

A Report and Update on *Invite Welcome Connect* at Trinity

Recently, Trinity has welcomed many new people seeking a spiritual home. In response, our leadership was inspired to improve how we serve those wanting a closer connection to God and community.

In 2024, we adopted the *Invite Welcome Connect* (IWC) program to support this mission. This Episcopal initiative provides key guidance on outreach, hospitality, and creating a sense of belonging. After two years of great success, we will conclude the formal phase of the program. However, we plan to keep the core principles and framework, knowing the tools will be available when needed.

The Essentials:

The oversight function involves consistently asking, “How are we doing in this area? What are the best practices, and where can we improve?” The Parish Council and Clergy will keep performing this role.

Maintaining a focus on authentic connections is crucial. Helping people develop a true sense of belonging is the most challenging and arguably the most important aspect. It is essential to foster this through various means: engaging formation events, small groups of different types—including ministry circles—and parish gatherings, as well as all opportunities for people to come together and share meals.

We sincerely thank everyone who contributed to the success of this effort. Here's a list of our key achievements. Numerous individuals contributed to making this possible. **The Steering Committee collectively agreed that, overall, these efforts have fostered a warmer, more inclusive environment at our cherished Trinity.**

Strengths and accomplishments of our Invite Welcome Connect program: Planned and held an IWC Leadership Retreat, which yielded practical ideas for implementation.

Invite

- Major effort to clean up signage inside and outside the church.
- Sidewalk signage has been successful in making us look more welcoming and provides helpful directions for parking and campus access.
- Significantly improved our system for connecting to and tracking newcomers.
- The “Plan Your Visit” button is now on our website. It invites visitors to notify us ahead of a Sunday service that they are coming. A greeter contacts them and then meets them at the red doors.

- Printed invitation post cards to church events like the Cookie Walk have been effective in seeing more of the public.
- Updated parish directory (online and printed) is newly available.
- A virtual “Ministry Brochure” on the website under Parish Life>Get Involved visually describes the active ministries at Trinity.
- Made new connections with some of our neighbors through the exercise of planning a block party (which did not happen).
- Established a labyrinth committee (in formation) for greater use by the community and congregation.

Welcome

- Greatly enhanced the Welcome Table with new signage, literature, and a Welcome Packet for newcomers.
- Created a “Guide to the Episcopal Liturgy” document to support the large number of newcomers from non-liturgical traditions.
- Increased the number of Greeters and had Greeter Trainings.
- Created the roaming Coffee Hour Ambassador ministry for all Vestry Members.
- A committee member has made fun announcements about tips for being more welcoming.
- The clergy have more regularly referenced the Welcome Table and Coffee Hour during Announcements.
- New lanyards and an emphasis placed on wearing your nametag.

Connect

- Held a “Best Practices for Small Group Formation Workshop” with leaders in ministry.
- Successful and well-attended Newcomer Classes, Newcomer Brunches, and Episcopal 101 classes.
- Potluck gatherings in parishioners’ homes were well-received.
- Held multiple parish-wide events to make newcomers feel welcome with a clear focus on connection.
- Ministry Fairs have been well planned and attended.
- Gatherings for those coming out of Evangelical frameworks.

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