vestry Members***

Lisa Mages, Jessica O’Meara

### **Commissioning New and Continuing Parish Leaders**

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

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Rev. Andrea: I present Anne Calmels, Rosemary Gallant, Beth Murphy and John Sullivan 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) Anne, Rosemary, Beth and John: 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, Warden Christina Lye, Treasurer Noel Bellesheim, Clerk Sue Roman, Nancy Cole, Patrick Corrigan and Bennett Leake and Karen Wojtowicz

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 - 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**

**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.

**Blessing**

**TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH STAFF MEMBERS**

**PARISH STAFF as of January 26, 2025**

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

The Rev. Andrea Castner Wyatt  
Jennifer Sisco  
Frances Chamberlain  
Kim Merrill  
Lori Rohrbacher  
John J. Qubick

## 2024 Rector Annual Report

The Rev. Andrea Castner Wyatt

How precious is your steadfast love, O God!

All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

They feast on the abundance of your house,

and you give them drink from the river of your delights.

For with you is the fountain of life;

in your light we see light. Psalm 36: 7-9

I choose this beautiful affirmation from the Psalms as I look back at the ministries of Trinity Episcopal Church in Newtown in 2024. Why? Because it describes for me the many ways I see *abundance* in our ministries at Trinity.

God's love is *steadfast*. As our world rages and changes around us, our prayer and singing persist - year after year. Advent becomes Epiphany. Epiphany becomes Lent. Holy Week becomes Easter, Ascension and Pentecost. We marry, we bury. We baptize, confirm.

We carry forward the *precious gifts* of our Anglican inheritance, Word and Sacraments; the teaching and practice of our Christian faith into a new day ... since 1732.

*Refuge*. Yes, parish members as well as neighbors, newcomers and strangers take refuge in our hospitality, in the peace and beauty of our historic Sanctuary. *Refuge* ... in times of loss, saying farewell to beloved souls. *Refuge!* Enjoying music, seeking solace from the brokenness of our world, sharing our space after August's flood.

We seek to be God's Living Room; we open our doors to our community. *All people take refuge in the shadow of God's wings*. ALL people.

*Feasting!* When our amazing cooks offer "Breakfast Sunday," the line of expectant guests snakes out the door and down the hall! When we gather around Christ's Table for the Sacrament of Communion ... Jennifer plays song after lovely song with so many pilgrims at the rail.

*A river of delights!* I am surprised and grateful to see new faces, new families every week. Our new 'Kids Klub,' a renovated storage space; a play space for active children. It is also a new conversation spot for parents and parishioners building community, engaging in theology!

Miss Frances welcomes new families into Church School; Jennifer Sisco invites singers to Choir. Newcomer Gatherings invite fascinating sharing.

We saw attendance of 250 at our Candlelit Christmas Eve service. (The 'legendary folding chairs' made their first appearance in my time here.) On larger Sundays, we are seeing 120+ worshipers.

Bishop Laura Ahrens Confirmed and Received 18 youth and adults into the Episcopal Church during her Visitation this fall – many of them long-time members going deeper into their faith. *A river of delights*.

*A fountain of life*. We see 90+ families making Stewardship Pledges, with even more committing to regular contributions. We have a new team of 27 volunteers serving our Little Pantry, sharing emergency food with neighbors in need.

Our Property Team is filling with new leadership. New Church School volunteers ... Dorothy Day volunteers; the list of celebrations is large. A *fountain of life* is flowing at Trinity Church. We need each of us to offer our unique gifts and talents to tend this fountain.

We see *light*. We find hope in these signs of God's abundance. We find light when things around us seem dark. In the year to come, we will need to search together for light.

*Abundance* ... is a gift. And it comes with responsibility, continuing change, and challenges. How can we incorporate newcomers into our ministries? Will Church School outgrow its classroom? We have kept staffing intentionally quite low; how can we juggle the needs of growth – faithfully, sustainably?

This summer, as your Rector reaches 5 years of service, I will take the Continuing Education Leave (Sabbatical) outlined in my contract. We will practice incorporating this discipline of renewal.

We need each Trinity member to share in a ministry, join a team. We must empower the ministry of each believer. We are fully self-funding, and we are drawing less each year from endowment savings – a significant fiscal challenge. We must empower Stewardship among each believer; we are profoundly grateful for your sacrificial giving.

We are tackling *long-deferred and major projects*. In 2024 we voted, as Vestry and as Parish, to sell not one but two residential properties. This is the culmination of a thorough study process; thanks to Patrick Corrigan, lead of our Property Team, for guiding us.

We hope to simplify and streamline our residential property into a single more-sustainable home, as housing remains a required part of clergy compensation. We aim to lower energy and maintenance costs, and free up volunteer time for other ministries. This project is awaiting approval of our Diocese, the Episcopal Church in Connecticut.

We also laid the groundwork in 2024 for much-needed repair to our primary stained-glass window of Christ that graces our Sanctuary. Work is scheduled to begin in 2025.

We are also collecting and scrutinizing bids for roof replacement, covering all sections of our Church and Parish House building. We have been managing leaks and buckets for too long. We must minimize added interior damage.

Are we ready for such projects? Is any Church ever ready? Do we believe in the preciousness of love and refuge we find here? Are we confident in the abundance we see? Do we trust in the river of delights, the fountain of life, the Light we enjoy? I believe we do - and I believe it is time.

We prayed for this Church to come back to life. With God's help, it is! We need each and every one of us to help guide Trinity Episcopal Church into God's new future. Jump in!

So ... a few more notes of celebration: I remain profoundly grateful – in countless daily ways – for the ministries of our devoted Staff: Frances Chamberlain, Kim Merrill, Jack Qubick, Lori Rohrbacher, and Jennifer Sisco. I am honored to work with such a delightful team.

I am privileged to work closely with Robert Gardner and Christina Lye as wise and faithful Wardens. I commend to you the Warden's Report published in this Annual Report – it contains many important details I do not cover.



I am grateful to serve with Noel Bellesheim as Treasurer, with Sue Roman - following the work of Tom Swetts - as Clerk.

Our Vestry leaders offer exceptional leadership: A warm thank you to Jessica O'Meara (Membership) and Lisa Mages (Adult Christian Formation/Creation Care) and Tom Swetts (Clerk) for all that you have given as you now depart the Vestry.

I look forward to continuing to serve in 2025 with these Vestry leaders: Patrick Corrigan (Property), Bennett Leake (Finance, Delegate), Nancy Cole (Mission and Outreach), Karen Wojtowicz (Trinity Parish Care Team/Stephen Ministry).

We look forward to welcoming Anne Calmels (Music), Rosemary Gallant (Membership), Beth Murphy (Children's Ministry) and John Sullivan (Stewardship & Development) to Vestry in 2025!

May God bless you and keep you.

Rev. Andrea Castner Wyatt

### *2024 Warden's Annual Report*

*Bob Gardner, Christina Lye*

The 2023 Warden's report noted that the year at Trinity was marked by the parish's impressive ability to honor its rich traditions while, at the same time, embracing change. A year later, that statement continues to run true. 2024 was marked by a growing membership, a strengthening of ongoing programs, and an embrace of new initiatives.

This forward trajectory was evident in a variety of ways, some of which were unique to the parish, while others involved Trinity's relationship to the greater Newtown community. The church continued to house a family from Ukraine, maintained a decades long relationship with the Trinity Day School, and, in December, again hosted an interfaith memorial service for victims of the Sandy Hook tragedy. Trinity also provided worship space for another faith community when the overpowering summer storm destroyed access to their worship space for several weeks, putting into action our value of welcoming and serving the broader Newtown community.

Trinity's determination to both maintain and upgrade its own properties also reflects its commitment to be a positive force in Newtown. The parish's prominent location on Main Street provides an opportunity to demonstrate community leadership. The multiyear project to eradicate Japanese knotweed on all of the church's properties continued vigorously. This helps not only Trinity and its neighbors, but is an example of a visible local institution taking an aggressive stance to help solve a problem which extends far beyond the boundaries of its properties. Not to be forgotten is the ongoing evolution of the pollinator garden which is not only an environmental asset, but also helps to beautify the area of the parking lot. Projects such as these exemplify Trinity's commitment to living our value of responsible stewardship of all God's creation.

The enhancement of local and regional food security continues to be a major focus of Trinity's outreach efforts. Its longstanding commitment to the support of the Dorothy Day "soup kitchen" in Danbury remains a high priority, one which has been underscored by a determination to maintain the high standards set for so many years by the leader of Trinity's team, the late Jean-Maurice Calmels.

A highly successful allied venture has been the growth of the “Little Pantry,” which has received widespread support from parish members. Open 24 hours, this simple structure provides food to anyone in need. Also deserving mention is Trinity’s participation in the “Chapel on the Green,” in which parishioners travel to New Haven to participate in worship and provide a simple meal outdoors on the green to anyone who needs food assistance.

Spiritual life at Trinity is vibrant. The core of ongoing worship is, of course, the Eucharist. Rev. Andrea excels at blending the time honored Episcopal liturgy with modern touches. Ever mindful that the congregation is composed of individuals who arrive with different backgrounds, faith traditions, and attitudes, she skillfully weaves a tapestry which is inclusive and unifying.

Of great importance are the music and children’s ministry programs which continue to flourish and grow. Blessed by the outstanding leadership of Jennifer Sisco and Frances Chamberlain respectively, the programs appear to work in concert with one another and are a tremendous asset.

Supportive of the worship services and vital to the parish are the Trinity Parish Care Team and Stephen Ministry. Also deserving mention is the very meaningful Grief Support group which Rev. Andrea leads. It includes Trinity members, but also includes individuals from the greater community.

Trinity’s finances remain strong. Budgets are carefully constructed and managed. The church receives widespread financial support from its members and is blessed to have endowments emanating from previous generations. These funds are professionally managed, providing income which, together with current contributions, enable Trinity to support its range of programs.

Managing Trinity’s assets is an ongoing process. In 2024, the Vestry and parish leadership made the decision to make strategic changes to best ensure the long term health of the parish. Specifically, a plan was developed to sell the “Curate House” and the Rectory. An integral part of the plan is the purchase of a new, more modern Rectory. The sale of those properties will eliminate ongoing expenses at two high maintenance sites. In turn that will enable the parish to focus on the long term needs of the church and parish house. This plan was approved by the parish in a formal vote and will be implemented upon approval by the Diocese.

Any discussion of Trinity’s finances and properties should rightfully cite the work of the Property and Finance commissions and should note the distinguished leadership of their chairs, Patrick Corrigan and Bennett Leake as well as the parish treasurer Noel Bellesheim. Warden emeritus, Suzanne Roman has continued in an impressive leadership role as a leader of the property sale/purchase team.

The 2023 Warden’s Annual Report concluded by commenting on Rev. Andrea, noting her outstanding leadership as Trinity’s rector. Let this report go on record with what was said a year ago, 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**

It's been another fruitful and fun year in the Music Ministry at Trinity. Our choir continues to grow and become more cohesive musically, spiritually and personally, and we have plenty of laughs in rehearsals while learning some great music. We are like a family, which I hope will continue to grow.

This year, we tried something new by hiring an Organ Scholar from Trinity College, and it has been a great experience all around. Our Organ Scholar, Elijah Morris, is a young organist who you would not believe is merely 18 years old by the professional and artistic way that he commands our Austin Pipe Organ. He is growing his skills and learning the ins and outs of being a church organist. I love the idea of our church being a training ground for tomorrow's music ministers!

Our kids enjoyed singing as well. The Church School kids sang a few times this year; notably in their Halloween Costumes to the delight of all the smiling faces in the sanctuary. They sang their hearts out in the Christmas Pageant as well, and it is pure joy to practice their songs with them in the choir room during church. Their exuberance is limitless, and I plan to have more youth music in our worship in the coming year.

A major step for the music program in 2024 was the return of Evensong. The last time there had been an Evensong service at Trinity was in 2013, and upon polling our veteran choir members, I learned that the reason that it hasn't been offered since is because of historically low attendance. The opportunity arose to collaborate an Evensong with the Connecticut Choral Society, which was to be my first experience diving into this incredibly meaningful service, and we took the leap of faith. What a delightful and heartwarming surprise it was to have the community show up in great numbers to partake in the musically prayerful experience! We even ran out of bulletins and had to quickly print more.

Another new musical offering in 2024 was our *Messiah* Sunday, where we inserted excerpts from the Christmas portion of Handel's *Messiah* throughout the Sunday morning worship, with choir, soloists, string quartet and organ. It was a special morning, and I'm hopeful it will become a tradition.

There are more and more musical talents popping up in our congregation, and this coming year will see even more of our Trinity family offering their music in worship. All are welcome to minister through music here, and it has always been my belief that if God has given you a talent- regardless of the level of professionalism- it should be used to glorify God. I pray that this coming year will see more growth, as well as unexpected blessings that will make Trinity even more of a beacon in the community. Thank you for your support of music at Trinity!

## **Adult Formation**

**Lisa Mages**

Cindy Anderau presented an Anglican prayer bead workshop on October 19. About 20 people attended to both learn about and make these rosary-like beads. It was a fun and lively event, followed by lunch. (The actual bead stringing proved more challenging than expected and Cindy was an angel to string many of the beads for people who were having trouble.)

November 10 marked the 50th anniversary of the first public celebration of the Eucharist in the Episcopal Church by a female priest. Trinity marked the occasion by sponsoring a virtual screening of "The Philadelphia Eleven" documentary about the long struggle for the ordination of women in the Episcopal Church. The screening was available to the general public for up to 250 viewers to watch the film for free. Thirteen people registered in advance. Six people met in the Johnson Room to watch together in person and had a wonderful conversation afterwards. (The screening platform (Kinema) does not share statistics, however, on how many people clicked on the link to watch without having registered, so we have no idea how many people watched in total.)

Trinity members were again invited (via our newsletter) to the ongoing; "Thoughtful Film Series"; sponsored by our neighbors at Newtown Congregational Church. Several people from Trinity attending the screening of "Wrestling Jerusalem", a mind-challenging presentation by a single actor of the myriad views that describe the Israel and Palestinian conflict.

The Adult Formation group sponsored two book groups in 2024. Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer was scheduled for four sessions in March/April, and Reading Genesis by Marilynne Robinson for four sessions in June/July. Parishioners had expressed interest in both books and the sessions were publicized in the Trinity newsletter. However, even fewer people showed up for these sessions than did for the 2023 book groups. Only one attendee (other than the presenter) had read either of the books. This made having any kind of meaningful discussion very difficult and both series were therefore canceled after two sessions. As in last year's adult formation annual report, I question whether book groups are what Trinity is interested in or can support at this time.

## **Youth**

**Noel Bellesheim, Julie Dunn**

2024 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. We partner with Mission and Outreach (M&O), membership and other ministries at Trinity to provide the youth opportunities and experiences.

For 2024, 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 2024 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 fourth 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 61 loans, totaling \$2,675 dollars - after the initial funds was lent out and repaid, those funds were lent out again and again.
- The funds supported 61 individuals in 29 countries.
- Of the 43 individuals: 69% were female business owners, 31% were male.

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

In September: The youth assisted the Little Pantry by providing a path from the driveway to the little pantry to avoid walking on the grass during weather.

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 \$1253 for the Hole in the Wall Gang for the seventh consecutive year. 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.

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

***Frances Chamberlain***

I am happy to report that 2024 was a year of growth in Trinity's Children's Ministry Program. We welcomed a number of new families and endeavored to integrate them into the larger fabric of the church. With love at the center of our programming, we did our best to make our church school students feel appreciated and truly seen. My heartfelt thanks are offered to Rev. Andrea, Kim Merrill, Jennifer Sisco, Christina Lye, Kara Leake, and Jessica O'Meara for your amazing support.

Church school students have responded well to consistent yet varied programming at Trinity. Each Sunday during church school students say prayers, light altar candles, participate in team building exercises, hear a bible story, and do an activity to reinforce the retention of that story. Outside of the classroom kids participated in worship during the Blessing of the Backpacks, Blessing of the Stuffedies, Halloween costume parade and concert, and the Christmas pageant. I also invited congregants to share their God-given gifts with the young people of the church. These visits added much joy (singing with Jennifer Sisco and Cristina Trnik), peace (practicing yoga with Erin Lutz), and enthusiasm (running around our amazing indoor labyrinth with Sue Roman).

Trinity Church School continues to use the 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 workshops in cooking, bible games, science, video, music, creative drama, and art. This encourages kids to engage further with each story and appeals to various learning styles. Our goal is to create a firm base of collective biblical knowledge in the students that can be built on over time. The curriculum is flexible and imaginative and suits the class well. Also, Spark Children's Bibles were loaned out/given to families to support parental efforts to teach faith at home.

The scope of the Children's Ministry Program is directed by me, Rev. Andrea, and the Children's Ministry Team. The team meets a few times per year to discuss past and future events, and to prioritize my duties. Together we hosted a session making baptism gifts, the fall ice cream truck social, and a Christmas cookie decorating event.

I continue to work with church school helpers and other collaborators. Church school meets on Sundays during the worship service, and helpers pitch in each week. Outside of that there are special events held seasonally, such as a pancake supper on Shrove Tuesday (canceled this year due to snow), a pumpkin painting event around Halloween, and an Easter Egg Hunt on Easter morning. The volunteers that make these events possible are incredibly valuable. In addition, we collaborated with Nancy Cole to bring in donations for the Little Pantry. We also held a event making valentines for troops in collaboration with the American Legion and Donna Monteleone. 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 do a great job of directing the youth programs at Trinity. Your leadership and commitment in this area is invaluable. Please see their report for more information.

### ***Nursery at Trinity Church***

***Frances Chamberlain***

The nursery at Trinity Church continues to be a vibrant and welcoming space for children from the time they are infants until they enter Kindergarten. The space is staffed each Sunday by a nanny from the Wee Care agency from 9:15 – 11:15am. We have been fortunate in the last year to usually have Deb Rosler with us, who is adored by the kids. Parents can leave their children in the nursery for the full two hours but often kids come and go throughout the morning. Many generous donations of toys and furniture from the congregation have enabled us to offer this fun and comfortable space to kids and their families on Sunday mornings. What a wonderful gift to the families at Trinity Church!

### ***Kids Klub***

***Jennifer Sisco***

As our church has been growing, so has our population of kids. Trinity has a fantastic, professionally staffed nursery, but due to the fact that the nursery is exclusively for use by children under kindergarten age, we had a growing need for a space for our older kids to hang out during coffee hour, events, and meetings downstairs.

During the summer of 2024, I along with some mighty choir volunteers, cleaned out and consolidated multiple spaces within the building to reduce our music department's footprint. Part of that clearing out was the room to the right of the kitchen, a room that most people didn't even know was there! Its closets held many old choir robes from the previous chorister program, as well as other random things that had been thrown in there. It was like a large-scale junk drawer!

Once that room was cleaned out, wheels started turning. Although not a huge space, it could be a great playroom for our kids! Once the idea was introduced, the creativity flowed from numerous parents in our congregation. Donations of toys, furniture, and financial gifts started coming in to support this new idea, and the room was quickly transformed into what we now call the Trinity's Kids Klub.

On any given Sunday, you can peek into the Kids Klub and see our kids enjoying games, puzzles, Legos, magnet blocks, and a variety of toys. They also love reading books and relaxing in the cozy reading nook. Parents are also congregating in there and forming friendships as well, and it's the parents themselves who monitor the activity and cleanup of the Kids Klub. The room is still a work in progress, but based on its already huge popularity with the kids and parents, it's clear that we were truly in need of this dedicated space.

## **Creation Care**

**Lisa Mages**

Our two major creation care projects continued in 2024. The pollinator garden in our parking lot was full of beautiful blooms throughout the warmer months. The garden designer, Sarah Middleleer, checked up on the garden and made recommendations for filling the few empty spots that had developed. Lisa Mages procured the replacements and Sue Roman made sure they got in the ground before colder weather arrived.

2024 marked year two of our three-year knotweed eradication program on the grounds of the church and the rectory. After two years of careful herbicide application and mowing, these spaces look very different. In 2025 the effort will expand a bit to include a border area along the west side of the parking lot where neighbors had previously opted to forego herbicide application. The neighbors are now OK with having this area sprayed, with the understanding that once the knotweed is gone, Trinity will plant some type of shrubs to provide a privacy screen. Once our three-year contract is complete, we will need to seek professional advice on what type of native species to plant so that various invasives don't move in and take over.

Trinity once again participated in the annual international liturgical Season of Creation. The season started September 1st, the Day of Prayer for Creation, and ended October 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of ecology beloved by many Christian denominations. With the approval of our Diocesan Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Jeffrey Mello, and led by Rev. Andrea, we used alternative creation-focused prayers in our Sunday liturgy during the appointed season. The Creation Care Team contributed frequently to the Trinity newsletter with curated creation-related news and upcoming events.

## **Service Statistics 2023 & 2024**

**Kim Merrill**

	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Holy Communion (Number of Services)		
Sunday	53	52
Weekday (includes LEV & other services)	41	28
All Other Sacraments & Services		
Special Services (Interfaith, Holy Week, Taize)	10	5
Marriages	0	1
Attendance		
Average Attendance Sunday 9:30 a.m.	88	98
Christmas Eve & Day Totals	221	284
Easter Day & Easter Vigil Totals	198	254
Average Online Viewers	31	27

## **2024 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.

Our lowest attendance was 25 (due to a snow storm), with our highest being Easter (219), Confirmation (183), the Christmas Pageant (184), Christmas Eve (253) and the highest regular Sunday was 127. We continue to attract visitors and new members and are excited to be a part of a thriving faith community.



**Parish Membership Statistics 2023 & 2024**

		<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b><u>Increases during year</u></b>			
Baptisms 16 years and older		0	0
Baptisms under 16 years of age		4	4
Baptisms recorded by reason of transfer		0	0
Received by Bishop		0	7
Restored from Inactive Status		2	2
Confirmed by Bishop		0	11
Transferred in		2	0
New to Trinity		25	39
	<b>Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>63</b>
<b><u>Decreases during year</u></b>			
Lost by death		1	2
Transferred out		1	0
Inactive/Moved, etc. (This number was not calculated for a few years due to the pandemic. This explains the high number in 2023)		27	8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>10</b>
<b><u>Baptized members (those who are recorded)</u></b>			
Members 16 years and older		58	60
Members under 16 years of age		10	8
<b>Present Baptized Members</b>		<b>68</b>	<b>68</b>
<b><u>Members in Good Standing &amp; Active Members</u></b>			
Members 16 years and older		<b>215</b>	<b>240</b>
Members under 16 years of age		<b>40</b>	<b>410</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>280</b>

## **Altar Guild**

**Ruth Garrett**

Your Altar Guild continues to perform with joy and dedication 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 eleven active members involved in this ministry divided into four teams (three teams of three and one team 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. If you have any interest in joining, don't hesitate to speak with any member of the Altar Guild.

## **2024 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.

## **2024 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>6</b>
<b>Altar Guild</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Driving</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Intercessor</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Usher</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Lector</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Tech Guild</b>	<b>7</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 20 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 people attending in-person and others via Zoom. We meet in the sanctuary where a sense of being embraced the spirit is ever present, where many, many prayers have been said. There are currently 15 active members of the group with an average of 4-8 people attending each session. 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 two, one-day Centering Prayer Retreats at Trinity Retreat Center in Cornwall, CT. One was in May and the second in October. These retreats allow the participants to pray together in a beautiful location and to take time to wonder in silence and find some peace within the grounds. 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.

#### *Tech Guild*

*Floyd Higgins*

The Trinity Tech Guild began providing streaming services during the Pandemic. This allowed parishioners to “attend church” virtually. As the Pandemic ceased, it was decided to continue streaming for our church families who were unable to attend because of travel, illness, or other reasons. Additionally, we found that a number of individuals and families “found Trinity” online and have become regular attendees. If you have not discovered or used the streaming services, you are encouraged to check it out on the Trinity Website or on Facebook.

The Tech Guild is made up of volunteers who serve in pairs, one operating the video camera and the other controlling the sound. Faithfully serving are Nancy Cole, Phil Cruz, Marcia and Patrick DeBrock, Floyd Higgins, Cherie Swetts and Chuck Wyatt. Typically each person serves two or three times per month. In addition to the regular Sunday Worship Services, there are several other services and events throughout the year that are streamed. If you are interested in getting involved speak with Floyd Higgins, Coordinator, or any of the other members. We can arrange for a “tour/demonstration” of our relatively simple system and training if you wish to join the “crew.”

## **Trinity Parish 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 23 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 2024 we provided the following:

**Meals:** 17 volunteers made 54 meals for 11 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. They made and delivered cookies twice this past year, April 7 and November 16. We had eight people baking each time (and not all the same people), lots of people helping to bag up the cookies, 4 – 6 people delivered the bags, many of which were driven to the recipient's home. Altogether, we delivered cookies to 40 people/families.

**Rides:** 6 volunteers have provided 22 rides for two parishioners and one non-parishioner for doctor visits. 6 volunteers are driving one parishioner (and sometimes two) to church each Sunday.

**Calls:** 6 volunteers have made 85 calls to 46 people. These calls have led to further support for these parishioners either through this team (i.e., meals, rides and prayers) or by Rev. Andrea.

**Prayers:**

Intercessory prayer team: 9 members have been praying for all those in the bulletin and another confidential list, total number of people is 60-70.

Emergency prayer team: 16 members have prayed immediately on 11 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 253 cards.

**Christian Yoga:** led by Erin Lutz, certified yoga instructor. 5-10 people attend the twice per month (2nd and 4th Tuesday, 7-8pm) sessions which are open to anyone. The classes run from September through May.

Anyone is welcome at any time to join the Trinity Parish Care Team. We meet twice during the year, in person, usually to share lunch on a Saturday and discuss future plans. The rest of our communication occurs via email. 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 have any questions or 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).

### **2024 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**

**Karen Wojtowicz**

*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 program continues to be a steadfast component of pastoral care for Trinity Parish since 2009!

Our current Stephen Leaders are: Judy Rowley, Teddy Jameson, Andrea Wyatt, Cindy Anderau and Ron Dukenski. The primary role of Stephen Leaders is to oversee the administration of Stephen Ministry by providing training, supervision and support for the Stephen Ministers and by developing ministry policies and procedures (with a special focus on ensuring the confidentiality of any persons receiving care giving services).

Our current Stephen Ministers (Care-Givers) are: Carol Bigman, Joe Bojnowski and Erin Lutz. Stephen Ministers provide the direct, completely confidential, one-on-one care giving to individuals seeking care (for the past two years, we have been able to offer this ministry to those outside of Trinity as well). Besides the one-on-one weekly meetings with their care receivers, the Stephen Ministers also meet monthly for on-going education and peer supervision to support their work.

In 2023, we began offering a 'Bereavement/Grief Support Group". These meetings occur twice monthly and have in attendance 8-10 people with a significant number coming from outside the parish. The meetings are facilitated by Reverend Andrea, Judy Rowley and Bob Gardner. We recently sent out a parish wide survey to assess what other sorts of support type groups might be needed. Once the survey information is evaluated, other groups may arise.

Our pastoral care to parishioners-in-mourning continues in the form of the series of "Grief Booklets" that we distribute to those who have lost a loved one.

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..

## **Mission & Outreach**

**Nancy Cole**

Outreach is at the heart of our Mission.

During 2024, Mission & Outreach participated in hands-on activities as well as disbursed funds for local and international needs.

During Easter and Christmas seasons, M&O nominates, with vestry approval, a special cause or organization for the Special Offering. We were able to contribute \_\$???? to *Flood relief in South Carolina*.

Dorothy Day Hospitality House - The Trinity team of volunteers continues to provide meals for those in need on the third Tuesday of the month. Our meal is prepared entirely by our team of 6-8 and we average 150+ meals each month. The Trinity team is dedicated and trained to serve efficient and nutritious meals in a cost effective way. We have seen increased for all the teams. To help supplement we plan to use more of the canned food available at no charge from Dorothy Day . They receive donations from CT Food Share and many other places.

Chapel on the Green - In June, 2024, Trinity Youth and several M&O parishioners went to New Haven to attend the outdoor service at Trinity on the Green and serve cold meals and sandwiches. This weekly service is always well attended and the meals appreciated by those in need in New Haven.

Food Rescue - We were able to participate in a Food Rescue program with Starbucks in Newtown and delivered food to the Jericho House and the CIFC in Danbury. We had over 20 volunteer participants who picked up and delivered. This worked well with our M&O objectives. Unfortunately, Starbucks Corporate decided to discontinue the program and we have not found a suitable replacement.

Laundry Love of Greater Danbury - As a member of the national non-profit Laundry Love, Laundry Love of Greater Danbury funds the washing/drying of clothes and bedding of low/no income families and individuals in Danbury. As a charter member of LLGD, Trinity has faithfully pledged \$1,200.00 annually for this mission. Trinity joins eight other faith communities in their pledging commitments. Besides pledges from founding organizations, LLGD relies on grants and individual donations for all of our income.

Each month LLGD hosts (2nd Wednesday of the month) an on-site event at White's Wash in Danbury. At this event we currently distribute about 80 cards and detergent sheets to individuals who bring their laundry. Additionally, we distribute approximately 220 cards to community partners who in turn give them to their clients. We are now working with 16 community partners. These cards may be used in a six week period.

There is no waste in LLGD. We only pay for the cards that are redeemed.

Currently we have a redemption rate of approximately 70 percent.

Because of the generosity of our founding members, grants and donations, we have been able to increase the value of each card to \$16.00 from \$13.00. We may increase the number of cards available for our on-site event and agencies soon. We also hope to expand our hours at the on-site event.

Mission & Outreach has four people who are active members of LLGD. Should you wish to Volunteer or donate, opportunities are available.

Little Pantry at Trinity. In our second year now, we continue to grow as we make available non-perishable items to the community in need. Trinity has been very generous with food contributions. Thirty parishioners actively participate in restocking and inventory, organizing donations and building maintenance. The donations have exceeded 800 items per month in the last 4 months and we often are in need of more items than available. Our goal for 2025 is to discover corporate donations of inventory or monetary donations. You may also donate via Vanco as well as grocery gift cards and cash.

Mission & Outreach will participate in fund-raising events in 2025 to fill in when needed.

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

- Association for Religious Communities - operating the 2 shelters in Danbury
- *Laundry Love*
- *Newtown Fund for Adopted Family* at Christmas
- Feeding Thanksgiving Family for WIN
- *Community Action Agency*- food pantry in Danbury
- *Newtown Fund Heating Fuel Assistance*
- Our Emergency and Relief budget went to the *Hurricane Helene relief through Episcopal Relief and Development and Oxford and Southbury flood relief*
- *Little Pantry at Trinity*

The M&O Commission includes: Nancy Cole, chair; Carol Bigman, Mark Benedict, Jeanne Benedict, Martha Dayton, Sharon Farrell, Kelly Rowan and David Erickson. Please contact one of us to be a part of this meaningful ministry.

### **2024 Communications Report**

***Kim Merrill***

Trinity's relationship with the Newtown Bee continues to be positive, and we appeared in the paper at least 33 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.

We have a solid presence on social media. On Facebook, we have 930 followers (up by 50 from last year), Instagram has 418 (up 17 from last year), and the enews is sent out to 437 people every week (down 25 from last year due to clearing up the bounce rate, with a 70% open rate, compared to an industry average of 40%).



## **Fellowship**

**Marcia DeBrock**

In 2024 as our church family grew, there are more parishioners venturing down to the Glover Room for coffee hour to enjoy fellowship and some treats. We would love to have more coffee hosts!

Sunday Breakfast is becoming more and more popular. The line has grown down the hallway outside of the Glover Room. It is so great to see young and old sitting together enjoying a meal. It's the best and cheapest breakfast in town!

On Palm Sunday our breakfast helped raise money for the Newtown Ecumenical Workcamp Servants (N.E.W.S.) who came in February to talk about their experiences. Our donation helped them with their workcamp trip to Biloxi, MS in July. A lovely thank you note from the group was in the May 9<sup>th</sup> E-news.

We continued to recognize our Mother's and Father's with special celebrations featuring strawberry shortcakes with breakfast for Mother's Day and Root Beer floats with grilled brats and burgers for Father's Day.

Cake season is always a favorite time for all. There are several celebrations in May involving cake and we thank those that help cut and serve.

In October we celebrated our gifts to the church and held a Stewardship celebration dinner with a Low Country Boil featuring plenty of snow crab legs, shrimp, chicken, potatoes, sausage and corn presented in our HUGE paella pans. It was a beautiful and tasty meal!

Because of your support for The Breakfast Sundays, we were able to purchase two used stainless steel prep tables and a food processor for the kitchen. These items will make prep work more enjoyable for all the volunteers.

In this New Year we welcome ideas for new food and fellowship adventures. With that said, it takes many volunteers to make these events happen and we are truly grateful for the many helping hands who step up and help with all the events that involve preparing food. They are truly special and we thank all of them for their devotion of time and talent.

And we thank all the parishioners who support this fellowship ministry by attending these events. We would not continue if not for your support and love.

As always, it warms our hearts, especially at breakfast when we see you all not only enjoying the food but truly enjoying being together and caring for one another.

The love of Christ certainly shines bright in the Glover Room!

## **ECCT Convention Report**

**Bennett & Kara Leake**

The 240th Annual ECCT Convention took place on October 25th and 26th at the brand new Bristol Event Center in Bristol, CT. Trinity Newtown delegates, Kara and Bennett Leake, accompanied Rev Andrea Wyatt on the two-day event. The event was led by Bishop Jeff Mello & Bishop Ahrens.

The goals of convention are to connect the various churches in Connecticut, to pray and to conduct business of the church. The theme of convention this year was "One Vine, Many Branches". During Bishop Mello's address, he stated, "If there is one vine in Jesus, our call is to be the many branches bound together in Christ's transformative love." We hope that this message can guide us as we begin the New Year.

In terms of the business of the weekend, there were 10 resolutions, 9 of which were passed. Each resolution was proposed, discussed, and debated. The resolutions included the budget, clergy compensation, and merging parishes. One resolution was recognizing May 5th as Red Dress Day in order to Remember Missing and Murdered Indigenous Woman and Girls.

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%)
- 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 Trees 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 39th 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 independent and incorporated and since 1988, 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 62 families this year.

Many of the ten 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. Combined, TDS teachers have over 100 years of professional childcare experience! Seven 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 has been nationally accredited since 1992 by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Accreditation is a five year cycle, and the most recent reaccreditation visit occurred in November 2023. 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 2024, the Property Commission explored and completed several projects which included the following:

- Replaced the Rectory roof
- Investigated installing air conditioning at the Rectory
- Initiated the process to sell the Rectory and Curate House and purchase a new Rectory
- Replaced roof south of the sanctuary next to the driveway
- Replaced gutter south of the sanctuary next to the driveway
- Repaired and waterproofed masonry next to the driveway
- Repaired air conditioning in Parish House
- Spring and Fall property clean-up
- Removed dying tree from the parking lot
- Stained Glass window evaluation and restoration project initiated
- Installation of Stations of the Cross
- Installation of Altar Handrails
- Renovated Upstairs Bathrooms
- Initiated evaluation of the Sanctuary and Parish House roofs

As the stewards of a large and aged collection of properties, we are responsible for managing the ongoing and extensive projects which arise throughout the year. With that in mind, a major goal of this past year has been and will continue to be addressing issues that will ensure our property's longevity while simultaneously looking to right-sizing our property holdings in an effort to be more sustainable both fiscally and in terms of volunteer hours.

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, Chris Gibson, Tom Swetts, Jim Funk, and Bob Gardner. Although not technically members of the Commission, I would like to offer my special thanks to the following members of our community; 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, Lori Rohrbacher for 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.

**Stewardship****Noel Bellesheim**

The Stewardship campaign again saw Trinity's giving increase for 2025.

2025 saw Trinity welcome 16 new pledges (as defined as not having pledged in 2024). This was an increase from 2024 of 6 new pledge units.

Pledging units increased to a total of 90 for 2025. This is up 5 additional pledges from 85 in 2024 – a 5.6% increase. Dollars are up 2.4% from 2024 (\$284,000).

As with most years we have had parishioners change of circumstances for the difference.

## **Finance Commission**

### **2024 Trinity Finance Commission Annual Report**

**Bennett Leake**

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 he 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.*

#### **2024 Overview**

2024 was a year of continued financial strength for Trinity. The draw on endowments decreased to 4% (vs. 4.5% in 2023), which will bolster the Church’s long-term fiscal health. Year-to-date pledges through November are at \$270,956, which is a \$8,649 decline vs the same period in 2023. Despite the decline, unpledged contributions from new parishioners remain strong at \$29,913, which far exceeds the budget through the same period. Trinity’s operating expenses are \$553,974 through November, which is a 2.7% increase through the same period last year. The increase in expenses is largely inflationary in nature and driven by rising utilities and clergy/staff costs. The net expense position of \$28,162 through November will be covered by draws on the Johnson fund of approximately \$27,120 in December 2024. This withdrawal is consistent with what was planned in the 2024 Budget.

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

The total balance for Trinity endowment funds increased to \$8,588,038 through September 2024, versus \$7,908,021 as the year-ending balance of 2023 (including the capital improvement reserve). The draw rate for 2024 was 4% on the Glover Trust, which will reduce to 3.5% in 2025, per the guidelines of the fund managers. In order to keep a balanced budget, the withdrawal rates on the Johnson and General funds will increase in 2025 that will net a blended rate of approximately 4% across the Johnson, General and Glover funds.

#### **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 4.0% withdrawals adjusted for cost-of-living adjustments but still maximizing portfolio safety.

**Trinity Episcopal Church**  
2025 Budget Summary

Description	2023 Actual	2024 Budget	2024 Thru Nov	2025 Budget
<b>Income</b>				
<b>PLEDGES / CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	320,039	300,000	270,956	316,948
<b>INVESTMENT INCOME</b>				
Glover Trust	278,579	245,345	227,669	211,657
Johnson Fund	-	11,002	-	42,000
General Fund	-	17,292	-	35,400
<i>Total Investments</i>	278,579	273,639	227,669	289,057
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>	17,224	53,400	27,187	15,600
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>615,841</b>	<b>627,039</b>	<b>525,812</b>	<b>621,605</b>
<b>Discipleship Expenses</b>				
<b>Worship</b>	44,557	42,870	35,164	41,024
ALTAR GUILD	8,284	7,000	6,912	6,704
MUSIC & CHOIR	33,395	33,870	26,510	32,720
WORSHIP	2,878	2,000	1,742	1,600
<b>Formation</b>	5,006	4,700	4,276	5,150
CHRISTIAN FORMATION	404	1,000	855	250
CHURCH SCHOOL	3,382	2,050	1,834	3,400
YOUTH	986	1,500	1,407	1,500
LIBRARY	235	150	180	-
<b>Parish Life</b>	802	3,595	1,803	3,320
MEMBERSHIP	205	700	189	800
FELLOWSHIP	324	1,725	1,165	1,600
PASTORAL CARE	105	610	257	360
STEPHEN MINISTRY	169	560	192	560
<b>Total Discipleship Exp</b>	50,365	51,165	41,243	49,494
<b>Apostleship Expenses</b>				
<b>Finance / Office</b>	102,870	100,419	89,997	106,190
COMMUNICATIONS/TOWER	9,198	7,724	7,036	7,500
STEWARDSHIP	292	200	378	750
VESTRY	868	1,250	754	-
OFFICE EXPENSE	33,353	32,245	27,308	34,277
COMMUNITY & WORLD MINISTR	59,157	59,000	54,522	63,663
<b>MISSION &amp; OUTREACH GRANTS</b>	21,798	18,700	14,014	9,800
<b>PROPERTY &amp; MAINTENANCE</b>	102,497	109,237	89,385	97,743
<b>Cleray / Staff Comop</b>	344,578	349,189	319,334	359,590
Clergy WAGES & BENEFIT	179,395	183,219	170,183	190,798
LAY STAFF WAGES & BENEFIT	165,184	165,970	149,152	168,792
<b>Total Apostleship Exp</b>	571,744	577,545	512,731	573,323
<b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>	<b>622,109</b>	<b>628,710</b>	<b>553,974</b>	<b>622,817</b>
<b>NET INCOME / (EXPENSE)</b>	<b>(6,268)</b>	<b>(1,671)</b>	<b>(28,162)</b>	<b>(1,212)</b>

