

# Annual Report 2023

with documents for the  
Annual Parish Meeting  
January 28, 2024



Growing in love of God and neighbor

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## *ANNUAL MEETING MATERIAL*

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### **AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Opening Prayer
3. Appointment of the Clerk and Parliamentarian
4. Minutes of the previous Annual Meeting
5. Elections
  - a. Qualifications
  - b. Report of the Nominating Committee
  - c. Further Nominations
  - d. Polls open for 30 minutes
6. Treasurer's Report for 2023
7. Presentation of Approved 2024 Budget
8. Results of Election
9. General Organization and Committee Reports
10. Announcements and Thanks
11. Necrology
12. Hymn
13. Benediction
14. Adjournment

# MINUTES OF THE 2023 ANNUAL MEETING

January 29, 2023

**Call to Order:** The Rev. Emily Mellott called the 185th annual meeting to order at 11:30 a.m.

**Opening Prayer:** Mother Emily opened the meeting with a prayer.

**Appointment of the Clerk and Parliamentarian:** Abigail Merk was appointed Clerk, and Lori Rapuano was appointed Parliamentarian.

**Minutes of the previous Annual Meeting:** A motion was made by Gayle Celentano, seconded by Stella Horton and passed unanimously by voice vote to approve the minutes of the 2022 Annual Parish Meeting.

## **Elections:**

- 1) **Qualifications:** A Vestry person must be a communicant in good standing of Trinity Church 18 years of age or older; a regular attendee during the past year and currently a giver of record; a person who accepts the principle of tithing and agrees to work towards it.
- 2) **Report of the Nominating Committee:** *Please refer to pages 8-12 of the Annual Report for biographies of Candidates.*
  - a) **Vestry and Warden Nominees:** Nancy Matthews for a new two-year term as Warden; David Douglass, Joe McDonnell, and David Shaw for three-year Vestry terms.
  - b) **Nominees for Delegates to the Diocesan Convention, a one year term, are:** Abigail Merk, Kristina Van Name, and Lisa Yeh. For Alternate Delegates to the Diocesan Convention: Bob Litsinger and Bob Winzler.
- 3) As there were no further nominations, Carolyn Weeks made a motion to elect the slate of officers as presented, at the end of the state-required 30 minutes the ballot must remain open. Sally Campolucci seconded this motion. The motion was passed unanimously with no abstentions.
- 4) Polls remained open for 30 minutes.

**Treasurer's Report for 2022:** *Please refer to page 46 of the Annual Report.*

In summary, Scott Hart reported that pledges in 2022 were \$44k under budget, totaling to \$415,457 as opposed to the budgeted amount of \$460,000. This reflects a 10% drop in pledge income for the 2022 year. Expenses in 2022 remained under budget, even with hiring a new sexton. While we planned to hire a part-time deacon, this never happened thus saving us about \$28k in expenses. Some of the gap in pledges for 2022 was offset by an increase of giving at the plate and by not hiring a deacon. With that said, we had increased energy expenses from August through November as our air-conditioning and heating systems needed work; we spent about \$16k in repairs. In order to make up for the gap between income and expenses during 2022, we had to take \$212,912 from the endowment in addition to the budgeted \$150k. The total withdrawal from the endowment in 2022 was just under \$363k.

Carolyn Weeks asked to clarify if we are *taking* or *borrowing* from the endowment, to which Scott clarified that we are *taking* from the endowment. Stella commented that we need to make a plan to address what we can see coming in 2024, given the aforementioned financial concerns. Nancy Matthews advised she will explain in the next agenda item. Stella then asked if there is a percentage of parishioners who give \$0 or less than \$100 annually to Trinity. Emily answered yes there is; and the people who give \$0 are technically not members of the congregation. Emily explained further that Trinity does not track people who attend worship but do not donate; Trinity *does* track what *members* give. As a follow up question to this, Stella asked if we are approaching the people who come to worship with us but don't donate, to which Mother Emily answered "Yes, we do that every year."

Per Geri Trost's statistics on pledges, Scott stated that \$10k was lost due to people who no longer come to Trinity. Another \$14k was lost due to people who have not met their pledge. After this, Emily reminded us all that we *can* in fact change our pledge/financial commitment to Trinity; but it's necessary to communicate this with the church office so our budget can be adjusted if necessary..

David Rapuano asked if there was a way we could remind people that we miss them and help them remember that this is very much a community—that "we are all waiting to see them" and that they are missed. Emily supported this by saying there is a lot of reason to help people reconnect to Trinity. Michael Bathke commented that Trinity has ample value, but may not be letting everyone know what that means: How can we reach the people who come to church only once or twice a year? Following this question, Kristina Van Name asked if we reach out to people who have left Trinity and ever learn why they left. Emily answered this with the following information: Of the people we know who have left, roughly 25% of them give us reasons as to why they left; another 25% do not tell us when they left; and the other 50% leave so slowly that it's impossible to know when they left.

Carolyn commented that our youth programs have much to offer. If we get more children involved with our programs, we will by nature bring in more parents and families (hence, more people).

A question was raised about the Diocesan Assessment: Has the Diocese of NJ discussed adjusting the assessment fee? Nancy answered this by sharing that, no, it has not. However, Trinity is not paying the full assessment again in 2023. The Vestry is looking at writing an appeal to have some of the fee waived or reduced for the future.

**Presentation of Approved 2023 Budget:** *Please refer to pages 43-46 of the Annual Report.*

Nancy presented an overview of the 2023 Budget which was approved by the Vestry in December 2022, as well as the plans we have to improve Trinity's financial well-being in the coming years. The budget gap in 2023 is projected to be \$233k. Much of this is a result of pledges going down and the congregation growing smaller since before the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2019 we had 188 pledge units; in 2023, this number fell to 122. Additionally, expenses are going up which also contribute to a wider budget gap. This gap has had to be filled by additional withdrawals from the endowment.

The Vestry incorporated a “stretch goal” of \$25k in income from fundraisers and/or other new sources of income to help mitigate the income gap. It isn’t going to fix our financial problems in a short period of time, but it will be helpful.

The 2023 Budget accounts for a 4.6% increase in expenses,  $\frac{2}{3}$  of which are related to staff (up by \$42k from 2019). There is no increase in property-related expenses this year. The contribution to the diocese is 11% of our expenses.

The Vestry and Wardens discussed at length with Mother Emily and Mother Angie what all of this means. What we’ve done in the past is take funds from the endowment to help close the gap between income and expenses. If we were to do this in 2023 as we’ve done in years past, we’d have to take 13% from the endowment which is simply not sustainable. This would total to a withdrawal over \$383k. (A \$150k budgeted withdrawal each year is generally considered “sustainable”, although this number is up for debate.) If we took 13% from the endowment for ten years, we would have used all of our endowment by the end of the ten year period.

In order to help eliminate the \$233k gap between income and expenses in 2023, we are faced with challenges to: 1) generate more income through increased pledges and other sources; and 2) consider if we can continue to afford the full range of programming and staff we have.

Stella asked if the property expenses have previously included Capital Campaign improvements. Nancy answered no. Following up to her original question, Stella asked if the \$118k budgeted for the property in 2023 includes any Capital Campaign improvements, to which Nancy stated there are some small capital improvements budgeted which were outside the scope of the campaign. However, most of the \$118k is budgeted for heating, cooling, and building maintenance.

With regard to generating more income, the Vestry will organize work groups of the following types to help Trinity close the income/expense gap:

1. Pledge and donation income
2. Fundraisers
3. Building use
4. Preschool

Note that the Vestry decided not to make a hurried decision about reducing expenses in 2023 at the time the budget was approved in December 2022.

The Vestry needs the entire congregation to be a part of the effort to close this \$233k gap. Stella asked what will be required of a person in an income work group? Nancy answered that depending on the group, the work will vary but there will be more communication with outside people than anything else. Each group will have three to five people on it. The groups have free reign and the ability to be creative. This is a place that everyone can get involved - it is imperative that, when you are asked to help with something, that you help out. Dave Shaw advised that each group will have one of two additional people on it who are Vestry members. Christine Norris asked how we can determine what to charge for building use. Nancy stated that whatever we charge must cover the cost AND make us a profit. This is going to look different for each activity. Carolyn suggested using the digital tool RallyUp and that she will gladly be on the fundraising committee.

**Results of Election:** The 30 minute waiting period having passed, those present from the congregation voted to elect the slate of officers as presented (Warden, Vestry members, Delegates to the Diocesan Convention, and Alternate Delegates to the Diocesan Convention) unanimously with no abstentions. During this time Mother Emily also thanked the outgoing Vestry members (Chris Norris, Audrey Henry, and Amy Paglione) as well as the outgoing Chancellor (Lori Rapuano).

**General Organization and Committee Reports:** John Bradley moved to accept the reports by title. Jane Shaw seconded this motion. The meeting voted to accept the reports by title unanimously with no abstentions.

### **Announcements and Thanks**

**Necrology:** Mother Emily read the names of those who have passed away in the last year and led the meeting in prayer.

**Hymn:** Those present from the congregation sang the closing hymn *Ein feste Burg* with Vernon Williams on the piano.

**Benediction:** Mother Emily gave the benediction.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned unanimously at 1:34 p.m.

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## **CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION**

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### **WARDEN: 1-YEAR TERM**

#### **Jeff Wojcik**

Susan and I moved from Audubon, Pa to Medford NJ back in 2014 to be close to one of our children who recently married and now lives in Medford as well. We first selected Trinity because of the beautiful building but we continue to be here for the ministry & people that are part the community of the church. Both Susan and I like being active and have joined various activities within the Church. Susan sings in the Choir while I have volunteered for various roles during the church services; usher, chalice bearer and doing several outreach programs. I have always felt I wanted to get more involved and to give back on all the good that has come my way.

In May 2019, I was “Received” into the Episcopal church and was later asked to help in the Youth program by being one of the youth leaders. In 2020, I decided to retire from my professional career which was a consulting role for a small firm that helped companies be more efficient and effective in how they run. My organizational and process skills have served me well during my life.

I continued with other volunteer opportunities (Tech Guild, Growing Young Team, Vestry Member) and looked for ways to help Trinity continue to grow as a strong community with God. I was honored to be asked to take on the role of Warden and look



forward to supporting Mother Emily and Trinity as it continues to change and grow in these challenging times.

On a personal side, my style is to remain active and work on areas that I now have time to address. I am an avid golfer and pickleball player, anything that keeps me moving, and with six grandchildren that will not be hard to do.

Thank You

### **VESTRY: 3-YEAR TERM**

#### **Julie Bathke**

I've been a Trinity "regular" since 2015, although my husband Michael and I have been members of the church since 2000 when a corporate move brought us to Marlton. We've moved a lot, from my native Texas to New York, Michigan, North Dakota (really?), and now here. We've been active in many churches - - Presbyterian and Episcopalian; large and small, growing, and barely hanging on. It gives you perspective.

In "real life" I was a middle and high school English teacher for forty-five years. My formal educational background is a B.A. in Drama from Trinity University and a M.A. in English from The University of Texas at San Antonio. My real world education was seven years teaching in a barrio school in San Antonio early in my career.

My contributions to Trinity all center around education. I got involved first through the Renewal Works program. That led me to lead a rather intense (I'm told) adult Bible study for three years. I also participated in the Sacred Ground Study. In addition, I serve as a lay reader.

Away from Trinity, I've been involved with the Diocese of New Jersey School for Ministry both as a student and an instructor. I also serve on the school's advisory board.

I've never served on a vestry. I have much to learn and I am grateful to the Trinity community for giving me the opportunity.

#### **Sandi Rapp**

Sandi Rapp resides in Mount Laurel with her husband Rick, and daughter Madelyne (Maddie). They have been attending Trinity since the Christmas Service of 2017. Sandi was born and baptized into a Catholic family but was seeking a different spiritual journey for her daughter. After researching and visiting several churches, Sandi decided that Trinity "felt right". Ever since their initial meeting with Mother Emily, they have been active members (other than a COVID-gap) of Trinity. Her daughter was both baptized and received her first communion at Trinity. Prior to settling down in South Jersey, Sandi moved around quite a bit, both as the child of a young career-minded mom and then later for her own career. Sandi graduated from THE Ohio State University and is still an avid Buckeye fan. In her professional life, Sandi is currently the President of PennFleet Corporation. She has spent the past 20 years in executive leadership roles focused on

operations management, finance and workplace culture. Sandi is honored to have the opportunity to serve on Trinity's Vestry.

### **Jen Shappell**

I'm originally from Toms River, NJ and have lived in Moorestown with my husband, Lance, and family since 2014. Before becoming members of Trinity in 2016, we attended St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Chestnut Hill (Philadelphia). Our family has enjoyed the warm and welcoming environment of Trinity Church ever since. Our three children; Alexandra (10), Brinley (8), and Andrew (4) enjoy their involvement in church activities such as choir and Sunday school. I hold a bachelor's degree from Rowan University and a master's degree from Monmouth University. I've worked as a public school elementary teacher for 14 years. Since 2020, I have been a stay at home parent. In my spare time, I enjoy spending time with my family, being outdoors, and reading historical fiction. Currently, I am teaching Sunday school to the 2nd and 3rd graders and look forward to serving on Trinity's Vestry.

## **DIOCESAN DEPUTY – 1-YEAR TERM**

### **Bob Litsinger**

Bob is a graduate of the Swanee Education for Ministry program and has provided leadership in four previous parishes. When Bob and Sandie moved to New Jersey in 2008, they found a church home at Trinity. Sandie and Bob were both very active at Trinity the first few years, but Sandie's health limited and eventually prevent participation. Bob was glad to return to active participation at the end of 2017.

Since returning Bob has been a Diocesan Representative, Sunday School teacher, a Discipleship for Episcopalians group coach, active in the RenewalWorks process, and has filled a short-term vestry role, and serves on the God's Diversity Committee. He served as liaison to the vestry of St. John's Maple Shade on behalf of Trinity and the Diocese, and he has completed study at the New Jersey School for Ministry. He is active in worship serving as a chalice bearer, lay reader and as part of the tech guild. He continues to provide a weekly Evening Prayer service for Trinity plus now does Evening Prayer Zoom services sponsored by the New Jersey School for Ministry.

Prior to his retirement, he worked as a database developer and has prior experience in administration in healthcare and legal firms. Family life, cycling, yoga, weight training, jogging, travel and visiting with friends rounds out current activity..

### **Emily Tinkham Provine**

Emily Tinkham Provine is a cradle Episcopalian who joined Trinity in Fall 2022, after a move to Moorestown. In the past year and a half Emily has spent time exploring which opportunities here at church can be both realistic and enthusiastic commitments for them. They have made breakfast at St. Paul's church in Camden, helped with the Blueberry Festival, Holiday Market, and Christmas caroling events, lectored at the Easter Vigil, and most recently joined the alto section in the Trinity Choir. They have also enjoyed

building connections within the church and growing their lifelong relationship with God and faith.

Emily's favorite Eucharistic Prayer is C, and their favorite hymn is LEVAS 111 (Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing). Outside of church, they dabble in several hobbies, including reading, baking, figure skating, violin, and martial arts.

### **Kristina Van Name**

Kristina Van Name has been a member of Trinity for over twenty years. Both her children, Connor and Kaylee, have been an active part of Trinity since their birth. Kristina has served as a deputy for the church three times in the past. She was a faithful member of the Trinity Choir before the pandemic and very much enjoyed singing with them this Christmas Eve. Presently on Sunday mornings, she is facilitating 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders in exploring God, Jesus, our church, and their own beliefs. She is also a lay reader. Each week, she looks forward to Monday Basic Bible Study in guiding and learning with the group. This fall, she participated in the book study - "Growing Young: 6 Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church," and is a member of the Trinity Growing Young cohort which hopes to identify and work with our strengths and find and create opportunities to grow. Last year, Kristina led Parish Committee on Ministry for Abigail Merk. The PCOM's role is to walk alongside someone who is journeying toward ordination, and is the Church's presence in listening and defining what that call may be. She also serves as the chair of the Trinity Preschool Board, where both her children attended preschool from the 2.5-year-old program through PreK.

### **Alternate Diocesan Deputies – 1 Year Term:**

Bob Winzler

Nancy Matthews

## *BUDGET*

### BUDGET AND ACTUALS REPORT

	2024 <u>BUDGET</u>	2023 <u>ACTUAL</u>	2023 <u>BUDGET</u>	2022 <u>ACTUAL</u>
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>				
Pledges	\$ 425,000	\$ 413,080	\$ 410,000	\$ 415,457
Plate	55,000	76,367	54,000	58,044
Building Use	6,000	7,600	7,000	7,510
Christmas/Easter	8,000	8,854	8,000	6,987
Preschool Building Use	18,000	15,000	15,000	12,000
Outreach Income	-	11,271	-	9,831
Budgeted Distribution from Endowment	182,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
Special Offerings	-	6,870	-	10,078
Other Income	32,000	23,848	36,500	10,900
Total Income	<u>726,000</u>	<u>712,890</u>	<u>680,500</u>	<u>680,807</u>
<b><u>EXPENSE</u></b>				
Worship	2,750	2,303	2,750	1,852
Music	31,262	30,321	31,262	29,969
Education and Spiritual Development	6,500	3,265	6,500	1,529
Outreach	-	11,271	-	9,831
Stewardship/Evangelism/Parish Life	1,500	915	4,000	413
Youth	2,000	1,147	4,000	1,966
Administration	45,525	36,696	33,400	34,812
Insurance	47,500	54,106	45,500	42,859
Utilities	30,000	34,018	37,800	41,019
Building/Equipment Maintenance	13,300	16,765	13,300	13,309
All Other Property	34,500	27,457	21,600	25,741
Capital Improvements*	-	-	5,000	689
Diocesan Assessment	112,200	102,605	102,500	101,625
Salaries/Benefits/New Employee Expenses	450,794	595,291	605,996	578,027
Special Offerings Transmittal	-	6,870	-	10,078
Total Expenses	<u>777,831</u>	<u>923,030</u>	<u>913,608</u>	<u>893,719</u>
Net Loss before additional funding	(51,831)	(210,140)	(233,108)	(212,912)
Add'l Funding from Endowment for Operations	51,831	210,140	233,108	212,912
Net Profit (Loss)	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>
Capital Improvements*	\$ 22,643	\$ 104,822		

\*reporting change in 2024

## 2024 VESTRY BUDGET REPORT

### Summary:

**The vestry has successfully reduced the budget to the point where expenses are expected to be in line with income by 2025.** The vestry concluded that “sustainably balanced” should be defined as withdrawing no more than 6% of the endowment funds to cover operating expenses each year. This amount is an income line identified as “Budgeted income from endowment”, set at \$182,000 in 2024. Ideally Trinity would draw less than this amount for operations, recognizing that unpredictable capital expenses may also require funding from the endowment.

The 2024 budget is a *transition year budget*, for a year in which Trinity will implement the program, staffing, and property decisions to move to a sustainably balanced budget in 2025. If it had been possible to implement all of the planned changes on January 1, instead of the planned rollout over the first 6 months of 2024, we would have been at the level of a 6% draw on the endowment this year, which is why we anticipate having a sustainably balanced budget in 2025.

The total endowment draw for operations is budgeted at \$233,831 vs. \$360,140 in 2023, meaning that we have cut a net amount of \$126,309 out of the budget.

The 2024 budget reflects a number of staffing changes, described under “expenses” below, and the Vestry believes that the budget is now “right-sized” for the size of our church. Fifteen years ago we had 320 pledging households in the congregation, and now we have 135, yet we had not adjusted staffing levels for many years. The context in which we are operating has also changed our staffing needs and resources.

If Trinity can increase income from additional sources besides donations (pledge and plate income), we will have a cushion against changes in congregational giving. *We have a number of feasible income ideas, with several new efforts started in 2023, but we need more people to lead the income-generating activities and events.*

On the expense side, it is important to recognize that the staff reductions are going to impact all aspects of the church. We will learn to depend more on volunteer leadership and less on clergy and staff, and accept that some programs are going to be changed or reduced. These changes also may create opportunities for new and creative programs or ministry.

Finally, a healthy endowment is essential to secure the future of Trinity. We are fortunate that members of Trinity in the past made contributions to the endowment in their estates and charitable giving, and the Planned Giving Committee has embarked on a new effort to encourage these gifts from the current congregation.

**Income:**

Total Income is budgeted at \$31,251 higher than actuals for 2023 (excluding outreach and special offerings\*).

It is great news that the 2024 pledge budget increased to \$425,000 from \$410,000 last year. As noted in the Stewardship report, Trinity is growing as 22 new households have joined the church and pledged their financial support. The total pledge and plate income budget of \$480,000 is \$9,447 *lower than actuals* for 2023 because it was based on the information available when the budget was approved. The budget was adopted in mid-December, so 2024 pledges received after that date are not included in the budget. In addition, the year-end results for pledge and plate income were about \$12,000 higher than had been projected. This gives us a slightly conservative budget for pledge and plate income, which hopefully we will exceed.

The “sustainable” level of draw on the endowment (up to 6%) is included in income as “budgeted income from endowment” because this is the amount that we are comfortable relying on each year for operations. For 2024 this amount is \$182,000 (calculated on the average quarterly ending balance over the last 12 quarters). This amount will likely decrease in 2025 because the large draws on the endowment for the last few years will reduce the endowment balances included in the formula.

All other sources of income total \$64,000, which is \$8,700 higher than actuals for 2023\*. This includes a new source of income from renting the house at 212 W. Second Street (currently occupied by the sexton), budgeted at \$10,000 net of property taxes for this year. Also included is \$10,000 to come from fundraisers and other new income streams. The 2023 budget included a “stretch goal” of \$25,000 for fundraisers/new income to provide a high bar for the vestry’s financial planning. The budget of \$10,000 may be more realistic for 2024, but we do not want to lose sight of the goal of increasing this type of income over time.

**Expenses:**

Total Expenses are budgeted to be \$127,058 lower than 2023\* (note that capital expenses, which also require an endowment draw, have been moved out of the operating budget and are shown below net income from operations). *The Vestry examined all major expense items this year to identify opportunities for efficiency and lower expenses.* Comparing the 2024 budget to 2023 actuals, the major changes in expenses are as follows:

Compensation: \$144,497 lower

Staffing changes are:

- Do not hire an associate or assistant rector.
- Change the Music Director position from full-time to half-time.

- Replace the current 6-hour/week Sunday School Director position (and some functions of the former Associate Rector position) with a 15-hour/week Youth and Childrens Ministry coordinator position.
- On the planned retirement of our current financial manager, hire a 15-hour/week bookkeeper, and contract with a non-profit accounting firm for expertise and support
- Replace the full-time, on-site sexton position with a combination of contract services and part-time staffing to handle property management, cleaning, and security.

Administrative: \$8,829 higher

- Includes new expense of about \$10,000 for the accounting firm and net savings in other lines

Total Property Expenses: \$7,046 lower

- This category includes Insurance, Utilities, Building/Equipment maintenance, and All Other Property expenses.
- The good news is that the 2024 property budget has absorbed about \$14,000 in additional expenses to cover the outsourcing of work previously done by the sexton, while still achieving net savings vs. 2023.
- The property committee is very happy that our utilities expenses appear to be declining (\$4,000 lower than 2023), partly as a result of the energy-efficiency improvements made in 2022 and 2023. We have also applied to be included in a new community solar farm, which can be expected to further reduce electricity costs if we are accepted.
- Property and liability insurance is a major expense, at \$47,500. The property committee re-bid the insurance policy this year in an effort to reduce costs, and switched to a new provider with a small cost savings and better coverage. This line also includes workers' compensation insurance, which should decline in the future as a result of staff reductions.

Diocesan Contribution: \$9,700 higher

- The diocesan contribution is determined by a formula stipulated by the diocese. Trinity is paying 92% of the Diocesan "ask", and we have requested a waiver for meeting the full ask.
- The formula is based on each congregation's total expense budget over the past 3 years; by reducing our expenses now, we will eventually reduce the contribution expected by the diocese.

### **Capital Expenses:**

Capital expenses are typically not included in an operating budget, partly because they can vary significantly from year to year, and the decision-making process for a capital project is different from operating decisions. For these reasons, the Vestry decided to move Capital Expenses out of operating budget, and show it as a line below the "Net income/loss from operations". This budget line only includes expenses that have already

been identified. It is important to realize that capital expenses require additional draws on the endowment, at least while we have a “net loss” budget and nowhere else to turn for additional funds.

While Trinity is using the Capital Campaign to complete a major round of building renovation and maintenance projects, the only capital expenses are for new projects that were not anticipated at the time the Capital Campaign projects list was compiled and sized. In 2023 the actual expenses were for major preventative maintenance on the slate roof, and paying back a 5-year loan from PSE&G for boiler replacement (76% of the total cost was paid by a PSE&G grant). In 2024, the budget includes these loan payments plus \$10,000 for a new security and building access system in lieu of having a sexton on-site to lock up every night.

**Total Draw on the Endowment:**

The 2024 budget makes substantial progress towards a sustainable draw on the endowment, and puts Trinity on the path to reach the goal of only using the sustainable draw for operations in 2025.

	<b>2024B</b>	<b>2023A</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>Target for 2025</b>
For Operations	\$233,831	\$360,140	(\$126,309)	\$182,000
For Capital Improvements	\$22,643	\$104,822	(\$82,179)	\$12,643
Total	\$256,474	\$464,962	(\$208,488)	\$194,643

\*Note that the discussions of actual totals for income and expenses exclude Outreach income and expenses and Special Offerings income and expenses. These are not budgeted items, and the income flows through to an expense of equal value, so the net impact is \$0.



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## *GENERAL MINISTRY REPORTS*

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### **RECTOR'S REPORT**

I have experienced 2023 as a year when the depth and strength of our Trinity community was on display, and I hope you have, too. At this time last year, your Vestry and I talked to the congregation at the Annual Meeting about how our budgets had become unsustainable – perhaps shaped more by our history as a congregation than by the realities, needs, resources and opportunities of our Trinity here and now, and committed to bringing the congregation a more sustainable budget and program plan in 2024.

As the Vestry examined our income, resources, and expenses, and worked to develop new sources of income, we were able to celebrate the return of one of our community's beloved fundraising and fun traditions, the Blueberry Festival. Even an evening of rain couldn't quench the friendly volunteers and festival-goers of Trinity, and we also welcomed the community beyond our congregation to celebrate with us. Special thanks to Liz Louie and the several leaders who worked with her to reboot, reinvent, and revive the festival.

Vital, community strengthening work was happening behind the scenes all year long, too. The main capital campaign project completed this year was extensive and necessary work to install new fire alarm and fire suppression systems in our buildings, to protect our community. The growth and strength of our community were being nurtured, too, by a team of creative and thoughtful leaders dedicated to helping Trinity "Grow Young" with guidance and coaching from experts, and ideas, energy, and resources from our own community. This group helped Mother Angie develop a new youth curriculum and program with service and fellowship to strengthen the youth community. The recent increased visibility of children and youth in our worship services is just the tip of the iceberg in the work that this group is leading to help us integrate our children's and youth ministries more vitally with all of our life as a congregation. I give thanks for Jeff Wojcik, Kristina Van Name, Sarah Senno, and Sandy Hay, our Growing Young team, and for Mother Angie and Christine Andonie, who helped them lead and implement new ideas.

Spiritual nurture of our adult members of the congregation in the last year or so has been primarily at the grassroots of our Trinity community. The ongoing work of Bob Litsinger, offering weekly Evening Prayer and Sunday bible studies, and Kristina Van Name, convening a group of faithful, mutually-supportive, novice Bible explorers in Basic Bible Study, nourish all of us, even those of us who don't personally participate, by strengthening the prayerful and faithful warp and weft of our community.

I had an opportunity for my own spiritual growth early in the year, when I took two months of sabbatical time, focused on learning the spiritual practices of rest in God. One of the monks I visited early in the sabbatical time told me he looks at Sabbath as a time to

step back in order to perceive that “it is good” as God does in creation (Genesis 1) – we pause our work and activities to have time to notice the fundamental goodness of what God has already done with us and for us. I’ve found that starting to practice that intentionally, with periods of sabbath rest in my own busy life, have really helped me notice that “it is good” (whole, and healthy and life-giving) at Trinity, in our worship and our service to the community and in our practical business and buildings. I’m especially thankful to note the goodness of our community – the strength of our ties to one another and our caring leadership that made it possible for me to step away for two months. We missed each other, but we had everything we needed in our leadership and community care!

The part of my role which requires me to “take part in the councils of the church” beyond Trinity saw some transitions this year. I wrapped up five years of work convening the Discerning Our Common Call team of the Diocese of New Jersey, which had been focused on clarifying and supporting the diocesan focus on forming and strengthening all of us as disciples of Jesus. Late in the year, I was elected to chair the board of The Gathering of Leaders, an organization focused on the growth of the Episcopal Church through connecting and supporting creative, hope-filled clergy and lay leaders who will energize and transform our church.

In Trinity’s connection to the wider Episcopal Church, in 2023 we took part in the historic election and consecration of the first woman to serve as Bishop of our Diocese of New Jersey – the Right Reverend Sally French. Bob Litsinger, Abby Merk, and Kristina Van Name represented Trinity (along with our two priests) in that election.

This fall saw us paying attention to the strengths and needs and resources of our Trinity community through a series of “Trinity Gatherings”, led by Dave Shaw, Abby Merk, and members of the Vestry. I’m grateful for all those who attended, and helped create the deepened understanding of the values, priorities, and connections of our community which helped the Vestry in the work of evaluating our programs and our spending.

With those learnings, and with the deep and broad work the Vestry undertook throughout the year, the Vestry spent several months thoughtfully, prayerfully, carefully working to develop a sustainable budget supporting the staffing, infrastructure, programs and needs of our congregation – the Trinity of today, and the Trinity that’s preparing for a long, strong future in a continually changing world and church.

That means, in addition to some new uses of our buildings and property, that we will be experiencing significant changes to our staff leadership and support at Trinity, drawing more on our connections with one another and the shared resources of our volunteers and community, with fewer full-time professional staff, and more contractable or part-time professional support. Mother Angie’s decision to make herself available for other work, and our decision not to hire another full-time clergy leader when she was called to St. John’s in Linden, was the first step in this process, which will continue to unfold through the middle of this year. The details of these changes are found in our budget report (and in my letter to the congregation).

This has not been an easy process, and I am grateful for the careful, difficult, creative and demanding work of several vestry members who developed alternate, sustainable plans for staffing our congregation, and for the Vestry as a whole, who worked throughout this process with care for the health, spirit, heart, and future of our congregation, and offered each other trust and support as we debated and discerned what steps to take.

I am also deeply grateful for the graciousness and patience of our Trinity staff, who have been waiting a year to see what might happen with their work here, and who have wholeheartedly invested in the developing and supporting the strength of our community as they waited.

I do not look forward to an easy 2024, but I look forward to a year in which our community strength, love, hope, and care for one another will have more and more chances to grow and to shine. This place, and especially these people, who we know as Trinity are so deeply good – good in the sense in which God sees us in creation: whole, healthy, full of the vibrant life and love of God. Every single year, as I look backward and forward in the creation of our Annual Report, I am increasingly grateful to live and work among you, to be your priest, your friend, and immersed in our wonderful Trinity community.

Thank you, from the depths of my heart.  
The Reverend Emily A. Mellott  
Rector

### **ASSOCIATE RECTOR'S REPORT**

This has been a year of experiments and change for me in several of the areas in which I ministered. The Growing Young team has been the backbone of helping to reimagine the youth program. They have helped to develop some experiments that we have tried throughout the year, from a step-up game night for our incoming 6<sup>th</sup> graders, to a celebration for our graduating seniors, to incorporating our younger kids in the worship service, to an intergenerational event to make care packages for our college students and members of the military. I am so pleased with how well these experiments have been received and am excited for them to continue.

The parish pledged to tithe (give 10%) of the capital campaign proceeds. The outreach commission was tasked with developing a capital grant application process to disperse half of those funds. This year, the outreach commission worked hard to develop this process and made it first set of grants at the end of 2023. I want to thank the outreach commission for all their hard work on this and their many other projects throughout the year. I especially want to thank Barbara Benton for her many years of service as chair of the commission and thank Bruce Velzy for accepting his new role as chair of the commission.

As always, preparing families for baptism has brought me great joy and fulfillment throughout the year. I love the time I get to spend with families, getting to know them and helping them get to know God, their faith, and us a little better.

During 2023 I was excited to be able to incorporate more altar servers during our worship service and have enjoyed watching our youth grow into their new role as gospel book bearers. This addition as well as our new youth lectors and gift bearers has made the services more vibrant and more joy-filled. I thank our children and youth for offering the gift of themselves in these ways.

Change is never easy and though I'm sure there were a few hiccups along the way (as there always are), I am grateful for the ways in which the parish has embraced change and growth this year. Keep challenging yourself to grow in faith, courage, and love for God and each other.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Mother Angie  
Associate Rector

## **WARDENS' REPORT**

Dear Trinity friends,

This is the last year for a joint wardens letter from Liz and Nancy. We have had a wonderful time being co-wardens for the past 5 years, but our bylaws say it is time for Liz to take a break, and that Nancy has one more year as warden. We have worked on many things together, and a few things independently, and we are both very glad and grateful for our partnership. Because we often see things differently, we thought this year we would share our individual thoughts with you:

### **Thoughts from Liz:**

Wow! Looking back over 5 years has given me an opportunity to reflect on the joys and challenges we have faced and SEE, but more importantly FEEL the resilience that we have and show at Trinity. Being a leader is never easy; it has been my honor to be your Warden, and I have tried my best to listen, contemplate, advise, represent and support Mother Emily, Nancy and the rest of the Vestry and YOU my Parish family. Please take the time to read the entirety of the Annual Meeting reports; what peaks your interest and how can you help? Reach out if you have questions or ideas.

While we have much to celebrate, we will need to remain focused as transitions occur. My sleeves are rolled up and my heart and hands are open...

### **Thoughts from Nancy:**

I have to admit it has been a challenging year to be a lay leader at Trinity. Every month the Vestry struggled with discussions about how to address our financial challenges and make the best decisions to match our resources to our needs and desires. I am so thankful for the dedication of all the Vestry members, who stepped up in many different ways to think creatively, try new approaches, and support one another. You can read elsewhere in this report about the difficult decisions we made to steer the church towards a sustainable budget. We started out the year with a wide range of reactions to the challenges facing the church, and it is important to know that through Mother Emily's thoughtful leadership and much discussion, we were able to reach unanimous agreement on these budget decisions.

Yes it was a hard year, but it was also a really good year, and there are many signs that encourage me about the life of our church. One thing we heard repeatedly during the Trinity Gatherings small group discussions was that our strongest common bond is in worshipping as a broad and welcoming community, and that is what the vestry has focused on in planning for the future. I felt our strength, in particular, on the wonderful marathon of Advent IV, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day, in terms of how many people were involved in our worship, and in so many ways: 31 pageant participants, 26 in choirs, 20 for Flower Guild, 7 for Altar Guild, 8 layreaders/chalice bearers, 7 acolytes, 6 ushers, 3 for Tech Guild, 2 preachers, 1 celebrant, many other helping hands, and 445 worshippers across all services (a 22% increase for Christmas services vs. last year). This is truly good news for our church!

We both urge you all to stay involved! Keep offering to help, and keep coming to worship, education and events at the church. We are all enriched by sharing in our strong Trinity community.

With thanks for our 5-year partnership,  
Liz Louie and Nancy Matthews, Wardens

### **TRINITY GATHERINGS**

“Trinity Gatherings” were small group meetings of the parish members held from late September through early November 2023. The purpose of the meetings was to prepare the congregation for change and obtain input to help guide decisions as vestry prepared the budget for the coming year. Nine meetings were held at the church and other locations, as well as virtually using Zoom. The meetings were facilitated by members of the parish vestry. A total of 68 people participated. Below is a summary of the discussions that took place.

Why do you choose to be part of Trinity? What draws you in? What does it look like when we are at our best?

- Many newer members commented on the importance of a welcoming environment, where people learn your name, where people look for new faces and welcome them.
- The importance of an inclusive environment where all are welcome was mentioned by many newer parishioners as well.
- Beautiful music was mentioned as important to many – particularly among older, long-time parishioners.
- The beauty of the building, in combination with a very traditional form of worship, beautiful music, emphasis on the Eucharist, and again, an inclusive and welcoming environment. This is seen as a unique combination that differentiates Trinity.
- The strength of Mother Emily's preaching – helping understand the readings and giving a message that is meaningful and something you can take away each week, relevant to today was seen as very important.
- The importance of intergenerational activities came up at several of the meetings – usually raised by older members of the parish not parents of youth. This is currently valued, but also seen as something we can build more on.
- Several people gave moving testimony about the importance of the church during time of trial for them as they dealt with losing a loved one. The way the congregation rallied around them, and the support they received from the Rector.
- People are glad that we have at least some diversity in our congregation, but many people mentioned we should do everything we can to increase diversity – racial, gender, sexual orientation, etc. The theme of welcoming all was very strong.

What do we need to preserve? What do we need more of?

- Very important to return to a full program of fellowship and community activities. People are ready to volunteer and help. Don't ask people to lead – ask them to co-lead or help. People are intimidated by the ask to lead but are ready to help. Move to an annual schedule of activities to increase lead time for organizing help and planning for attendance.
- Earth ministry is a good addition to fellowship and outreach. We need more. People will volunteer if we ask ahead of time. Rekindle sense of volunteerism.
- Exceptional music at special services and evensong should be maintained. We need to do a better job of advertising these and using them to pull people into the church – we are not doing that now.
- would a Saturday night service draw more families? (Sunday sports start at 9am.)
- We need to increase the size of our youth congregation. Need to ensure we have the scale required to give youth a good experience. Many people talked about the vitality of the youth program in past and the role the program plays in connecting parents of youth as well – but we are in danger of falling below minimum scale.
- What opportunities exist to share costs with other churches, and perhaps increase scale for some activities.

- Leverage the beauty and uniqueness of our building to draw people in. Open doors at beginning of service and end? Better signage outside. Historical tours of building for community not just existing members.
- But also, services outside during covid may actually have increased visibility in the community so we need to think about this. Services like blessings of the animals also increase visibility in the community.
- Make parking options more known. People perceive a lack of parking even though there are a lot of options.

What should we consider as we approach the budget process for the coming year? What are the non-negotiables we can't do without? Where should we look for opportunities to do things differently?

- Overall, it was very hard for people to help prioritize spending.
- Music and youth both appear very important – perhaps to different parts of the congregation – overall, youth and intergenerational activities are seen as vital to the future. While acknowledging the need to find the right scale.
- Maintaining a tradition of exceptional music is also very important to many people.
- Need to focus on growing congregation and revenue.
- There is a general recognition that programs and delivery, especially in the areas of youth and music will need to change. It was clear to people that the current situation is not sustainable.
- Current timing is challenging – coming out of covid, some people still giving capital program pledges, asking for more in regular pledges, but we need to do all we can to increase revenue.
- Admin expenses seem high. Are there opportunities to reduce these. Hard for people to contribute without detailed knowledge of expense.
- We will need to move to a more “volunteer” based program in some areas. This could actually be positive for engagement of all.
- It may be about many small cuts in a number of areas vs. big cut in one program

Respectfully submitted,  
Dave Shaw

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## ***WORSHIP***

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## **MUSIC**

In 2023 the music program began to settle into its former routine. The youth choirs are back in business and the 2023-2024 season is enjoying a return of our full schedule of events.

**Trinity Choir** – The Trinity Choir currently has 14 singers, including 5 sopranos, 5 altos, 1 tenor, and 3 basses. In addition to singing for 10 a.m. Sunday services, this congenial and dedicated group sang three services of Choral Evensong, Advent Lessons and Carols, Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday, and Holy Week Services. The choir includes four excellent section leaders whose vocal and musical leadership help the choir learn and perform their anthems with confidence.

**Coventry Choir** – The Coventry Choir, which is composed of the choir section leaders, continues to lead the way for the Trinity Choir, as well as singing motets and anthems on its own from time to time. Our current staff singers are Abigail Merk, soprano; Caroline Voyack, alto; Benjamin Kirk, tenor; and Joseph Aromando, bass.

**St. Cecilia Choir** – In its second year, the St. Cecilia Choir of older girls in grades 7-12 is singing beautifully despite ongoing schedule conflicts among its very talented and very busy young choristers. There are currently four members. In February, 2023, the choir sang a lovely service of Choral Evensong. In December, the choir participated in the service of Advent Lessons and Carols and helped lead the 3:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service.

**Carol Choir** – Maris's eight-member Carol Choir is now composed of choristers in grades 2-6. With the inclusion of older singers this choir is growing into new, more advanced musical territory. In a major milestone, the Carol Choir was invited to sing at the Bishop's installation service at the Cathedral. While billed as a choir from around the diocese, only two other singers were able to participate. Our young singers did an exceptional job and the experience was positive for all involved. The Carol Choir also helped to lead the 3:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service and is looking forward to singing its first service of Choral Evensong in February 2024.

**Cherub Choir** – Maris's Cherub Choir, for choristers in grades K-1, has three enthusiastic singers who sing approximately once a month.

**Chamber Choir** – This all-professional ensemble returned after a long hiatus to sing a service of Choral Evensong in November.

**Choral Librarian** – Susan Wojcik continues to do excellent and dedicated work as our Choral Librarian. Susan makes sure the music is put away in an orderly fashion, and she continues to be kind and patient with choir members who turn in their music late.

### **Piano Accompanist**

Gina Park continues as accompanist for the Carol Choir. Though still in high school, Gina plays at a high technical level and with great sensitivity. We are lucky to have her on the staff!

### **Lenten Organ Recital Series**

The annual series of five Lenten recitals continued in 2023 and was well-attended. We are planning to reintroduce the soup luncheons in 2024

### **Receptions**

A pleasant feature of our special musical events is the receptions that follow. Many



thanks to Maris, Dixie DePietropolo, Alberta Fuller, and the wardens for their ongoing dedication to offering these opportunities for fellowship.

### **Facelifts and Renovations**

Over the summer of 2023, Maris and Vernon repaired and painted the walls of the new music classroom at the bottom of the stairs. Also over the summer, Vernon refurbished the music office. Work included repairing the water-damaged ceiling, painting everything, rearranging the office layout, and shampooing the ancient carpeting. The music office is now a much more congenial place to work.

### **Friends of Trinity Music**

The Friends of Music continued to receive generous support from the parish, enabling us to offer our schedule of special music events including the services of Choral Evensong and Advent Lessons and Carols, as well as the Organ Recital Series and the Choir Concert which is planned for May 2024. Financial details can be found elsewhere in the Annual Report.

### **Thanks**

As always, we are grateful for Mother Emily's appreciation of the value of music in the life of the parish, and for her support which includes singing in the choir at times! And we are grateful for all who participate in their many various ways, especially the choristers and parents who make the choirs possible, and for the Trinity community that supports our efforts in countless ways.

Respectfully submitted,  
Vernon and Maris Williams

## **FRIENDS OF MUSIC**

The Friends of Trinity Music fund all of our special musical events, plus some extra musicians for Sunday mornings. During the Covid years there were no extra events and then a reduced number of events, but our loyal donors kept giving to the fund, so by 2023 the opening balance had grown to \$27,966. Donations in 2023 came to \$16,860, while expenses were \$10,710, leaving a closing balance of \$34,116. Expenses included five services of Choral Evensong (three by the Trinity Choir, one each by the Chamber and St. Cecilia Choir), the service of Advent Lessons and Carols, and the five organ recitals in the Lenten Series, plus administrative costs for things like Constant Contact and postage. The spring 2024 schedule includes two services of Choral Evensong, five organ recitals, a special Sunday morning service of Morning Prayer, and a choir concert with orchestra. Many thanks to the Friends of Music; over the years they have made an enormous difference to the musical life of the parish and the Moorestown community.

Respectfully submitted,  
Vernon Williams

## **LAY READERS & CHALICE BEARERS**

Trinity's chalice bearers and lay readers participate in the regular Sunday services and in the special services throughout the year. Specifically, the chalice bearers assist Mother Emily during communion and the lay readers read selected portions of scripture and lead the Prayers of the People. This year, for the first time, youth have been encouraged to become lay readers on a regular basis and they have proved to be a valuable addition to the lector pool. Initially the youth readers focused on the Prayers of the People, but in 2024 youth and adults will share the responsibility of the different readings each Sunday. We are always looking to expand participation in this ministry.

Respectfully submitted,  
Joan Dighton

## **LAY PASTORAL CARE**

Pastoral Care is something already done in many ways by many groups and individuals at Trinity. It is done by our Youth when they prepare and send cards to people and other things we do to support our members. It is noticeable as we send Eucharistic Ministers who take Eucharist to parish members who are unable to come to church. As we are past the pandemic all of these services are expanding and growing.

All this is a valuable extension of our Faith in our Service guided by the Holy Spirit in each of us. Yet there is another need to be addressed. During last year I began visiting and calling members and others who, due to age, difficulties or illness. From the experience, I found that some of these people feel that Trinity has abandoned them or at least feel we have forgotten them.

Mother Emily and I have been talking about efforts to support the confined and sick. As result of those discussions I have agreed to assume a role as a Lay Minister for Pastoral Care. I expect to be visiting those who are unable to be at church either long term or because of sickness or other needs, but I also expect to work with others in the church who engage in activities to support other elements of Pastoral Care.

Bob Litsinger

## **TECH GUILD**

The Trinity Tech Guild was established in September 2020 to support the technical live streaming needs during the Trinity services on Sunday and other special service events. This small group of volunteers have been behind the scenes providing outreach and fellowship to our home-bound congregation through live streaming of the Sunday 10am service.

Each Sunday a tech support person is assigned to power on the system and operate the camera for the Sunday service. The tech support person also is there to monitor the microphones and make any sound adjustments as needed during the service.

The current members of Tech Guild: (2024)

Nancy Matthews

Bob Litsinger

William McBride

Justin Rapuano

Harry Wind

Jeff Wojcik

We are always looking for new members who feel comfortable operating a laptop computer and / I-Pad.

All camera settings are preset and just need to be activated doing specific parts of the service by the tech support person in the church. There are specific easy to learn operating instructions for powering-up and shutting down systems at the beginning and end of the service. No heavy lifting is required. Training and guidance are provided by the group for all new members until they feel comfortable operating the system.

Any questions or interest in volunteering, please contact Jeff Wojcik:

Phone: 610-945-4004,

Email: woj5@aol.com

## **ALTAR GUILD**

The Altar Guild is a special lay ministry that cares for the altar, vestments, vessels, and altar linens of the parish. Altar Guild members prepare the sanctuary for the Holy Eucharist, baptisms, weddings, funerals and special services for holy days and they clean up afterwards. Normally we do not have barley loaves or small fish, so we make sure bread wafers, wine and grape juice are available.

Current members are Helen Anderson, Sally Campolucci (on leave), Wendy Carber, Gayle Celentano, Jasmine Declet, Priscilla Knapp, Inez Tokashiki, Carolyn Weeks, and Joan Willett. New members are always needed and welcome. Usually we work about half an hour on Saturday or Sunday between or after services. Schedules are flexible and we support each other. The Altar Guild hopes our work contributes to making worship at Trinity truly meaningful for the congregation.

Respectfully submitted,

Gayle Celentano

## FLOWER GUILD

If you are looking for a way to support Trinity that does not require a great deal of time, the Flower Guild is for you. There is no experience with flowers required. While providing a service to Trinity, you are provided an opportunity to learn an enjoyable and relaxing skill while spending time with some very nice people!

Presently, the Flower Guild is comprised of 19 members, male and female. There are always two members working together each week. One member is the leader and responsible for formulating the design and purchasing the flowers. The leaders and the assistants work side-by-side to produce the floral arrangements. In addition to the weekly arrangements, our largest responsibility is at Easter and Christmas, which is a wonderful way to enhance your enjoyment of the holiday. All the assistant needs to bring is a love of flowers and a desire to help the Church. Arranging the flowers provides a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the fellowship of our members and also is a wonderful escape -- there is no way you can be thinking about anything else while arranging flowers.

Volunteering is not a huge time commitment and scheduling is flexible. Your name will come up on the schedule about once every two-three months. Flowers are generally arranged on Saturday mornings or whatever time is convenient with the leader and assistant. Schedules are created every three months, giving you the opportunity to block out times that are not convenient for you. If a conflict arises, it is always easy to find another member willing to switch dates to cover for you.

## EVENING PRAYER

Prayer can be formal or informal. Trinity's Tuesday Evening Prayer gives you an opportunity to experience formal Evening Daily Prayer on an informal basis. The setting and approach is informal, but the service is built around a meld of the Contemporary Evening Prayer Service and the Compline service found in the **Book of Common Prayer**.

This service has been occurring since Advent of 2019 in the chapel and was moved to Zoom early in the pandemic. Doing the service on Zoom has enabled a larger number of people to participate, so it has remained on Zoom. Attendance varies, dropping as low as 3 around holidays and sometimes 10 or more, but normally 7 - 8. The group is friendly and will be happy to see you.

The service is done over Zoom at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday. The first few minutes allow for some social interchange. The service is "shared," that is to say opportunities to do part of the service, and during the interchange assignments are determined and provided. The

service is generally over by 7:30 but there is an option to stay to listen to a few performances of hymns.

You can join the Evening Prayer via the Zoom Link which is also provided on the church website. You will see some people you know from Trinity and some from other churches as well.

Peace to all,  
Bob Litsinger  
856-571-0008 | bob.litsinger@gmail.com

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## *SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND FORMATION*

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### **MONDAY BASIC BIBLE STUDY**

Basic Bible Study meets online Mondays from 7 to 8pm. No knowledge or preparation is needed. We were happy to have two new people join our group this year! We continue to use readings chosen from “The Path: A Journey Through The Bible” which uncovers the vast, sweeping story of God's extraordinary love for ordinary people.

We finished our focus on the Old Testament, and at the end of 2023 we began looking at the New Testament. Some people's stories and messages we explored and discussed were:

- King Solomon
- Prophets: Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah
- Esther
- Jesus - beginning of his life

Besides reading the Bible, we enjoy looking at how artists have interpreted these stories and listening to music.

**Please join us any Monday evening you are free! We would love to have you!**

### **GROWING YOUNG**

For this past year Mother Angie, Jeff Wojcik, Kristina Van Name, Sandy Hay and Sarah Senno participated in Fuller Youth Institute's 2023 Growing Young Online cohort. This is based on Fuller Institute's book, Growing Young Six Essential Strategies to Help

Young People Discover and Love Your Church. Growing Young identifies 6 strategies any church can use to involve and retain young people while breathing life into the whole church.

The 6 strategies are:

1. Unlock keychain leadership: Instead of centralizing authority, empower others—especially young people.
2. Empathize with today's young people: Instead of judging or criticizing, step into the shoes of this generation.
3. Take Jesus' message seriously: Instead of asserting formulaic gospel claims, welcome young people into a Jesus-centered way of life.
4. Fuel a warm community: Instead of focusing on cool worship or programs, aim for warm peer and intergenerational friendships.
5. Prioritize young people (and families) everywhere: Instead of giving lip service to how much young people matter, look for creative ways to tangibly support, resource, and involve them in all facets of your congregation.
6. Be the best neighbors: Instead of condemning the world outside your walls, enable young people to neighbor well locally and globally.

Our work with Fuller Institute included an online curriculum that included live webinars and 3 live online summits with other parishes, personalized meetings with a coach, and an assessment that looked at the 6 strategies and Trinity. Using what we learned, knowing Trinity and envisioning where we would like Trinity to develop we began creating a transformation plan with 3 goals. This transformation is not a quick change, but something to grow and develop with.

Our three goals for 2024 are:

- 1: Intergenerational Bible Study (Linked strategies: Jesus Message, Warm Relationships, Empathy Today)
- 2: Bring Young People Into Leadership Roles AND Youth Involvement (Linked strategies: Keychain Leadership, Prioritize Everywhere)
- 3: Develop a Mentorship Program (Warm Relationships, Empathy Today)

Jeff, Kristina, Sandy, and Sarah look forward to continuing their work, and are excited to have Patrick Louie joining the committee.

Respectfully Submitted by,  
Jeff Wojcik, Kristina Van Name, Sandy Hay and Sarah Senno

## YOUTH CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Through the work of the Growing Young team and its research, our experience has shown that using ‘school’ language for faith development programs can lead to challenges as children grow. Some children thrive at school but for some, the term evokes dread or boredom. It can also lead to an unintentional ‘graduation’ mentality when growing in our faith is meant to be a life-long journey.

In the Fall of 2023, we have introduced a new youth program and its language. Our ‘teachers’ are now called ‘youth leaders’ and our ‘classes’ are now called ‘Sunday morning gatherings.’ We have also chosen curricula which are designed to be highly interactive and not lecture-style. Confirmation is now integrated into the program and is not an ending point or ‘graduation.’ While these changes may take time getting used to, we hope that they will foster a better atmosphere for participation and life-long faith development.

The new groups started this past Fall, one for our middle school (grades 6-8) and one for our high school (grades 9-12). A newly revised Weaving God’s Promises curriculum was selected as a best approach for our middle school youth and the Generation Why? curriculum is best for our high school youth.

We also introduced a way of integrating our youth into the rest of the church community. Our Intergenerational Sundays bring all our youths together as a community with the church. Middle School and High school youths are working together on specific service type projects for community outreach.

Also, in response to parent and youth feedback, we are implementing a new system of eligibility for confirmation. Youth will now earn points for attendance and participation in the life of the parish. Our goal is to help youth be well-rounded members of the community and to help them discover their gifts and their place as an adult member of our church community.

The Growing Young Team will continue to bring new initiatives to the table with the goal of continuing to make the youth in Trinity church a priority. We know that these changes will help continue that journey of growth.

Respectfully,

Growing, Young Team (Kristina Van Name, Sarah Senno, Sandy Hay, Jeff Wojcik)

## CHILDRENS' CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Exciting news:

Our Welcome to Communion instruction has been enriched to teach the children about how the church functions and why we do the things we do. Led by Holly Pearson, the first graders take turns performing roles in chapel. I encourage you to peek into her classroom behind the stage. Jennifer Shappell is leading our 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade. We are blessed with her teaching talents. I am elated to have her join our crew. We are further blessed to have Kristina Van Name leading our Upper Elementary students. Kristina's class is our most regularly attended. Many of her students sing in the choir and some acolyte. I am grateful for Kristina's dedication. Our nursery has been covered by Lauren Ramirez, who has created a wonderful gathering space for our youngest parishioners.

On Jan.28th, Dr. Stella Horton will be leading a presentation on the Underground Railroad. Sunday school will take place in the chapel that day. Stella has presented in the past, and we are thrilled to host this event again.

Challenges:

Attendance has been a challenge but seems to be gradually improving. Most children attend when the children's choirs perform.

Respectfully submitted,  
Christine Andonie

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## *SERVING GOD IN THE COMMUNITY*

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### OUTREACH COMMISSION

This report is to highlight the Outreach Commission's activities in 2023, which was a year of continued support for those in need in our broader community. With your financial and volunteer support, Trinity continued to support activities such as Project Interaction and Camp Faith, the Cathedral Kitchen, and Sacred Heart School in Camden; the Christian Caring Center in Browns Mill; Family Promise in Burlington County and the Society of St. Vincent De Paul. The Commission coordinated sandwich-making on a regular basis for Project Interaction and the Cathedral Kitchen and continued to serve meals to residents in Camden. These activities helped bring Trinity members together on specific activities and connected us to those in need.



In light of Trinity's 2023 financial shortfall, the Outreach Commission's past fundraising efforts such as the Rummage Sale to benefit the Commission will no longer occur. Instead, the Outreach Commission will get 10% of all church fundraisers such as the Blueberry Festival and not including pledge income. The Outreach Commission will continue to retain, however, all income from the monthly pew envelope offerings, which totaled approximately \$6940 in 2023. Overall, the Outreach Commission raised and disbursed about \$10,757 in 2023

As a result of funds raised from the Campaign for Trinity, the Outreach Commission members identified and distributed \$35,000 to fund start-up or capital investments by local organizations that support Outreach-type activities. The Commission approved the following grants: Cathedral Soup Kitchen (\$8,500 - replace and upgrade its gate), MEND (Moorestown Ecumenical Neighborhood Development - \$11,300 - Repairs to Butler Court properties), Food Bank of South Jersey (\$12,000.00 for HVAC for a new building for Community Training/Wellness programs), Loaves and Fishes Ministry at Christ Church, Riverton (\$3,200.00 towards upgrading Kitchen equipment and purchase utensils to prepare food for Community Outreach program.

Finally, after 7 years, Barbara Benton stepped down as Outreach Commission chairperson and Bruce Velzy became the new Outreach Commission chair. I previously served twice in this role and am hoping it continues to connect me to Trinity members in fellowship and service; and to bring us collectively together to serve others.

In 2024, the Outreach Commission hopes to connect more of the parish to the Commission's activities, whether as new commission members (and we would love to have you join us) or on an activity-by-activity basis.

Thank you for your continued support of Trinity's Community Outreach.

Yours in Christ,  
Bruce Velzy

### **GOD'S DIVERSITY COMMITTEE**

***“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with God's people and also members of the household of God.” Ephesians 2:19***

Speaking of how Christ's sacrifice has made alien groups (Jews and Gentiles) one and has “destroyed the barriers, the dividing wall of hostility....,” St. Paul asserts that Christ's purpose was “to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace.” (Ephesians 2: 14-16). In these passages from Ephesians, St. Paul could easily be addressing us today. He speaks of the unfortunate human tendency to divide groups into

those who belong, the insiders, and those who are foreign and different, the outsiders. Although we, as members of God's family, do not all speak the same languages or share the same histories and cultures, we are united in our love for God and God's desire and command that we extend that love to our neighbors, to each other.

From our first planning meeting during the summer of 2016, the members of the God's Diversity Committee have sought to increase awareness, appreciation and knowledge of society's many diverse peoples and to offer programs, spiritual services and discussions to enhance these goals. Recently, however, the climate in our country has grown increasingly less tolerant. In a time when the mere mention of "diversity" arouses mockery, derision and often condemnation, it is important to remember that its original purpose was simply to open our hearts to others, to those who don't look like us and those whose customs, cultures, religious beliefs and way of life are different from ours and to remember that we are all made in God's image. Once we begin to understand our shared humanity, it becomes clear that the next part of this process is to work toward a fairer and more just society that honors the dignity of all peoples.

Throughout the past year, we once again observed through special prayers and presentations, important events. Working with our clergy, Mothers Emily Mellott and Angie Cipolla, Vernon Williams, Trinity's Music Director, and members of our Youth Group, we celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's life and work. On January 15, 2023, an abridged version of Dr. King's "Letter From Birmingham Jail" (prepared by Dr. Stella Horton and Veronica Hughes, with a great deal of input from Mother Emily) was read by Dr. Horton at the 8 am service and by Mr. Justin Rapuano, a member of Trinity's Youth Group, at 10 am. Music during February, Black History Month, showcased many spirituals and hymns from Lift Every Voice and Sing. Every Sunday, a selection of prayers to end racism and promote social justice was published in the Parish Notes. Biographies of Rosa Parks, the Reverend Raphael Warnock and a list of suggested readings on important topics of Black History were also published during this month. We also celebrated Women's History Month, Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, Juneteenth, Pride Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, and Native American Heritage Month through special prayers of thanksgiving for the contributions, achievements, courage and perseverance of these groups of Americans inspired to fight for the freedom and equality promised in American's foundational documents.

As always, we wish to thank Mothers Emily Mellott and Angie Cipolla for their constant support, guidance, and encouragement. We are always deeply grateful for Vernon Williams who creatively uses music to bring us closer to God and, along with the gifted choirs, helps us share our message and goals musically. Finally, we will always be grateful to the members of the God's Diversity Committee for their insights, diligence,

good humor and loving hearts. Not only do we share a mission, but we now also have become loving members of a family and this is a lasting gift.

Like the rest of Trinity, we too are in transition. Those of us who have led this group since its inception are eager now to step aside for others with new fresh ideas and energy and, perhaps even a reimagining of our group and its mission. We therefore invite other members of Trinity to consider leading this group forward. While our members remain committed to social justice and equality and to the goals and mission of this committee, many are no longer able to participate fully in its work.

Anyone interested in learning more about the God's Diversity Committee and to those willing to consider leading this group, please contact Anne Dalesandro, [dalesand@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:dalesand@camden.rutgers.edu) .

Respectfully submitted,  
Veronica Hughes, Anne Dalesandro  
Co-Chairs

### **EARTH CARE MINISTRY**

Trinity's Earth Care Ministry ("ECM") was formed at the beginning of 2022. The committee is chaired by John Bradley and Lori Rapuano and is open to all parishioners. Through this ministry, we seek to deepen our spiritual and physical relationship with all of creation and participate in the proper stewardship of the earth's resources.

The ECM sponsored one educational event in 2023, a program about food waste that was held on March 5 at the 11:15 coffee hour. The program focused on explaining the extent of food waste and why it's an environmental concern; offering tips to reduce food waste in households; and providing guidance on how to start composting food waste at home. We had two speakers: Gina Cohl from Tri-County Sustainability and our own John Dighton. Tying in with our Green Eating theme from Lent 2022, we offered a luncheon after the presentation, featuring a sampling of vegetarian dishes prepared by our committee members and supporters. About 20 people attended the presentation and lunch. People commented that the presentation was engaging and educational, and that they enjoyed the food and fellowship.

We attempted to replicate our very successful 2022 Native Plant Celebration for Earth Day in April 2023, but unfortunately, were not able to get the support from the Native

Plant Society of New Jersey that we had the first time, and accordingly were not able to proceed.

The committee has been mostly on hiatus since early 2023. During the course of the year, however, individual members of the ECM have taken some steps to raise awareness and help “green” some of Trinity’s own practices, including:

- Encouraging use of non-disposable dishware at Trinity’s 2023 Annual Meeting and other church events – and lining up volunteers to wash dishes.
- Promoting plant-based diets by ensuring that the food for purchase at the family movie night held in December 2023 prominently featured several delicious homemade vegetarian chilis.
- Working with the Property Committee to try to move Trinity’s electrical supply to solar through a subscription with a community solar farm. (We are currently on a waiting list that will give us the opportunity to join a particular existing solar farm.)

The ECM plans to resume regular meetings in 2024; hopes to sponsor additional educational events; and will continue to work with the Property Committee and other church committees and personnel to decrease the church’s carbon footprint and promote awareness of environmental issues. We invite interested parishioners to join us at an upcoming meeting!

## **PRESCHOOL**

With the stress of Covid behind us, it was nice to have the 2023 school year back to normal. We had Lunch Bunch every day where the children mixed with other classes as well as in all our wonderful Enrichment Programs: Music, Building Club, Arts & Science, Little Bakers, and Fitness with Coach Pat. It’s wonderful to hear the children laughing and having fun while learning new skills.

We were sad to have one of our teachers, Celeste Murray, retire this year – she is missed by all. However, we welcomed three new excellent teachers to our staff: Deacon Leslie Mazzacano, Emily Zimmermann and Erin Matzelle.

We are getting close to being in operation for twenty-five years and as I turned seventy this year, I’ve been asked many times: “Are you getting ready to retire?” My answer is “NO “- I’m still enjoying the job as Preschool Director. My goal is to see it through a full twenty-five years and after that – I don’t have that answer. Only God knows.

As always, thank you for the support of the Clergy, the Vestry, the Preschool Board, as well as the Preschool and Parish Families. We are blessed to be working with so many wonderful people!

Respectfully Submitted,  
Nancy Johnson  
Preschool Director  
856-235-1840

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## ***GROWING IN RELATIONSHIP***

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### **PARISH LIFE**

Trinity parishioners continue to amaze (but we already know that!) - as we have continued to re-imagine traditions and introduce new opportunities, many of you have been stepping up with ideas and showing up for engagement. Your energy is infectious and fuels our efforts to welcome, embrace, nurture and grow our Parish community.

We have said some new hellos and some goodbyes, but whatever we do and you choose, I hope it makes you feel like you belong. Highlights from 2023 include:

- \*2) Sandwich brigades for our neighbors in need
- \*2nd Annual Parish Picnic (3rd TBD)
- \*The return of the Blueberry Festival (TBD for June '24)
- \*Caroling for our friends @ home
- \*New events of Movie Night and Holiday Market
- \*Fellowship between and after services (come and meet each other!)

And ongoing support for various collections/special requests and last-minute activities. Apologies for any omissions - these, and all that we continue or will introduce this year cannot be done without God's Grace and your gifts of time and talent. Please consider sharing! See you on Sunday or soon....

Respectfully submitted,  
Liz Louie

## **TRINITY PAGE BRIGADE**

The Trinity Page Brigade usually meets on the last Wednesday of the month at 7pm via zoom. We have an optional Facebook group. The Facebook group allows us to share additional interesting information about the book. We decide as a group what our next book is each month. We also try to have discussion questions posted/emailed out the night of the discussion.

Below is what we read this year. Interested in what Jesus's wife might have been like if he married? Check out March's book!

January: And Every Morning the Way Home Gets Longer and Longer by Fredrik Backman

February: The book of Lost Friends by Lisa Wingate

March: The Book of Longings by Sue Monk Kidd

April: Dinners With Ruth: A Memoir on the Power of Friendships by Nina Totenberg

May: Founding Mothers: The Women Who Raised Our Nation by Cokie Roberts

June: The Song of Achilles by Madeline Miller

July: Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus

August: Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver

September: The Color Purple by Alice Walker

October: 1984 by George Orwell

November/December: Crow Mary by Kathleen Grissom

There are 3 to 4 of us that meet regularly, including a parishioner that moved to Florida. We hope you join us sometime this year and invite a friend or two!

## **TRINITY BOOK CLUB**

The books read by the Trinity Book Club, now in its 24th year, consist of autobiographies, biographies, classics, fiction, nonfiction, historical fiction, mysteries, thrillers etc. covering a wide range of authors and subjects. Over the years, this has resulted in many educational, heartfelt, interesting and lively discussions. During this time, the BC has undergone numerous changes. It now consists of a small group of friendly, supportive women who meet monthly throughout the year on the 3rd Friday of each month. We invite you to join us. Our meetings are held in the Parish Hall's Reception Room at 1PM. During the warmer months, we enjoy holding the meetings outdoors. We look forward to seeing you.

## MEN'S GROUP

The Men's Group enjoyed another year of monthly breakfasts and speakers. Speaker topics in 2023 included generative artificial intelligence and the architectural history of Trinity Church.

Beyond our monthly breakfasts, we were pleased to be able to resume our traditional Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper for the parish, which we hosted together with the Trinity Youth. Men's Group members also assisted at other parish events including the Blueberry Festival and an Advent showing of the classic film "It's a Wonderful Life."

Attendance has remained steady with about 12 to 15 participants at the regular breakfasts. We look forward to continued fellowship and events in 2024.

Rafael Declet, Bruce Lovejoy, and Roy Shubert, for the Trinity Men's Group

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## *CARING FOR GOD'S GIFTS*

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### ENDOWMENT FUND

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Endowment Fund is five-fold:

- To assume financial responsibility for the physical assets of the parish and to provide a permanent source of funds for their maintenance and preservation from Endowment Fund income and appreciation.
- To contribute to the parish programs as determined by the Vestry a portion of the investment income not required for the above objective.
- To ensure the preservation of the purchasing power of prior gifts to the fund by adherence to a prudent investment policy.
- To provide a source of contingency funds for use in the event of a major financial emergency.
- To recognize and record the terms of grants and bequests that specify the purpose for which principal and/or income may be directed.

#### **Objective:**

To achieve a growth of income and principal on investments that will preserve the real purchasing power of the fund, while providing a predictable and constant cash flow while adhering to sound investment guidelines.

## **Highlights of Operations:**

Following three years of returns averaging about 21% followed by a very volatile losing year in 2022 (down about 18%), the volatility continued into the first quarter of 2023 where the S&P 500 was basically flat in mid-March. Over the next 5 months, the index rose by nearly 20% despite four interest rate increases which pushed the Federal Funds rate to a range of 5.25 to 5.5% in July. The S&P 500 index then fell about 12% by early November and was up just about 8.5% at Halloween. Volatility continued, in an upward trend for once, and the index rose 18% in the last two months of 2023 to close the year with a healthy 26% increase. With interest rates rising and reaching the mid 5% level, one would expect the fixed income/bond sector to do well. However, the Aggregate bond index was very volatile most of the year and was actually down over 3% by mid-October before a late rally pushed it up over 5.5% by year-end. Short term investments were best with money market funds yielding more than 4.5% (some were higher) by the fourth quarter.

Inflation, which had risen from virtually zero (1-2%) to more than 9% on a year-over-year basis in the last six months of 2022 began a steady downward trend by May/June, 2023 and continued to fall as we approached the fourth quarter to a level which allowed the Federal Reserve to indicate that they were likely done raising interest rates which triggered the large market gains in the fourth quarter.

In a speech in 1981, Graham Holloway, the former chairman of the American Funds Investment group, said he never knew a good time to invest. “There are always many good reasons to wait.” Today is no exception – with interest rates in flux, constant strife in the Middle East, excessive government regulations and a Congress that is more a part of the problem than part of the solution, you can’t just sit on the sidelines and wait for a ‘sunny’ day to go into the market. However, one has to take advantage of opportunities that present themselves as investments are generally a longer-term prospect than just a few days or months.

Even with the continued volatility in the markets over the course of the year coupled with rising interest rates and some continued inflation issues until early summer, the Endowment Fund did have a decent gain net of fees of about 13.3% before distributions. The total equity portion of our portfolio remained at about varied between 65-68% with the allocation to US stocks at about 80% and international stocks at 20% of the equity portion.. The higher slant to US equities vs. International equities proved correct as the S&P 500 index gained just over 26% vs. the MSCI EAFE index gain of just under 19%. Our fixed income allocation remained the same as 2022 at about 26% and cash dipped slightly to 6%.

Our Endowment income consisted of interest and dividends amounting to about \$60,500, up about 4% from the 2022 figure. The net realized and unrealized gain for the entire Endowment Fund was about \$293,000, or 11.6% of our beginning of year portfolio value. The Fund contributed \$360,000, or about 14.3% of our beginning of the year balance, towards



the church’s ongoing operations and annual diocesan payment plus an additional \$104,800 towards major repairs or upgrades (roof and the boilers generating heat). Our normal target for support of operations is 6%, or about \$151,000.

Following is a summary of the Endowment Fund for 2023:

Balance, 12/31/22	\$ 2,518,164
Additions:	
Interest/dividends	\$ 60,489
Net realized & unrealized gains	\$ 292,901
Withdrawals/deductions:	
Used toward church property/expenses	(\$ 360,140)
Used toward major repairs/expenses	(\$ 104,822)
Portfolio management expenses	(\$ 17,678)
Balance, 12/31/23	\$ 2,388,914

**Outlook for 2024**

- Inflation has been declining since mid-year 2023 and the December, 2023 year-over-year increase was about 3.4%. The Federal Reserve put a hard target for inflation at 2% which seems to be an unlikely figure to hit in the near term. Some economists believe a target range of from 2 to 3% would be a better option but, unfortunately, they don’t have control over interest rates. The lower inflation rate in December came with very robust increases in new jobs during the latter half of 2023 and unemployment rate stayed around 3.7% which is well below the longer-term rate of about 5.7%.
- Interest rates will likely continue to remain somewhat elevated at least for the foreseeable future or until inflation continues to drift lower towards the Federal Reserve’s target. The short-term rates (1-3 years) continue to exceed 4.2% while the 5 year and 10 year rates have fallen below 4% recently. If rates stay higher (above 5%), this could weaken consumer demand which could lead to lower corporate revenue/profits and possibly the labor market. Also, corporate debt burdens would continue to be a burden on profits.
- In the event of a recession, it is not likely that it would last very long. Since 1950, recessions have ranged in time from 2 to 18 months with the average being about 10 months. In addition, stock markets generally begin to recover before the recession ends.
- Dividends will continue to play a larger role in the period ahead. Since 2017,

growth in investments during the bull market was king with dividends in a lesser role. In the past 10 years or so, dividends accounted for less than 20% of total return but historically they have averaged nearly 40% of total return and during the 1970's accounted for nearly 70%.

Respectfully submitted,  
Roy A. Shubert, Chairman

## BEQUESTS

*Many parishioners have participated in Trinity worship and events for many years and would like to help provide for Trinity's future through their estate planning. We encourage everyone to consider their own circumstances and whether an enduring gift to Trinity would be appropriate. If you are so inclined, we would be most grateful, as these gifts through the years have contributed significantly to help sustain our work. Please consult your lawyer to add Trinity Church to your Will when you are ready. Gift amounts are considered private, and gifts may be made anonymously, if so desired.*

\* \* \* \* \*

In 2023, we continued our educational effort to raise awareness of the many options for Planned Giving. Remembering Trinity Church in a Will is the most common approach and is a deferred gift. Many of you have already remembered Trinity in your Will and 13 households have let us know, and we thank you. There are many tax advantaged options that can financially benefit a donor today and these include appreciated securities, Donor Advised Funds, and Qualified Charitable Distributions. Life income gifts are future gifts and provide tax advantages today, income for life, and a deferred gift. We want to thank Jasmine Declat and Linda Carson for providing testimonials to aid our educational effort this year on how to make a bequest and other types of Planned Giving. Please consider joining Jasmine, Linda, and other church leaders in making an enduring gift to Trinity.

We truly appreciate all of our parishioners and pray for those who have passed on. May their souls and the souls of all the departed, rest in peace.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dr. Lisa I. Yeh, Chair

## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

We finally were able to get back to normal life in 2023 and felt relieved and joyous to be able to do so. We also have a renewed appreciation for our Trinity Church community and many opportunities for fellowship. In this year's stewardship drive to fund Trinity's

2024 operating expenses, speakers focused on the many ways we appreciate our Trinity community.

To better understand how the entire congregation appreciates Trinity, we hosted a series of Trinity Gatherings in the fall to solicit input from everyone about what they most cherished at Trinity. We found out that parishioners appreciate many things at Trinity!

Mailings went out to the entire congregation in the middle of October launching the stewardship campaign and asking everyone to consider how the Trinity community has welcomed us, supported us, and helped our relationship with God. Increasing financial challenges and Vestry efforts to address them were mentioned along with a probable change to Trinity programs in 2024. Frequently Asked Questions, a testimonial, and a pledge card were also included. Pledges were requested to be returned to Trinity by October 29, 2023.

As of December 31, 2023, Trinity has received a total of \$435,995 from 135 pledge cards. This is a \$44,749 increase from December 31, 2022, which is an impressive 11.4% increase in total pledges. 59 of these pledges increased their financial commitment above their last year's amount. This is a 15% increase in giving from these households above last year. We had 15 new giving units complete pledge cards (households who did not make a giving commitment for 2023 and did not make regular donations in the past) and 7 new giving units who formalized their giving with a pledge card in 2024 (these households did make regular plate donations in the past), for a total of 22 new giving units. We have not received pledges from 16 households that had pledged in 2023. Total giving from all households completing a card as of December 31, 2023 is \$435,995. This is about \$11,000 higher than the mid-December estimate available to the Vestry when making the 2024 budget. Adding an estimate for plate offerings based on the prior 3 years gives an estimated total of about \$491,000 in giving for 2024.

Thank you for all the generous financial commitments made by parishioners for 2024 and the increase in giving from so many families. Welcome to the Trinity community to all the new households. Thank you for being a part of our vibrant and engaged Trinity community! Thanks also to the volunteers who shared their stories about the Trinity community: David Douglass, Kristina Van Name, and Rafael Declet.

Despite the relative success of this campaign, Trinity continues to face financial challenges. The decline in membership over the years and heavy reliance on our endowment are concerns, and in 2023 the vestry looked into ways to close our budget gap through both increases in income and decreases in expenses. This will likely result in some program changes in 2024 as we work toward a sustainable budget for our long-term future.

We will also continue to seek assistance and support from all of the congregation as we continue on this journey of making Trinity an even more blessed and joyful church community.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dr. Lisa I Yeh

## 2023 PLEDGES

The congregation thanks all of our generous donors throughout 2023. Special thanks goes to all those who made a pledged commitment to help sustain Trinity Church in 2023:

Ferrill Alderfer  
Helen Anderson  
Thomas and Laura Bader  
Michael and Julia Bathke  
Barbara Benton  
Kevin Berry  
John Bradley and Camille Introcaso  
John and Elizabeth Brennan  
David and Teresa Britton  
Michael and Lauren Bulboff  
Cecilia Campolucci  
Len and Wendy Carber  
Cathryn Carroll  
Linda Carson  
Gayle Celentano  
Donald and Nancy Chambers  
Ken and Aimee Chojnacki  
Angela and Jenna Cipolla  
Donald and Simone Cochrane  
Robert and Robin Crowl  
Rafael and Jasmine Declet  
Brian and Deb Della Rosa  
Janet deVry  
Joan and John Dighton  
David and Carol Donachy  
David and Karen Douglass  
Robin and James Dryden  
Craig Ebner and Steven Butler  
Wayne and Kathleen Farren  
Sarah Fawcett-Lee and Jason Lee

Walter and Heike Fazler  
Kevin and Elizabeth Field  
Peter and Claudia Fletcher  
Don and Sarann Foster  
Nancy Froelicher  
Richard and Alberta Fuller  
Barbara and James Gattinella  
Glenn and Lisa George  
Jeffrey Gola and Linda Cecil  
Jennifer Gotthelf  
Christine Hallam  
Scott Hart and Amy Sprague  
Richard and Sandra Hay  
Susan Hogan  
Al and Carol Hoinsky  
Stella Horton  
James and Nancy Johnson  
Jeffrey and Nancy Johnson  
Kevin and Jeanette Kates  
Brian and Cynthia Kerr  
Priscilla Knapp  
Peter Knerr  
Mark and Suzanne Leis  
Loretta Johns Lill and Bob Lill  
Shelley Lippincott  
Robert Litsinger  
Bruce and Beverly Lovejoy  
Mark and Kisha Mann  
Edward and Jan Marcinkevich  
Chris and Nancy Matthews

William and Stacy McBride  
Joseph and Barbara McDonnell  
Thomas and Cathy McGarry  
Stephen and JoAnna Meader  
Emily Mellott  
Abigail Merk  
Jean Mervine  
Margaret Mikuta  
Maureen Moorer  
James Morley and Anne Dalesandro  
John and Janet Murray  
Polly Murray  
Christopher and Christine Norris  
William and Yvonne Oseiwe-Williams  
Adam and Amy Paglione  
Elizabeth Park and Timothy Pelletreau  
Edwin and Hollis Pearson  
Esther Pearson  
Anthony and Kathleen Perez  
Jeanette Peterson  
Thomas Pine  
John and Barbara Potter  
Linda Ralls  
Richard and Sandi Rapp  
David and Lori Rapuano  
Joan Reid  
Harry and Victoria Rice  
Brian and Helen Richards  
Charles Robinson  
Lorraine Ryan and Joseph Tufaro  
John Salmon Jr.  
Gerald and Susan Satkofsky  
Williams and Cecilia Schmidt  
Michael and Michelle Seaman

Todd and Sarah Senno  
David and Jane Shaw  
Roy and Lydia Shubert  
Lynn Sloane  
Donald Smith  
Gerri Smith  
Craig and Amy Snodgrass  
Matthew and Tammy Solitro  
Joseph and Kathryn Staudenmayer  
Jerry Steinberg  
David and Susan Taylor  
Ronald and Norene Taylor  
Elizabeth Thomas  
Joseph and Suzanne Tibbels  
Michael and Kristina Van Name  
Bruce and Sharon Velzy  
Kathleen Veston  
Scott Wallace  
Carolyn Weeks  
Mick and Julie Weeks  
Jackie Whitfield  
Joan Willett  
Cora and Elvy Williams  
Rick and Jocelyn Williams  
Vernon and Maris Williams  
Harry and Diana Wind  
Robert Winzler  
Jeff and Susan Wojcik  
James Wolfe  
Elsa Wood  
Lisa Yeh  
Steven and Jennifer Yocum  
John Zeigler

We give thanks to God for all of our generous donors. If you thought you had made a pledged commitment for 2023, but don't see your name above, please contact Geri Trost at (856) 235-0811 or at [gtrost@trinitymoorestown.org](mailto:gtrost@trinitymoorestown.org), so that we can correct our omission. Thanks!

## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN AND PROJECTS COMMITTEE

The Campaign for Trinity is continuing to build a Trinity that is stronger and more welcoming for all! You may remember that we began gathering pledges in 2020, with some pledges extending over a 5-year period from 2021 to 2025. The total amount pledged is \$1.5 million, which we are on track to collect by the end of 2025. **Thank you to all who have donated, and if you would like to add new support to the campaign that would be a wonderful gift!**

We are still on track to complete all of the projects originally planned, despite the fact that construction expenses have increased significantly since the budget was developed in 2020. We are trying to work within the funds available and adjust our expectations accordingly.

High-level results:

Total Income Received as of 12/31/2023	\$1,034,651
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Total Expenditures as of 12/31/2023	\$831,093
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Expenses by category:

Projects	\$652,694
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Fundraising	\$108,398
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Donations to ECS and Community Grants	\$70,000
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The largest projects completed in 2023 were major fire safety improvements required by the fire inspector. A fire sprinkler system was required in the basement areas, including underneath the church. Fortunately we were able to reach agreement with Moorestown Township to scale back the scope of the sprinklers and add structural changes to section off the protected areas, which reduced the cost significantly. We also elected to add a comprehensive new fire detection and alarm system to the entire building complex. These two projects cost just over \$140,000, and we believe these changes offer meaningful protection and the best possible early warning in the event of a fire.

The accessible ramp to the church was finished early in the year and we have enjoyed welcoming parishioners with mobility challenges to our worship. Also completed were masonry repairs to the bay window in the parish hall and the bay window in the rector's office, both of which were leaking badly. We are still trying to determine whether the leaking has been stopped in other areas of the school building.

Still to come in 2024 and 2025 are the following projects:

- Parish Hall air conditioning, accessible entry and bathrooms, and other renovations. This project is in the planning phase now, under the direction of a firm called Historic Building Architects.
- Lighting system improvements in the church
- New carpet and possibly other rehabilitation projects in the church offices

Ten percent of Capital Campaign proceeds (\$140,000) is earmarked for outreach, with half supporting Episcopal Community Services and half supporting other local charitable organizations. The Trinity Outreach Commission established a grant process and disbursed \$35,000 in community grants in 2023 to the following organizations:

- \$12,000 to Food Bank of South Jersey for HVAC system for new Community Training Room
- \$9,500 to MEND for building repairs
- \$8,500 to Cathedral Kitchen for gate motor replacement
- \$5,000 to Fishes and Loaves for a refrigerator

We are so thankful for the support of the capital campaign donors who are funding all of this important work.

In order to provide a complete record of how the capital campaign funds are being spent, shown below are all of the projects completed to date.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Nancy Matthews, Warden & Don Smith, Property Committee Chair

	<b>Spent to Date</b>
Episcopal Community Service	\$35,000.00
Outreach Grants	35,000.00
Consulting Fees - Fundraising	100,000.00
Other Fundraising Costs	8,398.76
Consulting fees - Projects	10,018.30
Fire-safe Stairwell	46,542.00
212 West 2nd Street	91,072.33
Walkway	11,671.00
Accessibility Project	27,362.00
Refinish doors	15,544.99
Landscaping	19,569.43
Architect & Engineering Costs	9,203.72
Air Conditioners	141,695.00
Sprinkler System	63,509.68

Fire Alarm System	76,559.00
School Bldg – addressing leaks	86,619.98
School A/C & Windows	10,802.00
Front Walk	5,030.00
Parish Hall	27,200.00
Lighting in Church	500.00
Fire Doors	9,795.00
<b>Total expenses incurred</b>	<u>\$831,093.19</u>

### **PROPERTY COMMITTEE**

Major projects in 2023 Were the Fire Sprinkler System and the updated Fire Alarm System which are detailed in the Capital Campaign report.

The 2022 upgrade to our building light and heating systems has proved to be an enormous success in 2023 we realized substantial savings on our PSE&G bills. In 2023 members of the Property Commission and our Church Sexton engaged in many repairs’ upgrades and improvements around our campus. Recaning and redoing the cushions of the chairs on the Altar, redoing the kneeling cushions on the Altar rail, adding electrical outlets in the front pews for use in music programs, repairing rotted trim in the bay window of the Parish Hall, plaster work and repainting some areas in the office, replacing and repairing toilets in the school building just to name a few. And there is much more work to be done.

It is my belief we are all Stewards of Trinity Church, and it is up to us to leave it in better condition than when we arrived. We are all extremely blessed to be members of this congregation and have such a magnificent and spiritual building to worship in. If you believe as I do and are interested in identifying, planning and sometimes doing projects please reach out to Nancy Matthews, John Dighton or myself about getting involved.

Respectfully Submitted  
Don Smith

### **GARDEN ANGELS**

First, on behalf of everyone at Trinity Episcopal Church, I offer my deepest thanks to Ken Chojnacki for his tremendous leadership of our small but mighty group. In November, after many years of dedicated service, Ken passed the trowel to me – and I am honored (and somewhat daunted) to follow in his footsteps.



It's too easy for our congregation and passers-by to take our beautiful gardens for granted. After all, God has a way of making things grow – thanks to sun, rain, and fertile soil. But it also takes hands-on effort to keep Trinity's outdoor spaces in tip top condition, and so the Garden Angels periodically descend (figuratively, not literally) to keep things under control.

I hope you will agree that our newly planted garden at the main entrance to the church is stunning. Skillfully designed by Cecelia Schmidt, and filled with native plants, it has quickly matured and is now a lovely focal point at Main Street's busiest intersection. The Sanford Garden (at the entrance to the parking lot) was lush and colorful all summer and fall and provides a natural habitat for birds and insects during the winter. And, the Memorial Garden (our lovely courtyard) continues to be a serene retreat, full of interest no matter the season. Plans for all these spaces in 2024 are still evolving, with a major focus on providing not only beautiful spaces for the human eye, but a rich habitat for insects and birds.

In 2023, the Garden Angels held quarterly "clean-up" sessions, and 8 volunteers were active throughout the year including Ken Chojnacki, Cecelia Schmidt, Bill McBride, Joe MacDonald, Dianna Wind, Lois Janney and me.

We typically meet on Saturday mornings for a couple of hours, with most of the effort being needed in the spring and fall. A few of us will do informal "clean-ups" throughout the year, as required. You do not have to be a knowledgeable gardener to join us! In fact, becoming a Garden Angel is a great way to learn about basic gardening and to get your hands dirty. If you'd like to get email alerts about clean-up dates, please contact me at 410-350-9075 or [sfawcettlee@gmail.com](mailto:sfawcettlee@gmail.com).

Sarah Fawcett-Lee  
Chief Garden Angel

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*VALEDICTION*

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**NECROLOGY**

*We offer our prayers for the following members of our community who have died since the last Annual Meeting of the congregation.*

George Flynn  
Elizabeth Makel  
Caroline Rossell  
Stephen Wenzler  
Linda Zeigler

*Father of all, we pray to you for those we love, but see no longer. Grant them your peace; let light perpetual shine upon them; and, in your loving wisdom and almighty power, work in them the good purpose of your perfect will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen***

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## HYMN

1 Joy - ful, joy - ful, we a - dore thee, God of glo - ry, Lord of love;  
 2 All thy works with joy sur-round thee, earth and heaven re - flect thy rays,  
 3 Thou art giv - ing and for - giv - ing, ev - er bless - ing, ev - er blest,

hearts un - fold like flowers be - fore thee, prais - ing thee, their sun a - bove.  
 stars and an - gels sing a - round thee, cen - ter of un - bro - ken praise.  
 well - spring of the joy of liv - ing, o - cean - depth of hap - py rest!

Melt the clouds of sin and sad - ness; drive the dark of doubt a - way;  
 Field and for - est, vale and moun - tain, bloom - ing mea - dow, flash - ing sea,  
 Thou our Fa - ther, Christ our Bro - ther: all who live in love are thine;

giv - er of im - mor - tal glad - ness, fill us with the light of day.  
 chant - ing bird and flow - ing foun - tain, call us to re - joice in thee.  
 teach us how to love each o - ther, lift us to the joy di - vine.

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 Music: *Hymn to Joy*, Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827); adapt. Edward Hodges (1796-1867), alt.

## **THE VESTRY OF TRINITY CHURCH**

Elizabeth Louie (Warden)

Nancy Matthews (Warden)

John Bradley

Sally Campolucci

David Douglass

Scott Hart

Joe McDonnell

Dave Shaw

Don Smith

Jeff Wojcik

Lisa Yeh

## **TRINITY CHURCH STAFF**

The Reverend Emily A. Mellott, Rector

Mr. Vernon H. Williams, Organist and Choirmaster

Mrs. Kate Stefanko, Office and Communications Manager

Mr. Kevin Moore, Sexton

Mrs. Geri Trost, Financial Administrator

Mrs. Christine Andonie, Sunday School Director

Mrs. Maris Williams, Director of Cherub and Carol Choirs

Mrs. Nancy Johnson, Preschool Director