



MARCH 2024

TRINITY CONNECTION

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF TRINITY UMC



"Trinity UMC is a fellowship seeking to share the love and word of Jesus Christ with all."

WELCOME TO TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

If you are are a newcomer to the congregation please make yourself known to one of the clergy or to one of our ushers before worship.

Pastoral Team

Rev. Erica Munoz - Lead Pastor
Rev. Dr. Deb De Vos - Associate Pastor
Rev. Donald Gebhard - Pastor of Outreach and Worship
Ginny Thorp - Congregational Care Lay Minister

Church Office Hours

Monday - Thursday - 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Friday - Office closed

Worship Times

Saturday 5:00 pm - Worship in Trinity House

Sunday 9:15 am & 10:45 am

All Worship Services are livestreamed

From the Pastor

"The woods are lovely, dark and deep, the sunlit woods can be a place of rest and inspiration." - Robert Frost

This Lenten season we are journeying through the Dark Woods. For some, this is a time of reflection, for some a time of exploration, and for others a time of uncertainty. For all of us, it is a time to intentionally journey with God through the darkest parts of our lives with the hope of seeking the Light as we move toward the Resurrection. The darkness is meant to be a gift in our lives and if we truly allow ourselves to open up, to empty, and to experience God in this journey, it will be the greatest gift.

The season of Lent brings so many wonderful opportunities and ministries in the life of the Church. Throughout these next few weeks, you are invited to worship each week with us as we experience the Gifts of the Dark Wood, to participate in a Lenten small group, in our annual Lenten Day Apart (March 2), and our Lenten Day of Service (March 16) as we pack over 10,000 meals for Rise Against Hunger. We will also see wonderful connections in our community as we participate in the Hackettstown St. Patrick's Day parade and host our "Hoppy Easter" brunch and Egg Hunt. Our Holy Week services begin with a celebration on Palm Sunday (with Sam the donkey and a worship parade) and will continue to Holy Thursday when we gather for worship and the reenactment of the Last Supper and end on Good Friday as we experience the darkest day with our Crosswalk and Good Friday service. Holy Saturday Night Worship will help us turn our time of darkness into the light of Easter Morning as we celebrate the joy of the Resurrection with our 9:15 am and 11:00 am worship services. What a gift it will be to gather each week as we journey to cross. I pray that you will join us. "See" you in Worship!

Blessings,
Pastor Erica

temptation thursday serve pray good study empty
maundy cross supper lost wood easter
lent thunderstruck misfits
worship reflect getting dark renewal
uncertainty tomb friday
emptiness last meditate



Updates and Upcoming!



Fun for Seniors

Senior Social
Mark your calendars: March 21

Come and enjoy fellowship and activities with other seniors! Coffee and a snack will be provided. You are invited to bring a friend. Come and enjoy lots of time for conversation, a few games, and an occasional guest speaker. Meet in Trinity House on Thursday, March 21, 1:15 - 2:45 pm.



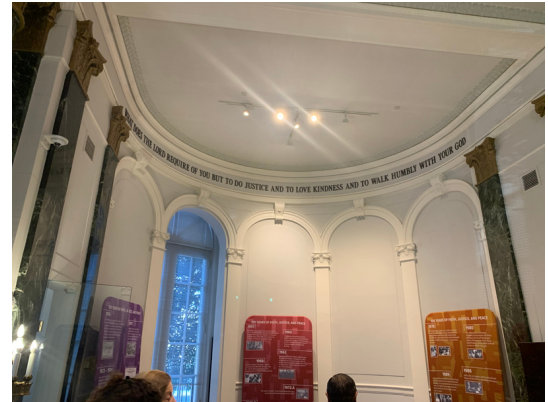
**Our Mission Trip to
ASP will be
7/13-21/2024**

Church and Society's Trip to D.C.

Seven people from our Church and Society went to D.C. last month as part of the Food Insecurity work they've done in partnership with the Sparta UMC and the Denville Community Church. All of the work done was funded by a grant we applied for from GNJ.

In D.C. we went to the United Methodist Building where we received training on how Church and Society advocates for those whose voices go unheard and the issues that are important to us as United Methodists. We learned about the racial wealth gap in this country and received training on how to communicate with our legislators in person and in writing. We had time with staffers of Sen. Menendez as well as Reps. Kean and Sherrill. We shared with them how we would like them to vote and how budget appropriations should focus on the common good.

It was an amazing experience which both educated and empowered us to do God's work in a different way understanding that what the Lord requires of us is *to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?* -Micah 6:8



Staying Connected



Youth & Emerging Adult Ministry Happenings

YOUTH MINISTRY DATES TO NOTE

MARCH 15-16
CONFIRMATION CLASS
TIME TRAVELER RETREAT
St. George's UMC | Philadelphia PA
Interested High School students may join us for the program on Saturday

MARCH 17
SUNDAY SOCIAL (Upper Room)
POTLUCK - Bring something GREEN
Hear about TUMC's Scholarship program and join us for some Bible Trivia!

MARCH 27
SPRING BREAK
NO Youth Gathering

Wednesday Gatherings
3/6 - Panera
3/13 - Food Pantry
3/20 - Thrift Shop

United Methodist Men

By Bill Blaskopf

Our 17th Annual hoagie sale was a success. We made and sold 180 hoagies. The profit from this sale and our other sales during this year will allow us to raise the amount of money available for the Torgersen Scholarship Fund. We would like to thank all who participated in our fundraising sales.

We will resume regular breakfasts on March 9th with NJ Author Paul Semendinger, who will speak about his book "The Least Among Them." "The Least Among Them", is about 29 baseball players who played in one Major League game in their career and that game was for the N.Y. Yankees. This topic is apropos as the 2024 baseball season starts on March 28th.

Looking ahead our April 13th breakfast will feature retired missionary Dick Dole, who will speak on the topic: "How I became a Missionary before I knew Jesus."

Always remember, UMM is not just for men. Among our goals is to provide: a sense of community, a meaningful presentation, and a fantastic breakfast.

Edible Blessings: New Small Group Offering!

Interested in fellowship, planning, and cooking with others and/or helping others when they need some loving Trinity support? Then, come to one - or all - of the Edible Blessings meetings as we expand and re-energize our Edible Blessings ministry. Our primary goal will be to prepare, cook, and freeze meals to have on hand and ready to deliver to people who need meals because of illness, surgery, or any number of other life upheavals. Along the way, we will share cooking and food storage tips (Thanks Chef Scott Savokinas!), recipes, and of course, cooking fun with one another.

Leaders: Sandi and Dennis Hoover

Dates: Sunday, April 21

Sunday, May 5

Sunday, June 9

(This is an ongoing small group. Future monthly dates to be determined.)

Time: 12:15 - 2:15 pm in Starr Hall/Kitchen

Haiti Update

After the frightening January attack on My Father's House Orphanage, those same kids are now happy and feeling safe. Their new temporary home is in Morne Rouge, a town very near the northern city of Cap Haitian. Okap, as it is called locally, is an original resort town that is considered the safest place in Haiti. Trinity raised \$5,000 through a special offering to put towards the deposit of land to build a new orphanage.

Time Traveler Confirmation Retreat

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH
United Methodist Historic Shrine
This is America's oldest Methodist church edifice, having been in continuous use since 1769. It was the seat of the first three conferences of American Methodism, the first church visited by many of the early British Methodist itinerants, and the first site of the Methodist Book Concern.

MARCH 15 - 16

GATHER 3/15 AT 4:30
(TRINITY PARKING LOT)

RETURN 3/16 AROUND 5:00PM
(TRINITY PARKING LOT)

Contact Rachel for details
973.713.2831 | rsavokinas@catchthespirit.org

Interested High School students can join us in Philly for Saturday's presentation

Breakfast at the River Star Diner

CALLING ALL 18-25 YEAR OLDS

SATURDAY, 3/30 AT 9:00AM
14 STATE ROUTE 57 | HACKETTSTOWN, NJ

RSVP TO RACHEL
973.713.2831

Staying Connected



Trinity's Friendship Circle

Since the COVID shutdown, Heath Village has discontinued the van to Trinity's Sunday worship services. However, Ginny & Fred Bormann and their committee of helpers have continued a monthly outreach to Heath Village residents. The Valentine's Party was held on Monday, February 5th, with 45 people attending.

Gerry D'Albis was at the keyboard while the game "Guess That Tune" was played. MaryLou Dauch & Sue Bernard won most of the prizes! What fun!

"Queen of the Chocolate Fountain" was our own Pastor Erica Munoz! Everyone enjoyed eating the various goodies in the flowing chocolate!

Dave Dingley read two lovely poems about feelings & love. Sandy Philhower read scripture. Fred Bormann shared the prayer.

It was a very nice day as love was celebrated!

The next meeting will be Monday, March 4th....an Irish Celebration!! Plan to come a little early if you would like to speak to Pastor Erica. She will welcome you warmly!

Small Group Ministry Team Planning Spring Small Groups

Some of the small groups we are working on for spring are *Seeing Gray in a Black and White World*, by Adam Hamilton, a Hiking group, an Intergenerational Fishing Group and Edible Blessings. If you have other ideas for a small group please notify someone on the Small Group Team. They are:

Glenn Ashton	Eileen Bozzuffi
Cindy Behler	Deb De Vos
Jerie Berkowitz	Arlene McCollum
Fran Blaskopf	Rita Merring
Maureen Boer	Pat Riegler



Trinity Scholarships Available

Applications for the 2024 Trinity United Methodist Church's student scholarships will be available starting March 1st. Students may request an application by contacting the church office, or by going to the Trinity website. All completed applications are due by Friday, May 3rd at noon.

There are 10 different scholarships available including ones for both beginning and continuing students. The description of each scholarship and its qualifications are included in the application package. Students are encouraged to apply for all the scholarships that they are qualified for. Last year 14 students were awarded scholarships, totaling over \$19,000 under this program. Several additional sources for scholarships for United Methodist students are: the UMC General Board of Higher Education and Ministry www.gbhem.org, The Greater NJ Annual Conference at www.gnjumc.org, and Centenary University at www.centenaryuniversity.edu

Other Ways to Stay Connected
with the United Methodist Church :

www.resourceumc.org

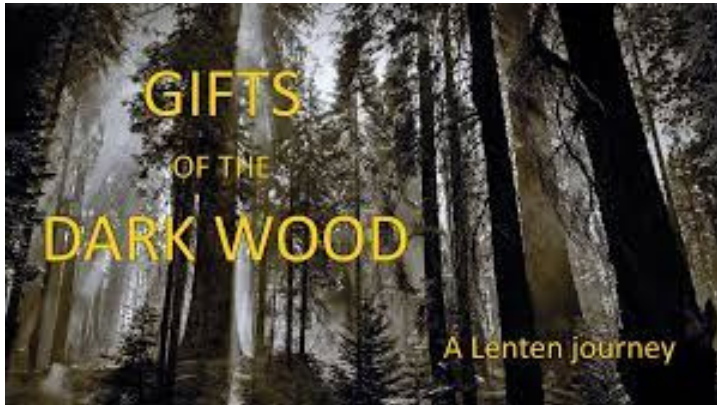
www.umc.org

And with our own
Greater New Jersey Annual Conference:

www.GNJUMC.org



Other News



Lent Continues at Trinity

Saturday, March 2nd ~ Lenten Day Apart at
Drakestown UMC 10:30 am-3:00 pm

Saturday, March 16th at 10:00 am ~ Lenten Day of
Service ~ Rise Against Hunger in Starr Hall

Thursday, March 28th at 7:00 pm Maundy Thursday
Service with Last Supper Reenactment

Friday, March 29th at 7:00 pm ~ Good Friday Service

Saturday, March 30th at 5:00 pm ~ Easter Saturday
Service in Trinity House and Livestreamed

Sunday, March 31st at 9:15 and 11:00 am EASTER
WORSHIP in the Sanctuary and Livestreamed

Pastor Deb to Begin Renewal Leave

Under Paragraph 350.3 of The United Methodist Book of Discipline (2016), "a clergy member may request a formational and spiritual growth leave of up to six months while continuing to hold an appointment in the local church. Such leaves are available to clergy members who have held full-time appointments for at least six years." Such a leave is defined as a time freed from normal duties in order to pursue spiritual and personal growth in the practice of ministry, and/or acquiring knowledge in related fields. Renewal leave is intended to prepare pastors to return to their pastoral appointments, empowered to continue their ministries.

Pastor Deb is in her ninth year of full-time ministry. She will be on renewal leave beginning April 1 and returning on May 13. For part of this time, she will be on a silent retreat with in-depth spiritual direction.

Pastor Deb has been empowering the ministry teams she works with to function and assert their agency. She is confident that they will continue to work on their goals and fulfill their objectives well in her absence. She preaches once a month which means within a six-week period, once or possibly twice, which can be covered by others.

During her leave, if any pastoral or ministry-related needs arise, please contact the church office or Pastor Erica.

Announcements



Our Sympathy to:

The family and friends of Colin Brodie
Rev. Dr. Duane Buddle and family on the death of his sister-in-law, Edna Buddle.



Celebration of the birth of Lilah Mei Dauch, daughter of Jonathan & Joycerine Dauch, granddaughter of Andy & Daisy Dauch, and great-granddaughter of Gene & MaryLou Dauch.

Lay Personnel Ministry Team Announcements:

Please join the Lay Personnel Ministry team in welcoming Robert (Bob) Sasena as our new Financial Secretary! Bob began his new position on February 15th. He comes to us with an impressive background in finance and technology, community service and a genuine willingness to support any place he is involved with. Bob will be working 15 hours per week and closely with Charlie Mule. If you happen to run into Bob, please give him a warm welcome.

The Lay Personnel Ministry Team had a Staff Appreciation Event in February. The congregation was invited to put notes of thanks into each staff member's "mailbox" in the foyer and at Trinity House. The response was overwhelming and I am sure our wonderful staff appreciated the love! Thanks to everyone for their participation!

Other News

TRINITY GARDEN - LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteering at the Trinity Garden offers numerous benefits, not only for the community but also for yourself. Here are some reasons why volunteering at the garden can be fulfilling:

Make a Positive Impact: By volunteering, you directly contribute to improving the community. Your efforts in cultivating the garden provide fresh produce to those in need through the Lord's Pantry, making a tangible difference in people's lives.

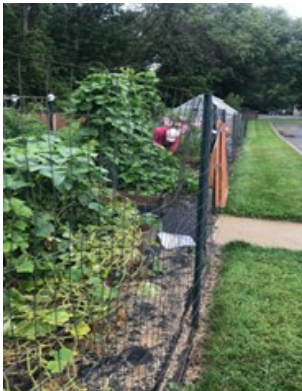
Build Connections: Volunteering brings people together from diverse backgrounds and experiences. You have the opportunity to meet new friends, build relationships, and strengthen the sense of community within Trinity Garden and beyond.

Learn New Skills: Whether you're an experienced gardener or a novice, volunteering allows you to develop and enhance various skills. From gardening techniques to teamwork and leadership, there's always something new to learn and explore.

Promote Health and Well-being: Spending time outdoors in a garden environment has been shown to have numerous health benefits, including reducing stress, increasing physical activity, and fostering a sense of well-being. Volunteering in the garden provides a rewarding way to prioritize your health while helping others.

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY

INTERESTED? EMAIL VIVIAN AT: RUTHORNES@GMAIL.COM



Midnight Run Update

On Saturday, February 3rd our mighty team of 17 volunteers for Midnight Run did a Breakfast Run to New York City. We met at Trinity at 6 am to prepare oatmeal, potatoes, egg sandwiches, and hot drinks to bring with us in our vehicle caravan. We had fruit, sweet treats, clothing and toiletries to share, as well, to help bring warmth and necessities to the wonderful people in the city. We gathered near St. Vartan Park to set up tables to distribute what we brought and we served 30 people that morning, sharing stories and love. The food nourished bodies and equally important (if not more so!) were the conversations that nourished our souls with everyone who came to partake. Our next run is on May 4th, and we hope those of you who are 18 years old and up will consider joining us for it; keep an eye out for the Just Say Yes to sign up!

A.S.K. is the name of Trinity's Prayer Team. The Team's name comes from Matthew 7:7-8 (NIV):

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you."

God is constantly working in and through prayer, so each A.S.K. member prays daily for your prayer requests. We also meet twice a month to pray together, to share new prayer needs, and to rejoice when prayer is answered. When requested, A.S.K. members will contact those who would like a time of personal prayer – where we can share God's peace, healing, comfort and encouragement.

To convey your prayer requests to the A.S.K. Team:

1. Fill out a blue prayer card at one of Trinity's worship services,
2. Indicate your prayer concern in the "comments" area if you're worshipping online,
3. Email your prayer request to kanzel@catchthespirit.org, or
4. Call the church office, 908-852-3020.

Please indicate if you want a minister or prayer team member to contact you.



Updates from the Congregational Care Ministry Team

We are changing up our **Easter Hope bags** this year – mainly because Christmas and Easter fall very close together. So, the Easter Hope Bags are in 2 parts. Part 1 will be sending out Easter cards to those on our Hope Bag list and including a Holy Week devotional. Part 2 will be delivering a spring bag in April – after Easter. We'll be needing some help with our 2 part Easter Hope "Bags" in writing some Easter notes and making some April deliveries.

Have you ever been told you are a good listener?
Do you have a desire to hear people's stories and provide encouragement?
Maybe you have incredible administrative skills and like to help organize systems.

If you think you may have any of these gifts, **consider becoming part of Trinity's Congregational Care Ministry Team as one of our Lay Visitors.** With a congregation of our size, we need laity to serve alongside our pastors and staff in making hospital/home visits and providing one-on-one support for those going through difficult issues (as well as joyous occasions).

This year, we are taking steps to re-energize our Lay Visitation Ministry using highly respected congregational care ministry material from Church of the Resurrection UMC in Kansas City called The Caring Congregation. If you'd like to hear more about The Caring Congregation, Congregational Care Ministers (CCMs) and what this ministry could look like at Trinity, come to our first step on this path of re-energizing Trinity's Lay Visitation Ministry – a light supper with conversation on Tuesday, March 5 at 6:30 pm in the Rotunda. Come to listen and to have your questions answered.