

Giving Story - David Shaw

A little more than six years ago Jane and I first walked through the doors of Trinity church. At the time, we were living in Minnesota and visiting our son and daughter-in-law in south Jersey. It was pre-pandemic. We had already decided we would eventually relocate to the area but did not have a timeline. So, we were not church shopping – simply visiting on a Sunday morning in an area we did not know well.

I clearly remember my reaction upon entering the church. Wow. What a wonderful space. We settled into a pew, were moved by the music from Vernon and the Choir, challenged to think by Mother Emily's sermon, smiled at the youth participating in the service, listened to announcements about sandwich making for St. Paul's, bible study, and fellowship activities. As we knelt at the rail we were both feeling – this is something we might want to be part of.

The pandemic and remote work accelerated our timeline for relocation and within a few months we were living in south Jersey. Of course, our early experience as members of Trinity was a bit different than that visit. Our first official service as parishioners was outside in the graveyard! But we were warmly welcomed, and we felt sure we had found a new spiritual home.

We all have our own reasons for being part of this community. And what is most important to us can change over time, through the course of our lives. For Jane and I right now, it's a combination of worship, music, fellowship through our many parish activities, and an opportunity to participate in outreach to the wider south Jersey community. As we watch the youth in the service every Sunday, we think about our young grandchildren, and thank God for the talented and dedicated people leading our Christian Formation activities.

It's not easy to keep all of this going. Caring for an historic building, creating a calendar of events that can accommodate the time pressures young families face, maintaining an inclusive community where all feel safe and welcome... And yet, our community is vibrant and growing! We have experienced a lot of changes over the last couple of years. We have become a congregation that relies heavily on people stepping up and sharing the gift of their time and talents. In many ways this seems only to have strengthened our bonds.

This is why Jane and I give to Trinity: yes, it's about what I talked about above – what we get out of it – but perhaps more importantly, it's because we believe the world needs more of this. More of what we do at Trinity. More worshiping God, more children learning about Jesus, more outreach to those in need, more inclusive safe spaces that welcome everyone... That is why we give.

Thank you for your presence, for the special gifts of time and talent you share, and for your continued financial support.

