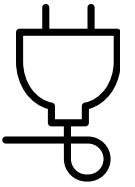




MAY 2026

# TRINITY CONNECTION



THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF TRINITY UMC



*"Love God, Love People!"*

## WELCOME TO TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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

### **Pastoral Team**

**Rev. Erica Munoz**

Lead Pastor

**Rev. Dr. Deb De Vos**

Associate Pastor, Spiritual Formation & Discipleship

**Rev. Donald Gebhard**

Associate Pastor

### **Church Office Hours**

Monday - Thursday - 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Friday - Office closed

### **Worship Times**

Saturday 5:00 pm - Worship in Trinity House

Sunday 10:00 am - Worship in the Sanctuary

All Worship Services are livestreamed at  
[Facebook.com/TrinityCatchTheSpirit](https://www.facebook.com/TrinityCatchTheSpirit)

# From the Pastor

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Spring is making its way to New Jersey. It's May, and many of you are out in your gardens again, planting flowers, tending the soil, and preparing for new growth. This season reminds us that growth doesn't happen by accident—it happens with care, attention, and intention.

This year at Trinity, we are focusing on your growth—your spiritual growth and your growth as a disciple of Jesus Christ. We began the year by offering a Bible Reading Plan designed to help you read through the Bible in one year. If you missed it, the plan is still available on our church website. The Bible isn't meant to be read like a novel from cover to cover; it's a library of books—stories, poetry, history, wisdom, and letters. This plan can help guide you through it in a meaningful way. Consider doing it with a friend and take time to talk together about what you're learning.

We are also offering monthly Lunch and Learns on a variety of topics to help you grow in faith and in understanding what it means to follow Jesus. I hope you're taking advantage of these opportunities, and I encourage you to keep coming—more are planned. In May, our Lunch and Learn will be hosted by Congregational Care.

And right now, our sermon series is focused on prayer. Prayer is vital to spiritual growth. It's how we deepen our relationship with God. Sometimes prayer can feel mysterious, and sometimes we may even wonder if we're doing it "right." But the good news is this: if you're talking to God, you're praying. There is no wrong way to begin.

Think about your garden. You water your plants. You nourish the soil. You make sure they get sunlight. You pull weeds and protect what you've planted. Growth requires steady care. In the same way, if you've raised children—or are raising them—you know that growth comes through nurturing, attention, and love.

Our spiritual lives require the same kind of nurturing. Faith grows when we tend it.

So, as you spend time outdoors this season, I encourage you to also spend time with the Master Gardener—the Creator who lovingly planted life within you and who desires to be in relationship with you. As the weather warms and you find yourself outside more, invite God into those moments. Pay attention to the beauty around you. Notice where God is and where God has been at work.

Let God into your daily life, and watch what happens. Your relationship with God will deepen, and that growth will begin to shape everything—your relationships, your choices, your words, your thoughts—until, little by little, you find yourself becoming more like Christ.

Blessings,

*Pastor Deb*



# Stay in the Know and Join in the Fun!



Savor  
Supper

## 3 Spots Available!

Ladies gather with other women for a simple meal, fellowship and great conversation.

The next Savor Supper will be on Thursday, May 14th at 5:30pm in Hackettstown.

Sign up by emailing [ddevos@catchthespirit.org](mailto:ddevos@catchthespirit.org).  
To host a Savor Supper contact Pastor Deb also!



## April Senior Social Tea Party Fun!



## Senior Social

Join us for an afternoon of fun. Come test your memory of your youth with quizzes and games. Remember to bring a friend to this fun time of fellowship with other seniors. Coffee and a snack will be provided. There will be lots of time for conversation.

Trinity House  
Thursday, May 21<sup>st</sup>  
1:15 - 2:45 pm

## SENIOR WHICH CAME FIRST?

Which came first? Guess the earliest, score points, and the one with the most correct answers wins!

Vinyl	Or	Cassette
Color TV	Or	Microwave
The Beatles	Or	The Rolling Stones
Pepsi	Or	Coca-Cola
Wrinkles	Or	Grey Hair
Led Zeppelin	Or	Pink Floyd
Leggings	Or	Jeans
Twist Dance	Or	Disco Dance
Coffee	Or	Tea

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# Stay in the Know and Participate!

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## United Methodist Men

On April 11th thirty-seven people attended our breakfast featuring author Paul Semendinger. Paul spoke about the West Point Cadets who fought at Gettysburg. This was Paul's third visit to us and again his presentation was both informational and intriguing.

Our May 9th speaker will be Mr. Jason Dennen who will speak to us about his experience of surviving a serious sky diving accident. Jason was recommended to us by Pastor Erica and he will be speaking about his book: "8 Days till Sunrise", which describes his accident and his remarkable recovery. This will be an inspirational presentation.

Our last breakfast this year will occur on June 13th. The speaker will be our own Bill Mahoney. Bill will speak about his experience of being part of a team to carry a wheelchair bound friend up Mt. Kilimanjaro. This will be yet another inspirational presentation.

What a way to finish our year, with two exceptionally motivational presentations.

This year's Voucher Sale in coordination with Donaldson's Nursery began Easter weekend and will run through August 30th. The vouchers again cost \$10. You may buy vouchers by using the church bulletin's "Just Say Yes" form, contacting the church office, or my contacting one of the officers of the UMM. As always, all our proceeds will go to the Torgersen Scholarship.

The UMM continues collecting new and slightly used clothing for the Midnight Run Mission. They always need NEW underwear and socks, and either new or slightly used jeans and hoodies. With the warm weather coming, shorts would also be appropriate. Their next NYC run will be in May. Please consider helping us support this mission.

We have started scheduling speakers for our next year, starting in September. If you have a suggestion for a speaker, please contact one of the officers of the UMM. To date, we have filled just over ½ of our speakers.

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

## Trinity's United Women in Faith invite you to join us on June 6th !

Susie the Life Coach presents -  
Self-Care: The Key to Well-Being

Join us on Saturday, June 6th from 11:00 am – 2:30 pm in Starr Hall for Self-Care: The Key to Well-Being, featuring life coach and mental health professional Susie the Life Coach. You can learn more about her at [susielifecoach.com](http://susielifecoach.com)

Enjoy a light lunch including pizza, salad, soft drinks, cookies, and brownies while connecting with other women in our church and community. As part of our outreach, we invite attendees to bring feminine hygiene products to support the Lord's Pantry and help address a growing need in our community.

Cost: \$10

Come take time to invest in yourself while making a difference for others. Register using Just Say Yes! All are welcome!



# Stay in the Know and Be a Part of the Action!

## Finance Ministry Team Update

Here is a quick snapshot of our financial status as of the end of our first quarter this year:

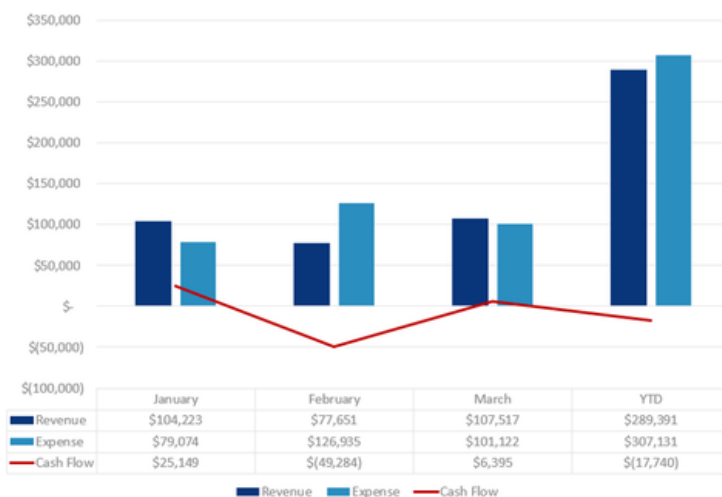
- Our planned annual spending budget is \$1.1M. Most of our budget comprises non-discretionary expenditures such as salaries, GNJAC fees, and utilities for our church buildings. • Q1 Revenues were \$289,390 vs. budget of \$244,405.
- Q1 Expenses were \$307,130 vs. budget of 297,935.
- Because expenses exceeded revenue in Q1, our change in net assets is (-\$17,740). We are working to control expenses; however, all utility costs (gas, electricity, water/sewer, internet, phone) are higher than budgeted. Snow removal fees exceeded planned budget.

Thank you for your generosity of time, talents and money. Your giving makes it possible for us to serve and do the work of building God's Kingdom here on earth.

Please feel free to reach out to any member of the Finance Ministry Team if you have any questions or would like to learn more.

"In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" –Acts 20:35

### Q1 2026 Revenue vs. Expenses



## Opportunities to Serve

**Be the reason a young person feels seen, safe, and supported.**

The Middle School Drop-In Center at Trinity United Methodist Church is growing—and with that growth comes an incredible opportunity to make a lasting impact in the lives of local youth.

Since opening our doors in September, what began as a small program serving an average of just 5 students per day has quickly expanded to over 100 registered students, with approximately 40 youth attending daily. This rapid growth reflects a clear and urgent need in our community: a safe, welcoming place where young people can build friendships, explore interests, and simply feel like they belong.

The Drop-In Center is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM, providing a structured yet relaxed environment where students can participate in sports, creative activities, games, and community-building experiences.

We are currently seeking caring and reliable volunteers to support this important work.

Opportunities include:

- Providing general supervision and helping maintain a safe, positive environment
- Building relationships and being a consistent, supportive presence for youth
- Leading or assisting with special interest clubs (arts, STEM, games, fitness, etc.)

You do not need to commit to every day—we understand busy schedules and will gladly work with your availability. Whether you can offer a few hours a week or occasional support, your presence can make a meaningful difference.

This is more than a volunteer opportunity—it is a chance to invest in the well-being, confidence, and future of young people in our community.

If you are interested in learning more or getting involved, we would love to connect with you. Please reach out to Trisha Massa, Program Director at [tmassa@catchthespirit.org](mailto:tmassa@catchthespirit.org) or through Just Say Yes.

### Breakfast Run

Our next run into NYC is scheduled for Saturday morning May 16th. We will meet at church at 6:00 pm to prepare the food and then go into the city. Just a reminder that you do not have to drive into the city yourself – we will have designated drivers.

## Other Ways to Connect and Things to Know!



From Cheryl VanHorn-

A big thank you to everyone who supported the Caring Hands to Hearts mission again this year. In our third year, a total of 963 gloves, scarves, hats, and socks was shared with our community, bringing a three year total to almost 2,000 pieces of winter wear.

Much appreciation has been expressed by recipients for the generosity of the people of Trinity UMC. Your helping hands mean so much to so many.

From Ginny Bormann-

Dear Trinity passion players and all who participated in the Palm Sunday parade, Maundy Thursday drama and Good Friday Crosswalk, Your dedication and enthusiasm to help recreate and experience of the Easter message was so appreciated and enjoyed. Thank you so much to all who helped to make Holy Week so special and meaningful at Trinity UMC. God bless you all!

From Pastor Parish Relations (PPR) Ministry Team-

Thank you for your wonderful support to our pastors during Pastor Appreciation Month. Your kind notes, generous financial gifts and acknowledgment of their leadership are deeply appreciated. In addition your prayers, acts of kindness and presence have been a source of strength to them. Through your steadfast faith you are planting seeds that will bear fruit for years to come as we carry on as a church to do God's work.



### Births

**Colette Marie Gerges**, daughter of Hannah & Brian Gerges, granddaughter of Donna Applegate, great granddaughter of Carol Theys, and great niece of Alyson Reynolds.

### Baptisms

**Logan Earl Schick**, son of Earl and Rebecca Schick

### Sympathy to

**Danielle Cummins** and family on the death of her brother-in-law Anthony "Tony" DiLauri

**Linda Mezzino** and family on the death of her mother Marian Sterner

**Ginny Mitchell** and family on the death of her brother Bill Gabel



Skylands

## A WESLEY CIRCLE CHURCH

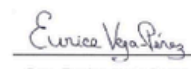
We praise God for your 100% Shared Ministry Giving in 2025.

## Trinity UMC (Hackettstown)

### THANK YOU

On behalf of the leaders of The United Methodist Church and the millions of people that we helped together through Shared Ministry Giving.

  
Rev. Cynthia Moore-Koikoi  
Resident Bishop

  
Rev. Eunice Vega-Perez  
District Superintendent



# Other Ways to Connect and Things to Know!



**VBS 2026 –**  
**Rainforest Falls, Exploring the Nature of God,**  
will be held July 27 – 31 from 9:00am – 12:15pm.  
Step into the mist into Rainforest Falls where kids  
grow strong roots of faith. [Here](#) is a list of our  
Rainforest Ranger (volunteer) opportunities.  
Registration is open for volunteers and/or  
participants [Here](#).

