



TRINITY STEEPLE NOTES

July - August 2025

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DO THIS SUMMER?

SUMMER SPLASH AT THE ROSENBAUMS

SUNDAY, JULY 13 FROM 3:00-7:00 P.M.

A time for fun and fellowship with Trinity's youth and families. Bring a bathing suit, towel, and some food to share as we cook out and relax. Maybe we will sing a camp song or two.

RSVP by signing up in the Narthex by July 10 so we have enough food.

TRINITY DAY AT KNOEBELS!

SUNDAY, AUGUST 10

After worship, we will carpool up to Knoebels Amusement Resort to enjoy America's favorite free amusement park. There is no admission and parking is free!

You can get discounted ticket books ahead of time at any Weis store (15% discount) or wait until you arrive that day.

Sign up in the Narthex by August 6 (for carpooling purposes). Use the QR Code to buy tickets online.



HANDS AND FEET - WEST BERKS MISSION DISTRICT MINI-MISSION TRIP JULY 14-16

This summer, West Berks Mission District will be offering an At Home Mission Trip for any youth 6th-12th grade. During these three days, youth from around our mission district are invited to spend their day in service, community, and connection, ending each day home with their family. Registration cost is \$20 to help cover a t-shirt and supplies for service activities. You can participate 1, 2, or all 3 days!

Questions? Contact Dcs. Deborah at (610) 374-4861 or dggraf@trinityreading.org. Signup using the QR Code.



HABEMUSNE PAPAM?



Over the past two months, our world has gotten to watch as one of the greatest dramas known to humankind unfolded: the death of one pope, and the election of another. This interregnum is so fascinating to us, so redolent in ritual and mired in mystery, that a recent Hollywood film centers on it. Conclave supplies our desire for the rich visuals, scheming, and scandal that we imagine behind closed doors when men in red zuccheti gather beneath the greatest ceiling ever painted.

The real conclave was a fair bit less dramatic than the film. I was sitting in my office when a push notification alerted me of the white smoke—earlier than expected. I quickly pulled up the NBC

News livestream and waited for the velvet curtains to part. Talking heads were silenced by the famous announcement: *Habemus papam!* We have a pope!

The man who processed out was a surprise: an American, an Augustinian, and a one-time bishop of a small city in Peru. As Americans and Lutherans, we find ourselves doubly in an odd position—how should we think about this man and the institution that he leads? Instead of exclaiming *Habemus papam*, we should be asking *Habemusne papam?* Do we have a pope?

The first American-born pope is notable—but should we expect for this leader of one part of the church to bring his Americanness to the forefront? We know he's a White Sox fan who speaks in an unmistakable South Side brogue. Genealogists have proven that he's of mixed-race ancestry, descended from free Creoles in New Orleans. But he's also spent most of his career as a priest abroad, speaking Spanish as easily as English.

While we may want to claim him, it won't surprise me if Leo turns out to be conspicuously less American than it now appears. This is not just because of his missionary background and cosmopolitan mastery of multiple languages. In fact, the church and her leaders, regardless of denomination, serve a people created not by ethnicity or place of birth, but by a common identity rooted in baptism.

Leo is a clear example of this, as the papal office is meant to represent the whole of Christ's church equally. But it's also true of churches, pastors, and leaders who serve in one community. When we gather for worship, Bible study, or prayer, we aren't Americans, Pennsylvanians, or Berks Countians first.

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We're Christians first, and sometimes this loyalty to Christ and His kingdom may lead us to act in ways contrary to our culture and its norms.

Lutherans sit uncomfortably with the idea of a pope—primarily due to the office's historic antipathy to our movement. Popes past issued bulls, excommunications, anathemas against Luther, Melancthon, and the princes who protected them. They traded barbs, sometimes devolving into hateful name-calling. If this all reminds you of a big, complicated family, you're on to something.

In a sense, we are family. The reformers didn't want to start a new church, but they had to when they were kicked out. Since they had the ability to start from scratch, they created a church with much less hierarchy. Decisionmaking would be vested in the people and their pastors, not in bishops and bureaucrats. Yet the reformers also left the door open for a future reconciliation after Rome had itself reformed.

While we still have a few doctrinal disagreements, many of the Reformation's biggest objections were addressed in the 20th century—things like justification by grace through faith and communion in both kinds. As Lutherans, we see our own bishops and even the Bishop of Rome as holding an office *de jure* humano—by human right. That means that the pope (and any other church leader) is fallible. We don't have a pope or any leader who speaks directly on Christ's behalf—but when the pope sounds like he is being a faithful teacher of the common faith that we confess, we don't need to discard his thoughts just because of the office he holds.

Pastor Hans

FALL PREACHING AND PRESIDING SCHEDULE CONFIRMED

During Pr. Hans' paternity leave, Trinity will have the opportunity to be enriched by many clergy from our congregation and beyond. Prs. Mark Christy, Fred Opalinski, Virginia Biniek, and John Richter will take turns preaching and presiding here at Trinity, with Dcs. Deborah continuing to be in the pulpit monthly. This is a wonderful opportunity to compare and contrast preaching styles and to think about what preaching means to you.

Wondering who will preach and lead worship on a given week? The weekly email, sent on Fridays, will always include details about Sunday's preacher and presider. Additionally, each week's bulletin will contain information about the following Sunday's leaders.

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CELEBRATION!!!!



Just a reminder of Trinity's celebration in honor of the anticipated arrival of the newest member of the Becklin family! The celebration will be in the form of a baby shower brunch, hosted by Trinity's Fellowship Committee, occurring on Saturday, July 26 from 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM in the All Saints Room of Trinity.

If you are planning on attending, please remember to sign up on the sheets located on the table in the Narthex, or you can let one of the people listed below know, and they will see that your names are added to the list. Please include the total number of people attending, including yourself, so the committee has a general idea for quantity of food.

As stated in the letter sent to the congregation, all are welcome to attend. If you cannot attend, but would like to contribute a gift, you can certainly give it to Martha Good, Erica Hofmann, or Donna Osborne and they will see that it gets to the shower. Please consider joining us for this wonderful celebration.

WE COULD USE A HAND IN THE OFFICE



Trinity's weekday office volunteers play an important role in the life of the church—greeting visitors, answering the phone, and helping with simple clerical tasks. Right now, we're managing, but just barely. A few of our regular volunteers are hoping to move from weekly to bi-weekly shifts, and we don't have many substitutes to call on when someone is away.

If you're free in the afternoons from 12:30–3:30 (even just once or twice a month), we'd love to add you to our list. Some days are busy, and some are quiet—perfect for catching up on reading, knitting, or other personal projects.

To learn more or to sign up, reach out to Rachel Gambone, our Congregational Life Coordinator, at (610) 374-4861 or rgambone@trinityreading.org. Your presence in the office helps keep things running smoothly and extends a warm welcome to all who stop by.

HEAR YE, HEAR YE, AVID LOVERS OF BOOKS!



Did you know that Trinity has a book club? The book club has been in existence for some years, with a few years of stepping back due to Covid, but we have been back in full swing for some time now. If you are an avid book reader and love to get involved in discussions offering your thoughts and insights about the particular book chosen, please consider joining us.

We meet on the second Thursday evening of every other month, normally at one of the members' homes, but we can certainly move our gathering to one of the rooms in the church building if necessary. Members often carpool, so transportation can be arranged for those who require it. Of course, we always have some kind of refreshments (that's one of the things we Lutherans do best!).

We would love to have you become a part of this group, offer your input and thoughts on our reading choices, and of course, suggestions of new books. We read all genres and we invite all genders. Please consider joining us on Thursday evening, September 11 at 7:30 PM; location and book to be determined. If you are interested, or would like more information, please feel free to talk to Virginia Biniek, Anita Dolak, Berni Ilgen, Charlene Norton, Jan Opalinski, Donna Osborne, or Beth Welz.

READ – COME AND BE TOGETHER – CONNECT - SHARE THE ADVENTURE – HONOR THE
WORK OF AUTHORS WHO SHARE THEIR GIFTS AND TALENTS WITH THE WORLD.

STEEPLE NOTES

CONGREGATIONAL CARE AND CONCERN: LAY EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS AND VISITORS



*"Overwhelming sense of joy."
"Jesus is present to feel me and helps me know what I need to do."
"A connection to the communion of saints of every time and place."*

These are some of the answers to the question: What does Holy Communion mean to you/give to you? We are blessed to have a congregation that celebrates the Eucharist every Sunday, where we receive Jesus to strengthen us for the journey.

Not all members, however, are able to attend on Sunday mornings to join in the celebration. Therefore, we are renewing our Lay Eucharistic Ministry to strengthen our connections to God and each other. Trained members of Trinity are available for monthly visits to anyone who would welcome the opportunity. If you are feeling disconnected from our faith community and wish to have a visit, please contact Dcs. Deborah at (610) 374-4861 or dgraf@trinityreading.org who can help match you with a Lay Eucharistic Minister (LEM). These visits will be in addition to visits from Pastor Hans or Deaconess Deborah.

Our new LEMs, Donna Osborne, Ralph & Vickie Unruh, and Beth Welz, will receive their communion kits (usually the 3rd Sunday of the month) and will be sent out with the very elements our congregation receives on Sunday mornings. And if you may feel called to our visitation ministry, please contact Dcs. Deborah at dgraf@trinityreading.org.

COMMON GROUND RECOVERY COMMUNITY

Thank you to everyone who has donated clothing and personal care items to support the work of Common Ground as we hold our weekly distributions on Fridays from 11:00 a.m. - noon.

We are currently particularly in need of towels and clothing for men including socks and underwear. Donations can be dropped off in the All Saints Room on Sunday mornings or during normal office hours. Contact Maggie Shelly, Trinity's advocate for Common Ground, with any questions or concerns.

FFA TURNS 40 WITH A BRAND NEW WEBSITE



Fall Festival of the Arts

The Fall Festival of the Arts has announced its 2025 season with the launch of a brand new website! The new site will allow you to learn about all of the festival events, sign up for news and updates, learn about the festival's history, and even purchase your tickets conveniently and securely - right on the site!

This year we encourage our audience to support the Fall Festival by generously paying what you can for your tickets. When you visit the Ticket page you will be offered several suggested ticket prices

to choose from and you can purchase tickets for multiple events and checkout only once. We will also be offering in-person sales again in September and will be using a card reader to process purchases which should make for a much easier experience.

This year's festival features two events centered on Ukraine and we are proud to be collaborating with Trinity to bring concert organist Gail Archer back to Reading for a program deeply rooted in the rich tapestry of Ukrainian musical heritage. We will finish out that weekend with a spirited traditional Slavic folk performance presented by Ukrainian Kozak Dancers, a group dedicated to honoring the Slavic arts and culture.

Our theater production, Faith Healer, presents a portrait of an artist as a charlatan/miracle worker who tours with his wife, Grace, and his agent, Teddy. As each character tells us his own story of their lives together, we find ourselves transfixed by the musicality of Friel's dialogue and the fictions of memory that each story reveals.

We encourage you to visit our new site to learn about all of the upcoming events!



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BERKS PRIDE FEST

SUNDAY, JULY 20, FROM 11 AM - 6 PM



It's time to share God's abundant love and Trinity's fabulous ministry @ Berks Pride Festival at Jim Dietrich Park. There will be music and food and lots of vendors. Tickets are only \$8.00. Use EARLYBIRD code by June 30, for \$3.00 off.

If you would like to sign up and take a shift at Trinity's Pride



Booth, you can sign up using the QR code. Speak to Amy Litvinov, our Pride Table advocate, for more details.

BIRTHDAY PARTY AT LIGHTHOUSE CENTER

SUNDAY, AUGUST 24



Help bring some birthday joy to the women and children who are currently residing at the Lighthouse Center. We will pull out all the stops, celebrating everyone who has a birthday in August.

There will be opportunities to donate gifts and supplies, and to volunteer that day, playing games with the kids, helping with the petting zoo, and more! Speak to Carolyn Holleran, our Lighthouse advocate, for more information.

THANK YOU FOR INVESTING IN OUR YOUTH!



Thank you to everyone who supported and prayed for our Trinity Mission Service Trip to New Haven Connecticut! Over 40 individuals and households invested a total of over \$1000.00 in our Stock Sale to help Declan, Jacinda, Danielle, Andrew, and Dcs. D. travel to learn and serve. We look forward

to sharing our learning and experiences with you in the fall!



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GRADUATES

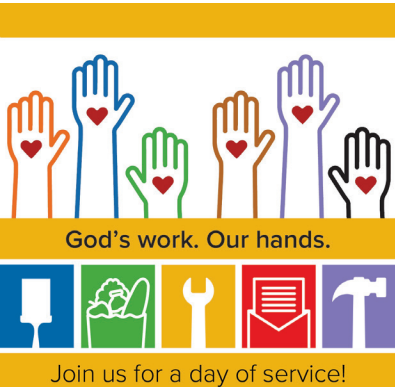
Katherine Speece
Kate graduated from Wilson High School at the end of May. She is spending several weeks in China, attending school and living in various homes. When she returns she will be attending the University of Pennsylvania. Her major is undeclared at this time.

Reagan Rosenbaum
Reagan graduated (May 2025) from Johnson & Wales University (Providence, RI) with a B.S. in Sports and Event Management. She is continuing her studies at JWU, pursuing her MBA with a concentration in Accounting.

Mark Hofmann
Mark graduated from Thomas Jefferson University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Sciences. He will be attending the accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at Thomas Jefferson in the fall.

GOD’S WORK. OUR HANDS.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 14 FROM 1-4 PM



We have applied to participate in the Potato Project, a local Christian ministry that grows free food for local hungry neighbors in need. This service opportunity is for ALL ages, not just youth. Another opportunity (indoor service) will be available; we are still in the planning stages.

If this is something that God is calling you to do, speak to Amy Heins, our God’s Work Our Hands advocate, with your ideas and suggestions.

MUSIC FROM TRINITY



What a joyous six months it has been since taking over the music department here at Trinity. Many thanks to the wonderful musicians whose dedication is deeply appreciated. But thanks also go to this whole congregation who have made Jorge and me feel so welcome.

As we close out the program year, I'm already looking ahead and excitedly planning 25-26, my first full program year with all of you. One important thing to look out for is the restructuring and rebranding of our concert series' which will now fall under the title "Music from Trinity." Within that title will be two series that you're familiar with: The Wolfe Series and the Noonday Series (which will return to in-person events). But a third series will be added entitled,

The Steeple Series. This will encompass in-house events, which will include a vespers service in the Fall & Spring and feature our department ensembles, as well as an annual organ recital that I will give in the spring.

Wonderful things continue to happen at Trinity, and I'm excited to welcome organist Gail Archer in October as a collaboration between the Wolfe Series and Fall Festival of the Arts. We will also host the Harrisburg Gay Men's Chorus in December as part of the Wolfe Series as they present "Queer Lessons and Carols." Your generous support allows us to invite many fabulous musicians to our campus each year, and should you be so moved, there is a form in this edition of *Steeple Notes* for you to donate directly to the Wolfe Series so we can continue to invite world-class musicians to Reading!

I'm incredibly grateful to be making music with all of you. I'm thankful for the care and wisdom of my staff colleagues. I look forward with hope and joy as I help shape and support the musical life of Trinity.

Dr. Cameron Lee Wentz

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WOLFE CONCERT SERIES PATRON FORM

The Rändel L. Wolfe Memorial Concert Series features a variety of outside artists and groups. This series partners with community organizations who receive financial support from concert donations. This series was founded to honor the memory of Dr. Randel Wolfe who served as Director of Music & the Arts from 1999 to 2010.

These concerts are supported through patron contributions. If you would like to make a gift to support the Rändel L. Wolfe Memorial Concert Series, please complete the form below and include with your contribution to Trinity. Please write “Wolfe Concert Series” on the memo line of your check. Thank you!

All contributions recieved by September 4th will be listed in the program for our first concert.

NAME: _____

AMOUNT \$ _____

THE BEAUTY OF UKRAINIAN MUSIC WITH GAIL ARCHER

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3 AT 7:00 P.M.



Immerse yourself in a captivating musical journey with acclaimed concert organist Gail Archer, as she presents a program deeply rooted in the rich tapestry of Ukrainian musical heritage. This unique performance shines a spotlight on the profound contributions of Ukrainian composers, offering a rare opportunity to experience their vibrant and diverse works.

JULY BROADCAST SCHEDULE

SUNDAYS

6:00 PM

WORLD VIEWS

Hindu Temple Ritual and Practice

6:30 PM

MUSIC FROM TRINITY

Vince Ryan, organ

7:00 PM

TRINITY WORSHIP SERVICE

WEDNESDAYS

4:00 PM

TRINITY WORSHIP SERVICE

5:00 PM

MUSIC FROM TRINITY

Jill Haley and David Cullen

5:30 PM

WORLD VIEWS

Hindu Temple Ritual and Practice

AUGUST BROADCAST SCHEDULE

SUNDAYS

6:00 PM

WORLD VIEWS

Chabad Lubavitch Movement

6:30 PM

MUSIC FROM TRINITY

RMF Scholarship Concert

7:00 PM

TRINITY WORSHIP SERVICE

WEDNESDAYS

4:00 PM

TRINITY WORSHIP SERVICE

5:00 PM

MUSIC FROM TRINITY

RMF Scholarship Concert

5:30 PM

WORLD VIEWS

Chabad Lubavitch Movement

TRINITY TV

Trinity broadcasts can be watch on Comcast Channel 190. We also stream our worship service live on Sunday mornings to YouTube and Facebook.

Past Music From Trinity programs, Beneath the Steeple episodes, and Worship/Music clips can be found on:

YouTube



Facebook

