

# Tidings



A Monthly Publication from Trinity United Methodist Church, Tallahassee, FL

## Guatemala Mission Trip 2025: A Tale of Six Miracles

By Jayne Mittan, Guatemala Mission Team Leader

**T**rinity's Guatemala Mission Team arrived in Guatemala City on Saturday, May 3, 2025. For the first time, we had team members traveling from North Carolina, Jacksonville, Orlando, Tallahassee, and Panama City. With that many different flights, what could possibly go wrong? Our one traveler from Panama City was delayed leaving Panama City and missed his flight from Dallas to Guatemala City. Our three travelers from Asheville, North Carolina, were five hours delayed leaving Asheville and missed their connection from Miami to Guatemala City. But guess what? Everyone got to Guatemala City within two hours of each other! That was miracle number one of the trip. We were off to a great start.

After a harrowing four-hour bus ride from Guatemala City, we arrived in Panajachel, our home-base for the week. We checked into the Hotel California (not kidding) and enjoyed a wonderful meal at Porch de Salomon. (There may have been a glass of wine or a beer or two involved.) Continue reading to learn about our successful mission trip and the rest of the miracles we encountered along the way!

*Photo: The whole construction team with Francisca, Rafael, Dilan, José, and Leonardo.*

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# Guatemala Mission Trip 2025, *continued*

Sunday morning, we enjoyed a boat ride across Lake Atitlan to a lovely resort called Casa Del Mundo (House of the World). We were treated to an amazing brunch of freshly prepared meals full of local fruits, eggs, and vegetables. After brunch we had plenty of time to get to know each other while relaxing and enjoying the beauty of God's creation surrounding us with flower gardens and breathtaking views of the lake surrounded by dormant volcanoes. For a team where some of us had never met each other, we gelled pretty quickly and shared our excitement of the coming week. That was miracle number two of the trip.



*The beauty that is Lake Atitlan, Guatemala*

Monday morning, bright and early, we shared breakfast and a devotional prepared by the Wesley Foundation team. They were so heartfelt and sincere, and turned our hearts and minds to the tasks ahead and to God's purpose in bringing us to this place.

## Constructing a Home

The construction team met and fell in love with the Hom Tax family. This family of five has been struggling in many ways. Father, Mr. Rafael, has epilepsy that requires daily medication. He works as a street vendor and has not been able to find other work due to his illness. Mother, Mrs. Francisca, helps support the family by selling sweets and jellies on market days. They do not have a refrigerator. When sales are good, they have a combined income of \$267 per month. Son Jose is 10 years old and is in the third grade. Son Leonardo is 9 years old and is in the second grade. Son Dilan is 1 year and 7 months old and is suffering from malnutrition. Porch de Salomon assists the family by providing Pediasure supplements for him. Rafael and Francisca struggle to cover the costs of their children's education due to the instability of their income. Their home is pieced together by sheet metal and tarps. The entire family sleeps in one room that is cold at night and very hot during the day.



*Karen Celandor learning the finer points of bending rebar from Lonnie*

The construction team labored all week digging footers for the foundation with pick axes and shovels. The ground is very rocky and the site had limited shade. They encountered a large boulder that required a group effort to remove by hand. The entire family, including the children, worked alongside the team. Dilan was the unofficial site supervisor making sure everyone was doing their job correctly. By the end of the week they had finished the footers, bent rebar, mixed and poured concrete, and started laying concrete blocks; remarkable progress in such a short time. That was miracle number three of the week.

But, more important than that progress on the house were the relationships formed between the team and the family. Imagine the trust and faith of Rafael and Francisca to believe that a group of gringos from America was coming to fulfill their lifelong dream of building a simple house that would protect them from the elements, keep them and their meager belongings safe, and provide their children a place to call home. For the first time, everyone would have their own bed to sleep in.

Despite the heat and the hard work, smiles were abundant throughout the week as dreams started to become a reality and prayers were answered. And, there may have been a gringos vs. locals soccer game or two. The team identified additional needs and stepped up to supply the family with groceries, pots and pans, bed linens, and other household goods, as well as money to purchase a refrigerator when the house is finished. The family was also presented with a Trinity prayer quilt. The money to build the house was raised in memory of Bill Celandor and Ed Jonas. The house is expected to be completed and dedicated in August. That was miracle number four of the week.

## Providing Medical Care

The medical team provided medical care and medications to a total of 325 patients (mostly children) in three different villages during the week. The team treated a variety of ailments, including body pain due to the heavy work that they do daily, infectious diseases, diabetes, high blood pressure, congenital defects, malnutrition, and injuries. Many patients were referred for testing and follow up. In addition to medications, each patient was given vitamins, soap, a washcloth, shampoo, a toothbrush, and toothpaste.



By far the most common condition we saw was depression and anxiety, more that I have ever seen on previous visits. I met one woman who had 10 children. Her husband had abandoned them 10 years ago after the birth of their last child. She was left to care for the children alone with no means to support them. It's very hard to earn an income when you are trying to care for that many children. When I asked my translator what else was contributing to these issues, she said that it is due to the current immigration situation going on in the U.S. Many of the women in these villages have relatives in the states who are working and sending them money. They live in fear that those family members will be deported and they will lose their only source of income to feed and care for their children and families. Most of the women I met were illiterate. Despite the number of patients, we had enough medicine and toiletries for everyone. That was miracle number five of the week.



**Arriving at our first medical clinic of the week, organizing our pharmacy suitcases to carry to the clinic site from the boat**



**Our pharmacist, Eric Hand, busy in the pharmacy.**



**Dr. Barbara Williams in the medical clinic**

## Celebrating Mother's Day

On Thursday, the construction team and the medical team came together and spent the morning at an adult daycare center, Des Años Dorados (Golden Years) in San Juan Chacaya where we helped them celebrate Mother's Day. It was a very festive occasion, with music supplied by an authentic Mariachi band, dancing, door prizes for the residents, and cake. It's hard to say who had more fun: the residents or the team. Suffice it to say that a good time was had by all.

Thursday afternoon it was time to say goodbye to the Hom Tax family. Many tears were shed and many prayers uplifted. On Friday we had a chance to unwind a little and enjoy a cultural tour across the lake in San Juan La Laguna, or go zip lining for the adventurous souls. Saturday morning we made our way back to Guatemala City for our flights home. We were tired, but our hearts were full and we will carry with us our memories of a truly miraculous week. Everyone made it home safely—miracle number six of the week.



**Our team with our honored guests at Golden Years celebrating Mother's Day**

## Looking Ahead

Our next trip is scheduled for October 31-November 7, 2026. We will be there for the Day of the Dead, or Día de los Muertos. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Jayne Mittan at [jaynemittan@gmail.com](mailto:jaynemittan@gmail.com). The team size will be limited to 15. To reserve your spot will require a \$500 non-refundable deposit that will go toward your team fee for the trip. Stay tuned for information on our annual garage sale fundraiser this fall to cover the cost of the medical clinics and house construction. If you would like to contribute toward the expenses of the clinics and house, please go to the Trinity app or the Trinity Website and click on "donate" and designate your donation for the Guatemala trip. All donations go directly to the work we do for the indigenous people of Guatemala and not to the team members' travel expenses.

# Onward!

By Paula Smith, Church Council Chair

On Saturday, May 3, 8:30 a.m., an amazing 100 dedicated Trinity volunteers gave up their Saturday to gather together to brainstorm future plans for our beloved church. Moor Hall was buzzing with conversations, ideas, and plans for the future.

Led by Christina Drouin, founder of the Center for Strategic Planning, ideas were discussed and recorded in small groups, then presented and prioritized by vote of the total group. Through breakfast and lunch and into the afternoon, Trinity's enthusiastic participants worked together, producing over 100 ideas for strategies and many more for initiatives to activate Trinity's refreshed Vision and Goals (approved by Church Council, April 9, 2025). After more focused work by the Strategic Planning Task Force (SPTF), all strategies and initiatives will be finalized to create a true action-oriented Strategic Plan to guide us forward for the next five years.

On Wednesday, May 28, 2025, 6:00 p.m., the SPTF presented the results of their work to date to Church Council. Following that presentation, work will commence to vet the many initiatives suggested by Trinity membership. This vetting work will conclude in the summer, creating actionable plans with attached timeline goals, just in time to motivate our stewardship campaign and successfully launch us into 2026.

The dedication, talent, and creativity of Trinity members is amazing. No wonder we are the most exciting church in Tallahassee!

Many thanks to our Strategic Planning Task Force. Their investment of time and talent for the future of Trinity is inspiring. Every time you see them, please tell them "Thank you!"

### 2025 Strategic Planning Task Force Members

**Co-Chairs:** Nan Hillis, James Hunt

**Research Work Group Co-Chairs:** Rick Burnette, Erica Staehling

**Onward Planning Day Work Group Co-Chairs:** Beverly Burleson, Amber Pendleton

**Communications Work Group Chair:** John Koehler

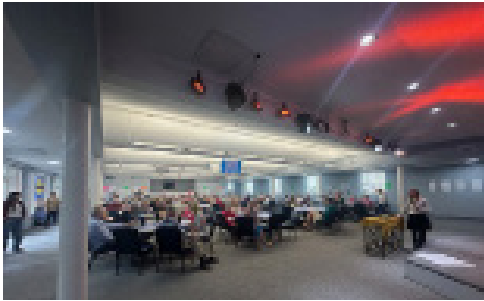
### Committee Members

Heath Annin  
Sean Bower  
Hines Boyd  
Janegayle Boyd  
Donna Bryan  
Lois Burnette

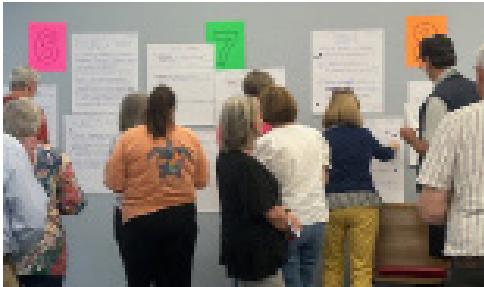
Gary Cherry  
John Crowe  
Rachael Diaz  
Jennifer French  
Bart Gunter  
Jennifer Gunter

Will Hall  
Sally Huggins  
Amy Jones  
Lori Keller  
Susan Koehler  
Cindy McDuffie

Jimmy Richerson  
Karen Rowan  
Paula Smith  
Pat Striplin  
Susan Thomas  
John Trombetta  
Emily Waugh



Christina Drouin leads a discussion with Trinity volunteers on Onward Planning Day



Trinity members consider ideas generated by small groups and vote on favorites



## Trinity Launched a New Website!

Have you visited [tumct.org](http://tumct.org) lately? Our new website promises to be simpler, more streamlined, and easier to navigate. We hope to get members and visitors engaged in the many opportunities for study, service, and fellowship that our church provides. The new website syncs with our app, so that events are easy to find and registration can happen right there on the website. As with anything new, we're sure there will be a few bugs to work out. However, we hope you'll enjoy your new [tumct.org](http://tumct.org)!



# Trinity's Mission Churches: Open Hearts and Abundant Grace

By Rev. Anna Brook Opalinski, Associate Pastor

During the disaffiliation process of the United Methodist Church a few years ago, there were faithful members of churches in Madison and Monticello who wanted to remain United Methodists. They gathered together, found places to worship, and worked with United Methodist Churches in Tallahassee to continue forming and growing together. Trinity UMC held the memberships of Open Hearts United Methodist in Monticello, and Saint Paul United Methodist held the memberships of Abundant Grace United Methodist in Madison. They have been our mission churches for the past two years, and it has been wonderful to worship together.



**Rev. Anna Brook Opalinski addresses members of Abundant Grace UMC**



**Rev. Anna Brook Opalinski with Dr. E. Lynn McLarty, who accompanied her to welcome Abundant Grace members**

On May 18, I went to worship with and preach at both congregations, helping prepare both groups for the arrival of their new pastor. We transferred the membership of Abundant Grace UMC to Trinity UMC, and we celebrated with them the fact that they will have another pastoral presence in their ministries.

Open Hearts United Methodist holds services at First Presbyterian Church in downtown Monticello, using their fellowship hall as their main worship space. Abundant Grace United Methodist holds services in rural Rocky Springs Methodist Church, a congregation that voted to disaffiliate, but that still offers their sanctuary to the United Methodist congregation. These two beautiful congregations are living into the future of United Methodism. They show grace when they could have chosen bitterness, faith when things looked challenging, and growth in the face of adversity. I am so grateful that Trinity UMC Tallahassee gets to be in ministry with these faithful folks, and I look forward to seeing what God will do with these two special congregations.

## Pastor Appointed to Serve Mission Churches

Rev. Kenneth "Will" Newton has been appointed to serve at both Open Hearts UMC in Monticello, Florida, and Abundant Grace UMC in Madison, Florida. A graduate of Florida State University and Wesleyan Theological Seminary, he has served in the Baltimore area since 2020 but looks forward to returning to Florida with his wife, Ginny. In reference to his faith, Rev. Newton said, "My formative experiences with the Church taught me that it can embody a certain political-social ethic—rooted in the eschatological promise of the Gospel—that can transform our world to be more just, compassionate, and loving. It can do this through the discipleship of individuals living in community as a response to an ever-expanding and inexhaustible grace." Rev. Newton begins his appointment at our mission churches in July 2025.



**Rev. Kenneth "Will" Newton**

## New History Website Coming Soon!

Trinity's Historical Society and Committee for the Preservation of Church History will soon have their own website! This new site will be able to house the growing collection of data, archives, and records that document over 200 years of Trinity's history. While [tumcthistory.org](http://tumcthistory.org) will be a separate website, it will be linked to the church's main website for easy access and ready interaction. We'll be sure to let you know when [tumcthistory.org](http://tumcthistory.org) is up and running!

# Trinity's 2025 Graduates

By Susan Koehler, Director of Communications

We are honored to announce the graduation of students who are a part of the Trinity family. We celebrate the graduates of Trinity United Methodist Preschool, high school, and college.

## Trinity United Methodist Preschool Graduates

Preschool Class of 2025

High School Class of 2038

George Anderson, Gilchrist  
Aiken Armstrong, undetermined  
Barrett Barnes, Kate Sullivan  
Beau Beaubien, Gilchrist  
Olivia Crane, Buck Lake  
Noah Davis, Kate Sullivan  
Ellie Duarte, School of Arts and Sciences  
Logan Falb, Kate Sullivan  
Zoe Gonzalez, Gilchrist

Samuel Lawton, Homeschool  
Alice Madden, Gilchrist  
Dylan Manning, Gilchrist  
Nika Reznikova, Gilchrist  
Hazel Root, Kate Sullivan  
Sutton Tillman, North Florida Christian  
Owen Vaughn-Newell, Kate Sullivan  
Ethan Williams, Maclay  
Jordan Yeboah, Canopy Oaks

## Trinity's High School Graduates



**Cole Annin**

Cole graduated from Lincoln High School in Tallahassee, Florida, and plans to attend Florida Southern College, where he will continue playing baseball while studying exercise science.

Cole's favorite hobbies are playing golf, spending time outdoors, and hanging out with friends. When asked what Trinity has meant to him, Cole said, "Trinity has been a constant source of support and community. It's helped shape my faith and given me a place to grow spiritually and personally"



**Caroline Garner**

Caroline graduated from Lake Nona High School in Orlando, Florida, and plans to attend the University of North Florida to major in pre-health kinesiology with a physical therapy path.

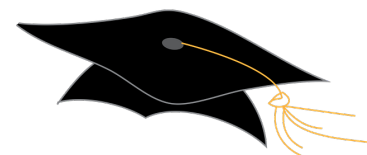
Caroline's favorite hobby is spending time with friends and being a manager for her high school baseball team. When asked what Trinity has meant to her, Caroline said, "Growing up in Trinity has brought me closer to God and brought me experiences I would have never had anywhere else. It has also brought me life long memories and friendships that I will never let go of."



**Luke Pararo**

Luke is a graduate of Liberty County High School in Bristol, Florida, and plans to take a gap year and work with his dad before attending Tallahassee State College.

Luke's favorite hobby is fishing. When asked about his connection to Trinity, Luke said, "My grandmother [Julie] goes to Trinity and has been a member since 1982."





## Trinity's College Graduates



### Marylyn Clark

Marylyn graduated from FSU with a Bachelor of Science in Special Education. She will pursue her Master of Science in Special Education and plans to become a teacher during the upcoming school year while working on her advanced degree. When asked what Trinity has meant to her, Marylyn said, "Trinity has meant so much to me! My husband has gone to this church since he was four years old. He led me to this church, where I started to work at the preschool. I have been a teacher-assistant going on four years and have loved every moment of it. I have met some really amazing friends that will be in my life forever! This preschool showed me the path of becoming a teacher! Marylyn's favorite hobby is reading fantasy or thriller books.

### Cassie Duclos

Cassie graduated from FSU with a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering and plans to pursue a PhD in Chemical Engineering at Texas A&M University. Cassie's favorite hobby is reading manga (a form of comics/graphic novels). When asked what Trinity has meant to her, Cassie said, "Growing up at Trinity was where my oldest friends always were. It was where I made so many memories, especially on youth trips, where we'd put in work to help out others or play crazy games or stay up late. I remember sleeping in a mud house under a leaky metal roof as freezing rain fell outside. I remember being comforted as I cried for reasons I couldn't begin to explain or even understand myself. I remember being on the roof with trusted mentors and friends and feeling close to everything. At Trinity I felt a sense of community, a sense that was stronger than at school or in clubs. Even the bittersweet times seem so perfect, almost untouchable. Though my old friendships aren't as well kept as they once were and Trinity isn't where my community is now, my experiences there are integral to who I am as a person."

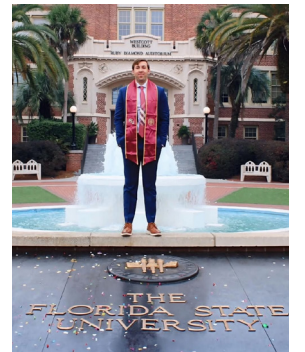


### Wyatt Duclos

Wyatt graduated from FSU with a Bachelor of Arts in History and plans to work in museums. Wyatt reports that his favorite hobby is eating. When asked what Trinity has meant to him, Wyatt summed up his feelings in one word: "Community."

### Carter Nash

Carter graduated from FSU with a Bachelor of Science in Finance. He plans to live and work in Tallahassee. When asked what Trinity has meant to him, Carter acknowledges a long history of involvement, including being baptized at Trinity, being a graduate of Trinity United Methodist Preschool, and being a K-5 NETKids participant.



### Rebecca Plagens

Rebecca will graduate from FSU on August 1, 2025, with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science and Policy. She plans to continue at FSU, pursuing a Master of Science in Urban and Regional Planning for Environmental Planning. Rebecca's favorite hobbies include hanging out with friends for weekly game night and playing video games. When asked what Trinity has meant to her, Rebecca said Trinity is "a comforting home church with a lot of friendly faces."

### Jane-Kathryn Whittington

Jane-Kathryn graduated from FSU with a Bachelor of Arts in History and will attend the University of North Carolina School of Law in the fall. When asked what Trinity has meant to her, Jane-Kathryn said, "The church has been a grounding and supportive community that's strengthened my faith and reminded me I'm never alone." Jane-Kathryn's favorite hobbies include running, playing intramural sports at FSU, and drawing.



# Does It Ever Slow Down?

By Brett Ingram, Facilities Director

I often hear people say, “It’s almost summer. Things will slow down now,” referring to what is happening around church. One might think that after all of the renovations that were done in 2024 in preparation for Trinity’s 200th celebration that things would slow down when it comes to the building and programs. One would be incorrect. Since the celebration, we have organized and accomplished a lot—with more to come.

We have gotten a fresh coat of paint on the first and second floor, door, and trim around the worship building. This would include around the Moor Hall entrances, the entrance to Duval Street, the choir room hallway, the parlor, the conference room hallway and the music hallway on the second floor. All of the restrooms have a new look in doors as well around these locations.

We have touched-up painting in the sanctuary to keep it looking fresh and new. Thanks to a generous donation, we’ve updated the furnishings in the parlor. Everything is color-coordinated now. It looks fantastic. Check it out! We have continued the “Let There Be Light” program by updating more of the building to new energy-efficient LED lighting. About 97% of the building has been completed to this point! Woo-Hoo! We have begun the process of weather-sealing the outside of the education building to keep moisture out and dryness in! These old bricks (circa 1949) have indeed seen their fair share of thunderstorms and hurricanes in their tenure here and are in need of a little TLC. The plan is to have the moisture barrier in place, set and cured long before the 2025 hurricane season. This will also enable us to continue proper upkeep in several of the children and adult classrooms. Every year there are several classroom air conditioners that are in need of replacing. This year is no different. With having 75 of them in the building, upkeep can be constant.



*1st, 2nd, and 3rd floor interiors have been painted and the exterior bricks are being weather-sealed*



*The parlor received new furniture*



*Landscaping and gardens*

We have been renovating several third floor classrooms to be friendlier and more accessible. Room 303 will now be a comfy curriculum resource library and reading room. When this room is open, people will be able to find Bible study curriculum and will have a place to sit and review it to see if it’s something they are interested in. Room 304 is now a well-needed storage room with several organizing storage racks. The area behind the stage in Moor Hall is now used for storage. There are plans to transfer this storage to room 304 and open the back of the stage of Moor Hall to include the existing outside windows. This would make the stage area larger. It would also make it possible to bring in more natural lighting and make it more aesthetically pleasing.

Plans are in the works for updating the family restroom, just off the Welcome Center. We are preparing to make it ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant with a larger door opening that would allow adequate clearance for wheelchairs. Let’s not forget about the playground where most of our children play. It has been and is being addressed as well. We have replaced worn areas of the playground surfacing with new pour-in-place rubber surfacing around the trees, under the swings, and around the sandbox. We have renewed the “Children’s Garden” with new colors and textures of plants to keep young minds and imaginations stimulated. (I am always careful to make sure that the things we purchase that will be around children are attractive and non-toxic!) The bench around the Children’s Garden on the playground, which I built about 12 years ago, is in need of replacing. One discussion is installing a more maintenance-free, child-sized bench to be put on the playground-facing side and a short four-foot picket fence surrounding the remaining sides. There are plans in the works to replace the wood borders on the playground with something more permanent that would entail less continued upkeep. Concrete has been discussed as a viable option.



*Playground improvements*

In addition to the extra “opportunities” listed above, there is still the normal upkeep and events that are continuing to happen: the every Wednesday morning Men’s Daybreak breakfast; the Wednesday night Summer Series dinners that will continue every other week during the summer; VBS is happening!; the preschool is continuing with their summer programing; Youth Week; every Sunday worship; the Tuesday and Thursday BFC exercise classes; regularly scheduled meetings...and the list goes on.

So, to answer the question, “Does it ever slow down”? Not at Trinity!



# BFC (Becoming Fit at Church) Ministry – FUN, FELLOWSHIP, FITNESS and FUNDS

By Beth Curry, BFC Team Leader

## Can You Do the Flamingo?

Come join us for the BFC (Becoming Fit at Church) Balance and Fall Prevention class and learn how to do the Flamingo (and lots of other balance exercises—just like our good friend Lyn Bevis is doing here. Class meets at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesdays and at 1:05 p.m. Thursdays.

## What Do Bananas, Mattress Pads and Spending Money for FSU Students Have in Common?

All are ways the BFC Ministry is making a difference both locally and globally. Every Monday, fresh bananas are given out with snack packs to our unhoused neighbors. In February, 40 waterproof mattress pads were donated for the bunk bed build. And in May, 14 FSU students received extra funds to support their mission trip to Guatemala. These are just a few of the many ways this ministry touches lives in our community and around the world.

How does the BFC Ministry raise these funds? Our dedicated BFC Instructor Team volunteers their time to lead exercise classes and Pickleball sessions. Participants are encouraged to make a suggested donation each time they attend. Since 2008, over \$90,000 has been raised and given to benefit others.

Come experience one of the seven weekly BFC Ministry Exercise classes or a BFO Pickleball session and have FUN, FELLOWSHIP, get FIT and help raise FUNDS for community service. Groups will meet throughout the summer. For all the details, see our information on the Adult Ministries page of [tumct.org](http://tumct.org), or digital readers can click here. To register, email [BFCSeries@yahoo.com](mailto:BFCSeries@yahoo.com), or call the church office and leave a call-back number.



*BFC participant Lyn Bevis "doing the flamingo" in his flamingo shirt.*

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## Summer Dinner Series

By Betsy Gingery, Culinary Director



Our regular Wednesday Night Dinners came to an end on May 28, but never fear—more food, fun, and fellowship are on the menu. Our Summer Dinner Series will feature two events in June and two events in July. I hope you'll add the following dates to your calendar and join in on the fun!

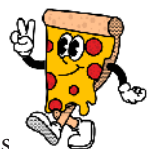


**June 11 - Bingo Night:** Enjoy hamburgers, hot dogs, and chips, and prepare to win prizes!

**June 25 - Nacho Average Game Night:** Fun and games will be accompanied by tacos!

**July 9 - Worship Night:** Bring the family for praise and worship, and enjoy some Sloppy Joes and Fritos

**July 23 - '50s Sock Hop / Packing Snack Packs:** Dine on pizza while providing service for our local missions.



As always, please remember to register in advance so that we know how to plan. You can register by going to the Culinary Calendar on the Trinity app, by visiting the Events page of the new [tumct.org](http://tumct.org) website, or by calling the church office.

# Meet Erin Casey: New Director of Trinity United Methodist Preschool

By Susan Koehler, Director of Communications

**E**rin Casey is a Certified Early Childhood Educator with over twenty years of experience. Over the past school year, she's been teaching three-year-olds in Trinity's weekday preschool. That means that much like her predecessor Stacey Duggar, Erin began her time with Trinity as a teacher before moving into the role of director. Erin officially began her new role on May 27, but before she got too busy, she was gracious enough to sit down for an interview.



**Erin Casey, Director of Preschool**

**Erin, tell us a little bit about your upbringing and background.**

I was born in Little Rock, Arkansas, but my dad's job moved us around the south before settling our family in Clearwater, Florida, in time for me to finish high school. From there, I attended the University of Florida (Go Gators!) and earned my degree in Early Childhood and Exceptional Student Education. Over the last 20+ years, I have taught in many different preschool classrooms while raising my five children.

**You've served our preschool so well this year as a teacher. Describe what you see as your new role as Director.**

Trinity United Methodist Preschool is already an amazing school with a rich history and dedicated staff! I am excited to be here to continue building strong relationships between the preschool, the church, and our community as we work to grow the school to its fullest potential!

**What special skills and experiences do you bring with you that will impact your work here?**

As a former special education teacher and advocate for young children, I am passionate about all areas of learning, but I am particularly interested in helping children develop their social-emotional health and self-regulation skills as they learn to navigate this big and oftentimes confusing world.

**We know that life is much bigger than work. Tell us a little bit about your life outside of Trinity.**

I am mother to five pretty incredible kids, ages 23 - 11! My oldest three are in college and the two youngest are still at home with me. I'm also responsible for one mischievous cat and several wilting house plants.

**Can you fill us in on some of your hobbies and interests?**

My favorites are travel, movies, coffee, camping, cooking, and music.

**Okay, now it's time for some fun facts. We'll start with a lightning round of favorites.**

**Favorite flower:** Wildflowers

**Favorite dessert:** Cheesecake

**Favorite genre of music:** Pop/Rock

**Favorite holiday?** Christmas

**Favorite sports team:** Florida Gators

**Favorite Bible verse:** Matthew 22:37-40

*"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and most important commandment. The second is like it: "Love your neighbor as you love yourself."*

**What's your idea of a dream vacation?**

I'm on a mission to see our National Parks. I love a good road trip!

**If you could have one superpower, what would it be?**

Teleportation – downtown at rush hour is no joke!

We're so grateful for the opportunity to get to know our new Director of Trinity United Methodist Preschool, Erin Casey. We look forward to a great VBS experience for our weekday preschool children, followed by a summer filled with activities and a bright new school year ahead.



# Children's Ministry Update

By Candace Duclos, Director of Christian Education

Our Wednesday NETKids activities have come to an end for the school year. We've had so much fun! While we won't be meeting for our usual activities, we hope you've signed up for VBS and that you'll be joining us for our Summer Dinner Series, where we'll build community across generations! See p. 9 for more details on the summer dinners, contact [cduclos@tumct.org](mailto:cduclos@tumct.org) if you have questions, and enjoy this trip down memory lane!



It's been a great year. I hope to see you at some of our summer events. Have a safe and fun summer!

## Trinity Youth Happenings

By Britton Stacey, Director of Youth Ministries

This summer will be an exciting time for the youth group. First, we have summer camp June 16-21 at Warren Willis Camp and Conference Center. We also have our North Carolina mission trip July 13-18. This trip is for rising 7th graders through those who have graduated. Please be on the lookout for our summer youth meetups, which will happen throughout the summer. We will meet at local venues in Tallahassee for fun and fellowship at places like Funstation or Big Easy Snow Cones.

Also, be on the lookout for our Youth Week events. Youth Week will be July 28-August 1, and the events for this will be shared soon! Youth events will continue throughout the summer and be on the lookout for all the fun activities.

### Emma's Creed

May 4 was Confirmation Sunday. This year, we had one confirmand, Emma Staudt Willis. As part of her Confirmation process, Emma rewrote the Apostles' Creed in her own words. She shared her beautiful version of the creed in the Contemporary Service and has graciously agreed to share it with her church family here. We are so proud of Emma and know that you will enjoy the Apostles' Creed in Emma's words.

We believe in God the Father who watches over us like a shepherd with his sheep.

And we believe in Jesus the Son of God who died for us on the cross.

We believe in the Holy Spirit who speaks to us, protects us, and responds to our calls for help and justice.

We believe that in our sin we may be forgiven because of God's love for us.

We believe that through church community we may become closer to the Lord who calls us his children even when we run away.

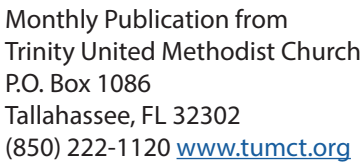
We believe that God is greater than death and that when Jesus died, sin died, and God resurrected Jesus and we will live with him forever.

And because of this, we are free to see light in darkness, because God will always shine a light through our doubt.

We are free to give praise in pain because Jesus suffered and suffers with us.

We are free to feel grateful in tragedy because the Holy Spirit watches over us.

We are free to taste freedom in captivity because Jesus will break every chain of injustice.



Early Service: 8:30 a.m. in the Chapel  
Contemporary Service: 9:45 a.m. in Moor Hall  
Liturgical Service: 11 a.m. in the Sanctuary

Rev. Dr. Matthew M. Williams, *Senior Pastor*  
Rev. Anna Brook Opalinski, *Associate Pastor*  
Rev. E. Wayne Curry, *Minister of Pastoral Care*

Laurie Atteberry, <i>Business Administrator</i>	Patti Groh, <i>Sexton</i>
Ben Armstead, <i>Sexton</i>	Brett Ingram, <i>Facility Director</i>
Dori Barton, <i>Financial Assistant</i>	Justin Kendrick, <i>Sexton</i>
Dr. Viktor Billa, <i>Organist</i>	Susan Koehler, <i>Director of Communications</i>
Yuliia Billa, <i>Director of Music</i>	Charlotte Mathews, <i>Sexton</i>
Erin Casey, <i>Director of Preschool</i>	Britton Stacey, <i>Director of Youth Ministries</i>
Zachary Cramer, <i>Technical Director</i>	Alex Taylor, <i>Contemporary Worship Music Leader</i>
Candace Duclos, <i>Senior Director of Christian Education</i>	Heather Watson, <i>Administrative Assistant</i>
Melanie Gonzalez, <i>Church Operations Administrator</i>	

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