



APRIL 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 - in the Sanctuary  
All Worship Services are livestreamed

# From the Pastor

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Dear Trinity United Methodist Church Family,

As we journey through these beginning weeks of spring, I am filled with a sense of renewal and hope. The Easter season has passed, but its message continues to resonate deeply within our hearts. Just as the earth around us bursts forth with new life, we too are experiencing growth and transformation in our spiritual journey.

In this season of growth, I encourage each of you to take a moment to reflect on where you are experiencing growth in your life. Perhaps you have noticed new buds of joy blossoming in your relationships, or maybe you have encountered moments of spiritual awakening that have deepened your faith. These are the green spots in our lives – signs of growth and vitality that remind us of God's faithfulness and love.

However, along with growth comes the need for pruning. Just as a gardener carefully tends to their plants, removing dead branches and shaping growth, so too must we engage in spiritual pruning. Take a moment to discern what areas of your life may need pruning – whether it's unhealthy habits, negative thought patterns, or distractions that hinder your spiritual growth. Allow God to guide you in this process, trusting that through pruning, new growth can emerge.

As we embrace this back-to-growing season, let us draw inspiration from the words of the apostle Paul in Philippians 3:13-14: "Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

May we, like Paul, press on toward the goal of spiritual growth, leaving behind the past and eagerly reaching forward to the new life that God has in store for us. Let us continue to nurture the green spots in our lives while bravely embracing the pruning process, knowing that God is with us every step of the way!

In Christ's love and grace,

*Pastor Don*



# Updates and Upcoming!

## COFFEE FELLOWSHIP AFTER 10:45 Worship

The Missions Ministry Team will be sponsoring coffee fellowship with delicious homemade treats in Starr Hall after the 10:45 worship on Sunday, April 21st! Come and join everyone and get to know who is on the Missions Ministry Team while you enjoy a warm cup of coffee or tea and a sweet treat!

Look for information as to which team is sponsoring the coffee fellowship in May!!!



## Fun for Seniors Senior Social

Mark your calendars: April 18

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 and welcome our guest speaker, Detective Richard McQuade of the Warren County Sheriff's Department. Detective McQuade will be speaking about Scams and Identity Theft. Meet in Trinity House on Thursday, April 18, 1:15 - 2:45 p.m.

# #BeUMC

New Sermon Series starting April 13-14

What makes you proud to #BeUMC? #BeUMC honors the core values that connect the people of The United Methodist Church (The UMC). We are reclaiming our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

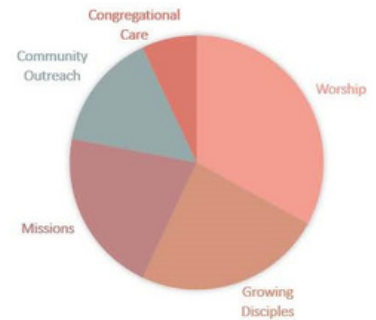
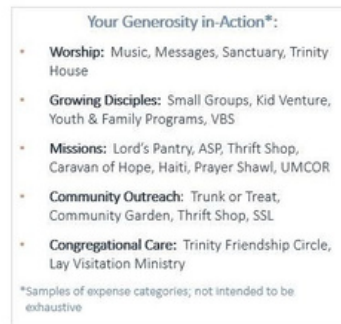
The UMC is founded on a Wesleyan theology of grace, anchored in Scripture, and based in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the continuing movement of the Holy Spirit.

#BeUMC is built upon powerful stories of United Methodists living their faith. We celebrate what draws us to The UMC, the revival we find there, and what we aspire to be.

## Finance Ministry Team Update

The kind generosity of many enabled Trinity to begin 2024 in a much stronger financial position than 2023. Our church and its ministries are fueled through your pledges, donations, and the profits from the Trinity Thrift Shop. 160 Individuals and Families made promises this year by pledging a portion of their income to Trinity. Praise be to God for your love and faithfulness!

Trinity's budget this year is \$1.22M. If you're wondering how these funds are enabling our congregation to be the hands and feet of Jesus, here's a brief snapshot:



The Finance Ministry Team meets regularly to review income and expenditures. We work hard to ensure that every dollar delivers the maximum impact to further the Kingdom of God. So far this year, we are controlling spending and remaining within our expense budget. Year-to-date revenues are a bit behind budget; if you are behind in your pledge, we encourage you to catch up.

If you ever have any questions regarding Trinity's Finances, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Finance Ministry Team.

## PASTA DINNER & SILENT AUCTION FUNDRAISER

PLEASE HELP SUPPORT TRINITY'S ASP MISSION TRIP  
TO CENTRAL APPALACHIA THIS SUMMER

Bringing teens and adults to repair homes for low-income families for a week

Saturday, April 27, 2024 - 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

All You-Can-Eat Buffet includes:  
Several Pastas including gluten free  
Home-made sauces, fresh salad, bread & deserts



Ticket prices:  
Adults \$15  
Kids 6-10 yrs. \$ 8  
Children under 6 are FREE!



Tickets are available from:  
The church office, after services,  
ASP volunteers or at the door

Trinity United Methodist Church  
213 Main Street, Hackettstown, NJ  
(908)852-3020

**ASP**  
**Appalachia**  
SERVICE PROJECT<sup>SM</sup>



# Staying Connected



We live in a beautiful part of God's creation - let's go explore it! Each hike will be a stand-alone experience - join us for one hike or for all of them! Each hike will include a devotion, exploring what the Bible has to say about God's creation and what we can learn from it. Led by Jen Caldwell. Use Just Say Yes to signup.

**Sunday, April 7 (rain date Saturday, April 13), 11:30am:** Allamuchy Mountain State Park, Sussex Branch Rail Trail, from Waterloo Road to Iron Mine Trail and back, approximately 2.5 miles. This out and back trail is a wide, flat trail with little to no elevation, appropriate for most ages/abilities. *Trail highlights: Jefferson Lake, mountain stream paralleling part of the trail.*

For other dates and details see the link in the Friday email or the flyer in the foyers.

## Edible Blessings

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 have need of 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. Led by Sandi and Dennis Hoover once a month on Sundays in the kitchen from 12:15 - 2:15pm. Current dates are April 21, May 5, and June 9.

## Seeing Gray in a World of Black and White by Adam Hamilton

Led by Pastor Deb for 6 weeks starting May 16 from 7pm-8:30 in Room 104. Cost of the book is \$6

## Just Breathe - Christian Yoga

Led by Rev. Laura Steele on June 15 from 10am to 1pm  
More details to follow

## Small Group Ministry Updates

This past month has been busy with all of our Lenten Activities including 6 Lenten small group studies averaging 70 people each week.

The Lenten Day Apart was March 2nd with 7 folks going apart for a quiet day of prayer and reflection.

The Lenten Day of Service on March 16th was a huge success with 74 people serving to provide over 10,000 meals for *Rise Against Hunger*. We did it in 1 hour and 20 minutes. It was also a lot of fun.

The April movie "*If Beale Street Could Talk*" will be offered on Sunday April 14th at 12:30 in the rotunda. Join us and feel free to bring your lunch!



## United Methodist Men

By Bill Blaskopf

Thirty seven people attended our March 9th with NJ Author Paul Semendinger, who spoke about his book "The Least Among Them." Paul was an incredibly vibrant speaker who shared so much with us. He held everyone's attention. We have already booked him for our breakfast next March 8th, 2025.

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." Dick is a Presbyterian minister who spent 40 years in Brazil.

We have again partnered with Donaldson's Nursery to sell \$20 vouchers. This is our second year of partnering with them on this. We were able to increase the amount of the Torgersen Scholarship this year because of the extra monies this raised. Please plan on buying our vouchers so that you may purchase your flowers and vegetables from Donaldson's while supporting the UMM.

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.

## United Women in Faith

By Pat Riegler

The Trinity United Women in Faith are in the process of gauging volunteer interest for creating an After School Program for the local community. This is in response to information that was gathered from families who participated in last summer's summer backpack program.

Initially the program will only be offered to those families, the majority of whom have children in grades 2 - 5. The After School Program would take place the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 3:30- 5pm in Starr Hall. The initial rollout would include supervised physical education type games, as well as crafts.

If the pilot program takes off, then we would expand in the fall to include homework assistance and additional organized activities such as music and dance. If you love working with children and think this would be an area where you could lend a hand, please contact Trisha Massa, Pat Riegler or Sandi Hoover.

## Spring Service of Prayer and Communion

Wednesday, April 24, 7:00 p.m. in the Rotunda

We invite you to join us as we focus on Ask, Seek, and Knock, Searching for God, in this comforting service of spring renewal. We will be celebrating with communion, prayer, and music. Join us as we gather in the Rotunda for this uplifting time of peace and serenity. We pray this service will be a spiritual gift for you. Everyone is invited to attend.

# Staying Connected



## Trinity's Friendship Circle

On Monday, March 4th, Trinity Friendship Circle held its annual "Irish Celebration" at nearby Heath Village. "Uncle Claude", wearing his kilt and playing his guitar, entertained us with songs and stories of Ireland. Pastor Erica was there to chat with all the attendees, and she told us some of her life journey that eventually brought her to Trinity UMC. Fred Bormann had everyone laughing with his "5 minutes of funnies"! There was lots of conversation and laughter...and Irish soda bread!



## Breakfast Run Opportunity

The next Breakfast Run into NYC will be on Saturday May 4th. We will meet at Trinity to prepare the food at 6:00 A.M. We will carpool into NYC and we are usually back in Hackettstown by 1:00 at the very latest. If you have never been and have any questions, feel free to call me Tedi Granke at 908-672-0240 and she will be happy to speak to you!

**Other Ways to Stay Connected  
with the United Methodist Church :**

[www.resourceumc.org](http://www.resourceumc.org)

[www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org)

**And with our own  
Greater New Jersey Annual Conference:**

[www.GNJUMC.org](http://www.GNJUMC.org)

## 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.

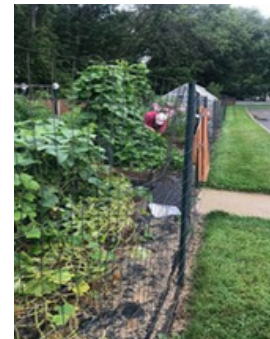
**Build Connections:** Volunteering brings people together from diverse backgrounds and experiences. You have the opportunity to meet new friends, build relationships, and strengthen the sense of community within Trinity Garden and beyond.

**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](mailto:RUTHORNES@GMAIL.COM)**



## United Methodist Church General Conference To be held from **April 23-May 3, 2024** in Charlotte, NC

<https://www.resourceumc.org/en/churchwide/general-conference-2020>

To learn about what the General Conference is click [here](#).

## Greater New Jersey Annual Conference to be held from **May 19-21, 2024** in the Wildwood Convention Center in Wildwood, NJ.



# Other News

## Meet Your Lay Leaders

Hello from your two Lay Leaders!

Lay Leaders function as the primary representatives and role models of Christian discipleship and faith lived out in the church and in daily life. Lay leaders connect the people of the church and the leadership of the church and the local community. We would love to get to know you, our congregation & church family, more deeply and look forward to hearing from you!

We would like to briefly introduce ourselves:

**Arlene McCollum** – I've been a member of Trinity for about 25 years. I taught Sunday school and confirmation and have served on many ministry teams-Pastor Parish relations, lay personnel, new members., student ministry, small group ministry and have sung in the choir.



**Jennifer Forestiere** - I've been a member, along with my husband John, for almost 14 years. We have a 9 year old daughter, Sophie, who you may also see running around like Trinity is our home ... because it is! In addition to serving as your Lay Leader, I have been involved in teaching Sunday School (KidVenture) for 2nd and 6th grades, leading Confirmation, playing handbells, leading various small groups and reading scripture or finding other ways to participate in the services.



Thank you to everyone who gave to our **Communion Offering** in March to support the United Methodist Committee on Relief (**UMCOR**). Trinity UMC collected \$1400 to support this wonderful ministry! Thank you!

Many, many, many thanks!!!! In conjunction with the Prayer Shawl Ministry, the **Caring Hands to Hearts Mission** began providing warm scarves, hats, gloves and mittens to those in our community in December of 2023. As this undertaking drew to a close in March, our church has provided over 370 pieces of winter wear to those in need.

The mission will begin again in the fall, and we will still be very happy to accept any winter items that some busy hands might be working on at present and beyond. Many thanks to all the caring hands who have supported this community outreach mission. It could not have been a success without you.

## Announcements



### Our Sympathy to:

**Lois Slattery and family** on the death of her brother, Charles Werdles



### Celebration of the birth of

Dane Charles Deforge Thomas, son of Jena Desiderio Thomas and Logan Thomas, grandson of Tammie & Gary Philhower, great grandson of Sharon and Charlie Townsend

Nyla Thorp Kish, daughter of Taylor Thorp and Ryan Kish, granddaughter of Tom and Ginny Thorp.



### Celebration of baptism of

Emiliana Nieves Licwinko, daughter of Joseph & Kathryn Licwinko

## 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.