

TIDINGS



Let's lean into love – feed the hungry, lift up the weary, shine God's light in acts of mercy and love, and become the people through whom God can restore and redeem the world.
—A summary of Isaiah 58:9-12

Dear Beloved Trinity Community,

I am certain that I cannot muster the strength or courage to practice a penitential Lent. There is absolutely no way I can give up something that brings love, light, and joy into my life...not when it feels like the world is going to hell in a hand basket. I cannot take on more burdens, cannot practice denial. I shall be drinking coffee, a Diet Coke here and there, relaxing in front of Netflix with Mark, spending time with people who are love and light – all during Lent.

If this is your first experience with Lent or if you have been doing Lent for decades, I invite you to make Lent 2026 a new experience. No heaviness. No extra burdens. No guilt or shame. And absolutely no giving up things you love – unless those things are harmful and do not actually bring life. I invite you into a deeper, more gentle Lent.

Traditionally, Lent is shaped by practices of penitence like giving things up, focusing on our shortcomings, or emphasizing sacrifice. While those practices can be meaningful, they are not the only way to journey through these forty days. This year, as a community rooted in hope, justice, and grace, we are choosing a different path. This Lent, we are leaning into love. We are not ignoring the brokenness of the world or of our lives. Rather, we are trusting that God's tender, liberating love is the truest force for transformation. This is the love that called Jesus into the wilderness, sustained him there, and sent him back into the world with clarity, courage, and compassion. Leaning into love does not ask, "What should I give up?" Leaning into love asks, "How can I love and care for myself in ways that will help me better love and care for the world?"

My hope is that this Lent will feel spacious rather than heavy; honest rather than punitive; grounding rather than shaming. I invite you to participate in ways that feel life-giving to you which may mean adding a practice of care or connection, or simply allowing yourself to rest more deeply in God's presence. May these 40 days be a time to lean more fully into love.

With love and fierce hope,

Pastor Susan Crowell

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COUNCIL AND BUSINESS

Council Notes

Please note church council did not meet in January due to inclement weather. Therefore, no update is available to report for February.

Trinity Lutheran Foundation Grants

The Trinity Lutheran Church Foundation Committee met in December to consider grant applications for 2025. Ten grants totaling \$149,180 were awarded to the following recipients:

Challenges, Inc | \$4,500
Providing funding for Narcan training

ELCA | \$5,000
Supporting the ELCA's World Hunger work in South Sudan

Fostering Great Ideas | \$5,560
Supporting new mentor program for youth in Foster Care

Meals on Wheels | \$5,000
Supporting the #MoreThan Meals program to help combat social isolation and loneliness among their clients.

Pendleton Place | \$5,000
Strengthening essential services for youth experiencing homelessness and family instability

Trinity Lutheran Church | \$7,500
Providing funds for trauma specific mental health counseling training for the Coordinator of Mental Health Wellness at Trinity

Trinity Lutheran Church | \$4,500
Funding the Second Annual Festival of Queer Books at Trinity

Trinity Lutheran Church | \$100,000
Providing funds for 2026 debt service and other capital items

Uplift Outreach Center | \$7,000
Supporting QUEER ME IN!, a peer support and leadership program for LGBTQIA+ in the Upstate

Upstate Medical Legal Partnership Institute for the Advancement of Community Health | \$5,000
Helping fund essential court fees for low-income clients whose unsolved legal issues impact their health, safety, and stability

The Trinity Lutheran Church Foundation has given away in excess of \$2,000,000 since 1997.

LENT @ TRINITY 2026

Leaning into Love in Lent A Forty-Day Lenten Journey

This year, instead of adding extra mid-week worship services and activities that can become both burdensome and exhausting, Trinity invites you into a quieter, more gentle, more home-based experience guided by the theme "Leaning into Love in Lent." This theme does not encourage participants to ask, "What should I give up?" but rather "How can I love and care for myself in ways that will help me better love and care for the world?"

- Where am I being invited to soften rather than harden?
- How can I practice love for my body, heart, mind, and spirit?
- How can I show up more fully for my neighbors, especially the neighbors who are struggling, the ones who are constantly overlooked, misjudged, oppressed, and marginalized?
- In what ways can each of us work, during this Lenten season, to make Greenville a more fair, equitable, and just community for all people?
- How can we better practice love and compassion for ourselves and for others?
- How can we grow into grace?

A Lenten Calendar that includes daily ideas and activities for leaning into love is provided in this publication. Each person may choose to participate in all daily suggestions, complete a few of the suggestions, or create other ways that seem more appropriate to lean into love this Lent. The calendar is not intended to be prescriptive or burdensome. It simply contains ideas for this Lenten Season that will further connect the Trinity beloved community with each other and with the world.

On several Sundays in Lent, after worship and during refreshments and fellowship, a simple Lenten activity designed to lean into love by encouraging and lifting up others will be included. All are invited and encouraged to participate in ways that best fit individual schedules and that are most meaningful.

Attendance for January

Sundays	1/4	1/11	1/18	1/25
Online devices	551	455	492	No worship due to inclement weather
In Person	123	155	131	
TOTAL	674	610	623	

OTHER SERVICES

Queer-Led Worship, January 7 | 29 in person, 280 online devices

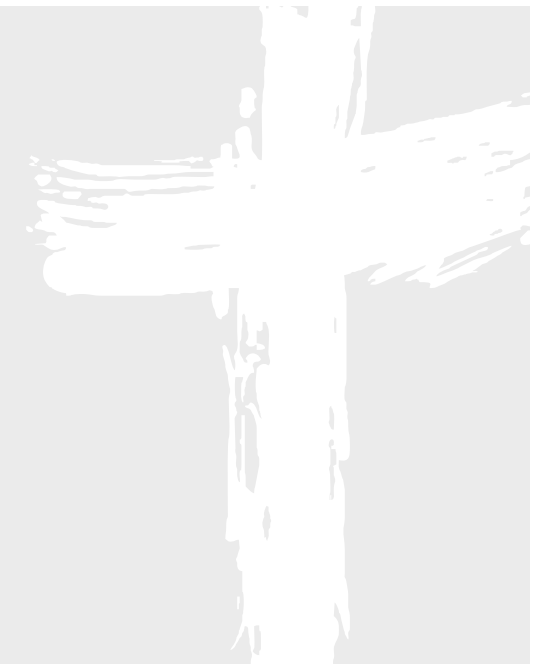
Offering Summary for December

Giving	Dec. 2025	YTD
Needed for Budget	\$95,403	\$1,144,830
Given to Budget	\$145,291	\$1,133,541
Difference	\$49,889	(\$11,289)
Given to World Hunger	\$150	\$11,557

The offering totals reflected below include the total amount of offering received in December. The January total income will be included in the March Tidings.

Ash Wednesday Wednesday, February 18 1:15 pm and 6:15 pm | Sanctuary

The Trinity beloved community is invited to gather on Ash Wednesday for a 45-minute worship service that will begin the 40-day Lenten journey, a journey that will reach its conclusion with the celebration of the resurrection on Easter Sunday. This service includes the Imposition of Ashes, a ritual of marking foreheads with an ashen cross to remind worshippers of their mortality and that "marked with the cross of Christ in baptism, all God's beloveds are forever promised life and love"...both in this life and the next. While this service points to human brokenness and all the ways humanity falls short of God's intentions, hopes, and dreams for the world, it is infused with hope and light, love and life...and the promise that God is always extending grace upon grace to all God's beloveds.



WORSHIP AND FAITH EXPLORATION

Adult Faith Exploration in February

Please consider attending Adult Faith Exploration prior to worship Sundays at 9:00 am in Rooms 12 and 13. Below is the teacher and topic schedule for February. New discussion leaders are always welcome. Contact Patrick Preacher via text, 864-483-2590, if you are interested in leading.

- **FEBRUARY 1:** Sharron Goodlett will facilitate discussion about telling personal faith stories including time for sharing and reflection.
- **FEBRUARY 8:** Dexter Brecht will facilitate discussion about Reclaiming and Reimagining Prayer. Participants will be invited to explore the ancient spiritual practice of prayer using five different approaches. Attendees can choose to take part in either or both sessions, being invited to discover what prayer can be and how it can enrich daily life! No experience required!
- **FEBRUARY 15:** Dexter Brecht will facilitate another, yet differing session, of Reclaiming and Reimagining Prayer. Participants may join this week even if last week was missed.
- **FEBRUARY 12:** Franklin Sease will lead a discussion introducing the central concepts of Richard Rohr's teachings. Richard Rohr is a Franciscan Monk dedicated to Christian contemplative practices which lead to action fostering justice and peace. Rohr is the author of numerous books, most famously, *The Universal Christ*.

February Worship Schedule

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1 at 10:00 am | Gym
Worship | Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Refreshments and Fellowship to follow in the back corner of the Gym.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5 at 6:30 pm | Gym
Queer-led Worship

Popcorn and sodas to follow in the back corner of the Gym.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8 at 10:00 am | Sanctuary
Worship | Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Refreshments and Fellowship to follow on the front lawn.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 15 at 10:00 am | Sanctuary
Worship | Transfiguration of our Lord/Last Sunday after Epiphany

Refreshments and fellowship to follow on the front lawn.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18 at 1:15 pm and 6:15 pm | Sanctuary
Ash Wednesday Worship

This service includes the imposition of ashes.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22 at 10:00 am | Gym
Worship | First Sunday in Lent

Refreshments to follow in the back corner of the Gym.



Offering Tellers Needed

The Church Office staff is looking for volunteers to count offering and prepare the bank deposit each week. Two volunteers (non-related individuals) are needed to count on Thursday mornings at 9:30 am. The process should take an hour or less. If interested in volunteering, please reach out to Kay Cook in the Church Office via email at kmcook@trinitylutheran.ws.

MUSIC MINISTRY



Music ministry at Trinity is off to a great start in 2026. In January, we rejoice to welcome new singers and ringers into our musical community and are well into rehearsals for the rich worship schedule of early 2026. If interested in singing and/or ringing in 2026, now is the perfect time to join as the group works on new choral and handbell music for Epiphany, Lent, and Easter.

Adult Choir

Adult Choir rehearses each **Wednesday from 7:00 to 8:15 pm** in the Choir Room on the second floor of the Pence Building. On Sunday mornings, the choir gathers for warmups in the Choir Room from 9:30 to 9:50 am. For 10:00 am worship, the choir assembles in the Sanctuary balcony or around the piano in the Gym to support and strengthen congregational singing and to offer special choral music in a wide variety of styles that proclaims, enriches, and interprets the scripture for the day.

Martin Luther called music the "Servant of the Gospel," so the goal is to offer music that draws minds, bodies, emotions, and imaginations to experience more deeply God's rich, inspiring, and often challenging word. Everyone with a love of singing is invited to join this community of musical mission partners. There are no auditions, but new singers are invited to schedule an orientation meeting with Pastor Parham prior to their first rehearsal. At that meeting, the new choir member will be paired with a numbered folder for choir music, a hymnal, a robe for when the choir leads singing in the Sanctuary, and will take a brief tour of the building. If interested, please e-mail Pastor Parham with any questions.

Handbell Choir

Handbell Choir rehearses from 6:00 to 6:50 pm on the first two Wednesdays of February and then enjoys a Lenten sabbath from rehearsals until Eastertide. The next ringing date is February 15, Transfiguration Sunday. The group has only two rehearsals during February.

- **Wednesday, February 4** in the Handbell Rehearsal Room on the second floor of the Pence Building
- **Wednesday, February 11** in the Sanctuary balcony

Ringing handbells is a unique and especially satisfying kind of precisely coordinated human community. We are, in effect, a single percussion instrument with many hands, hearts, and minds. If interested in this unique kind of musical community, please contact Pastor Parham at jcparham@trinitylutheran.ws.

Share Your Instrumental Gifts

Instrumentalists are always welcome to use their gifts in worship. If new to the community and feel drawn to share instrumental gifts in worship, please contact Pastor Parham at jcparham@trinitylutheran.ws or 864-242-5702.



FEBRUARY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>1 Fourth Sunday After Epiphany 9:00 am Faith Exploration for Adults 10:00 am Worship in the Gym and Live-stream Refreshments and Fellowship to follow 11:30 am Young-ish Adults Group 11:30 am Together@Trinity</p>	<p>2 6:00 pm Fiber Arts Group</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4 6:00 pm Handbell Choir 7:00 pm Adult Choir</p>	<p>5 6:30 pm Queer-led Worship in the Gym</p>	<p>6 10:00 am Mahjong Group</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8 Fifth Sunday After Epiphany 9:00 am Faith Exploration for Adults 9:30 am Second Sunday Food Drive 10:00 am Worship in the Sanctuary and Live-stream Refreshments and Fellowship to follow 11:30 am Trinity Youth 1:30 am Congregation Council</p>	<p>9 6:00 pm Meeting of Trinity GOAL members</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11 7:00 am Men's Reflection and Fellowship Group 11:30 am The Welcome Table 6:00 pm Handbell Choir 7:00 pm Adult Choir</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13 10:00 am Mahjong Group</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15 Transfiguration of our Lord 9:00 am Faith Exploration for Adults 10:00 am Worship in the Sanctuary and Live-stream Refreshments and Fellowship to follow 11:30 am Boundaries Workshop</p>	<p>16 President's Day Church Office Closed</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18 Ash Wednesday 1:15 pm Worship in Sanctuary 6:15 pm Worship in Sanctuary 7:15 pm Adult Choir</p>	<p>19 6:30 pm Love Wins</p>	<p>20 10:00 am Mahjong Group</p>	<p>21</p>
<p>22 First Sunday in Lent 9:00 am Faith Exploration for Adults 10:00 am Worship in the Gym Refreshments and Fellowship to follow</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27 10:00 am Mahjong Group</p>	<p>28 10:00 am Festival of Queer Books</p>



CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES



Trinity Youth

On **Sunday, February 8**, youth are invited to lunch in the youth room. Following lunch, the group will go to Group Therapy for some indoor putt-putt. Pick up will be at 1:30 pm at Group Therapy, 320 Falls Street. Contact Angie McCormack at ahmccormack@trinitylutheran.ws for more information or to sign up to attend



Nursery for Sunday Morning Worship

A nursery hosted by a member of the Trinity staff, Beth Oswald, as well as a small group of rotating adult volunteers who have been trained in Trinity's Child Protection Policy is available each Sunday morning beginning at 9:45 am to care for infants and toddlers who would prefer enjoying play time instead of attending 10:00 am worship. The nursery is located on the first floor of the Pence Building. Please reach out to a greeter or usher if assistance is needed.



Children's Worship Opportunity

Children's Worship Opportunity is central to the mission of introducing Trinity's young children to the stories of the faith. New adult volunteers are always needed. Leaders must be Child Protection Policy approved (completed through the Church Office). Lesson plans are prepared in advance for those leading. This means leaders simply get to have fun with a group of boisterous and fun children who are excited and curious about faith. Those interested in becoming a part of this ministry should contact Patrick Preacher to be added to the sign-up list.



Young-ish Adult Group

The Young-ish Adult Group will gather **Sunday, February 1** after the 10:00 am service by the playground doors to head downtown for lunch. The group will share a "dutch treat" lunch at Society located at 18 East Coffee Street. Weather permitting, the group will walk together or meet at the restaurant. The menu is available online. Please reach out to Lara Wannemacher at larawannemacher.com to RSVP or with any questions.

CARE, JUSTICE, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Support Group for Women in Challenging Relationships

Are you feeling exhausted, unseen, or that no matter how much you give in a relationship, it's never enough? You are not alone. This group, led by Jerry Wesley, Trinity's Coordinator for Mental Health Wellness, is a safe, judgment-free space where participants can share with others who understand, find encouragement, practical ideas, and hope, and build genuine connections with women walking a similar path. The group meets several times a month on **Sundays from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm** on the first floor of the Education Building. Reach out to Jerry Wesley at jrwesley@trinitylutheran.ws for more information and meeting dates. Childcare is provided.

A Boundaries Workshop: Protecting One's Time, Energy, and Peace

What are boundaries? And how are they helpful? Do you ever find yourself saying "Yes" when you really want to say "No"? Boundaries are not about being selfish. Boundaries are about setting personal limits in order to show up as one's best self in relationships with family, colleagues, friends, even the beloved community at Trinity. A workshop, hosted by Jerry Wesley, Trinity's Coordinator of Mental Health Wellness, will be held on **Sunday, February 15** from 11:30 am to 12:45 pm in the Multipurpose Room. A simple lunch will be provided. Reach out to Jerry Wesley at jrwesley@trinitylutheran.ws to register for this event for youth and adults. Childcare will be provided.

The Welcome Table

The Welcome Table will take place **Wednesday February 11** and **March 18** at 11:30 am in the Multi-Purpose Room. Volunteers are always welcome and everyone is invited to lunch. Contact Patrick Preacher via text, 864-483-2590, with any questions or to volunteer.

Festival of Queer Books

Trinity will host its Second Annual Festival of Queer Books on **Saturday, February 28** from 10:00 am – Noon. Last year, Trinity distributed over 800 books to a wide array of community members. All are welcome to attend. Those who would like to volunteer at the event should contact Patrick Preacher via text, 864-483-2590.

Queer-Led Worship

Queer-led Worship for February will take place **Thursday, February 5** at 6:30 pm in the Gym. Dexter Brecht will serve as guest preacher. Please consider joining in worship. New Queer leaders are always welcome! Contact Patrick Preacher via text, 864-483-2590, if you are interested in leading. Allies are also welcome to support the service as greeters or refreshment hosts.

FESTIVAL OF QUEER BOOKS



A free event celebrating books that feature characters who identify as LGBTQIA+ as well as characters from other marginalized communities.

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH, GREENVILLE SC

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28

10:00 AM - NOON

Free books, kid's bounce house, popcorn, music, read-alouds, silent disco, face painting, and more!



GROUPS AND COMMUNITY LIFE



History Reading Group

The Trinity Lutheran Church History Reading Group will meet on **Sunday, February 15** at 11:30 am in the Parlor to discuss Hidden History of Greenville County by Alexia Helsley. This is a change of pace by a local Furman grad. Several copies are available at the Greenville County Library. All are welcome to attend. Contact Don Todd at dktodd47@gmail.com, 803-517-8129 or Bob Schirmer at rwschirmer@gmail.com, 419-348-6508 with questions or comments.

Friday Mahjong Group

A group of Trinity members and friends gather each **Friday morning** at 10:00 am in the Assembly Room to spend time together and play Mahjong. It's a non-competitive group with folks willing to teach others to play the game. Questions may be directed via text to Lani Ludian at 864-419-9574.

Love Wins Fellowship Group

Love Wins will meet on **Thursday, February 19** at 6:30 pm in the Parlor. The group will discuss the podcast "What Does Progressive Christianity Look Like in a Conservative Area?" from The Progressive Christian Podcast. All are welcome! Contact Angie McCormack at ahmccormack@trinitylutheran.ws for more information or to sign up to attend.

Praying for Possibilities

Praying for Possibilities is a program at Trinity dedicated to praying for the ministries of the congregation. Members and friends of the congregation are invited to sign up for a specific week during the year when they are encouraged to pray through the written prayers one time during the course of the assigned week. This ministry requires a small commitment of time with the possibility of tremendous blessing.

Fiber Arts Group

During these anxiety producing times, research shows being in community and having social support produces significant positive effects to mental and emotional well-being. Along that "thread," a Fiber Arts Group formed at Trinity to simply make space for being together while creating and keeping hands busy. Those who enjoy (or want to learn) crochet, knitting, cross-stitch, sewing, latch hooking, or some other fiber-based craft not listed here are invited to come together for a time of crafting and community. Really, all crafts that travel well are welcome! Attendees should bring supplies to craft. Those who are interested in learning a craft but do not have supplies are welcome too. Someone will be happy to share and teach! The group will meet on **Monday, February 2** at 6:00 pm in the Multipurpose Room. Contact Jenn Jordan at 314-605-2605 with questions.

Men's Reflection and Fellowship Group

A Reflection and Fellowship Group for men meets on the second Wednesday of the month from 7:00 am to 8:00 am in the Parlor. Calvin Harmon leads and facilitates this group with the intent of providing a brave, safe space for mutual sharing and encouragement. The morning includes a light breakfast as well as time for devotions and prayer. Upcoming dates include **February 11** and **March 11**.

February Prayer Volunteers

- February 1 – 7** | John Cox
- February 8 – 14** | Dexter Brecht
- February 15 – 21** | Vicki Rubenstein
- February 22 – 28** | Kerrie Seymour

THE TRINITY FAMILY

New Member Class

Are you interested in learning more about Trinity? More about what it means to be a Lutheran? To be a part of a progressive, inclusive Christian community? Are you considering becoming a member of the beloved community at Trinity? Pastor Crowell and Patrick Preacher will teach a two-part class on Lutheran Faith and Theology on **Sundays, April 19** and **April 26** from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm. These gatherings will be held after worship and will include lunch in the Multi-Purpose Room followed by an hour-long class for youth and adults. Childcare will be provided. Please reach out to Pastor Crowell at sjcrowell@trinitylutheran.ws to register for these sessions and to share any dietary restrictions.

New Members Joining

Trinity will receive new members on **Sunday, May 3** during worship at 10:00 am in the Gym. If interested in joining this community of faith on this date, please reach out to Pastor Crowell at sjcrowell@trinitylutheran.ws.



February Birthdays

In an effort to stay connected, please consider extending birthday greetings to the following members. If you would like the church to know your birthdate please contact the Church Office to submit this information through Realm.

- Mark Allen** – February 14
- Bonnie Bridges** – February 16
- Caroline Brightwell** – February 4
- Edith Casey** – February 5
- Ann Coon** – February 26
- Ronny Dillard** – February 3
- Clayton Dykes** – February 20
- JL Dykes** – February 16
- Angie Hager** – February 23
- Calvin Harmon** – February 12
- John Janssen** – February 21
- Vicki Lanier** – February 10
- Clark Lawrence** – February 6
- Angie McCormack** – February 6
- Kaitlin Moose** – February 27
- Pastor Jim Parham** – February 6
- Joshua Rhodes** – February 23
- Stefani Robinson** – February 28
- Alice Smith** – February 4
- Rick Smith** – February 13
- Chris Somerville** – February 10
- Niko Thomas-Harewood** – February 7
- Joseph Threlkeld** – February 25
- Jan Willis** – February 15
- Reli Zhou** – February 11

Prayers & Sympathies

Please lift the following families up in prayer:

Deaths

Marilyn Boeker on January 13
the uncle of Chris Lawrence
the sister of Jeff Roth
the brother of Rosa Waldrep

Hospital Patients

Jeanne Blinkoff - Discharged



TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Nursery Attendant

Giving to Trinity

Trinity is grateful for all the prayers, contributions, and displays of support from members, friends, and guests. Financial contributions can be placed in the offering plates during worship, mailed to the church, or given electronically by going to trinitylutheran.ws, by scanning the QR code, or texting TLCGIVE to 73256.

