



WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER
TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH
ANNUAL GIVING 2027

October 2026

Dear People of Trinity,

This past spring, just after Easter, I received an email from an Episcopal priest in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, inviting me to participate in something called *The Episcopal Church Trajectory Study*. He pitched it as four “brief” surveys. (Brief? Turns out there were a total of 179 questions.)

The surveys were designed to explore what Episcopal churches are doing with regard to worship, welcome, formation, and leadership—everything from the style and frequency of worship services to how vestry members are selected, to attitudes toward inclusion of female and LGBTQ+ leadership, and even how people are “physically oriented during coffee hour.”

After making sure the request—and the requester—were legitimate, I started wondering, why does the national church want to know all this? Every congregation in the Episcopal Church already fills out an extensive annual report detailing our finances, attendance, demographics, and other statistics. What was behind the request for so much additional, detailed information? The answer was: *to get at the why*.

Focusing on the years since the pandemic, they’ve noticed that some churches have declined and others have grown. Might there be common threads that help explain why some congregations flourish while others struggle?

I’m not sure how many of the 5,600 congregations invited to participate actually responded—the full results have yet to be published—but the Wisconsin priest has been sharing some preliminary, broad-brush findings. And what seems to matter most isn’t worship style, or theology, or even how good the snacks are at coffee hour.

It’s relationship. It’s following up. It’s people feeling welcomed and seen. It’s people sharing themselves and their stories with one another. In other words, it’s everything the early church was about, everything Jesus did, everything he told the disciples to do in order to make God’s love real and tangible in the world. Go figure.

And all these things—welcoming, seeing, sharing—they are things we *do together*. No one person can create a flourishing congregation alone: not the greeters, not the ushers, not the vestry or the staff or the clergy. It takes all of us, together.

I’m reminded of Rev. Anne Howard’s sermon from earlier this summer, about the holy miracle in the loaves and fishes story. A story not of ‘Jesus magic,’ but the power of what can happen when we generously share what we have, in the service of others. When we join together to do as a community, what none of us could accomplish alone.

What the survey results are making clear is that joy breeds joy, connection and caring multiply, and a flourishing congregation is something we create together.

This time of year marks the beginning of Trinity's Annual Giving season, a time when we ask parishioners to make a financial pledge to the church to fund the 2027 Operating Budget. But your pledge isn't simply about the money needed to keep the lights on and staff paid. **Our pledge to share what we have—our bits of bread and fish—is one of the ways we draw together as a body, as Christ's body, and participate in the relationships that make all our ministries possible.** Pledging is a statement of hope, a mark of trust in abundance over scarcity. . . that despite there seeming to be only a mere 5 loaves and 2 fish, there will be more than enough to go around, and all will be fed.

A note about this word—"pledging"—and how it's distinct from "giving." All of Trinity's regular operating expenses (salaries, cost to operate and maintain our building, ministry expenses, outreach) are funded from your monetary gifts (plus a bit from building use income and fundraisers). When you pledge—that is, fill out a pledge card with an estimate of your financial giving for the year—then the vestry knows what money to expect and can plan the budget accordingly. So, if you have been a regular giver, but haven't filled out a pledge card previously, please consider doing so; it absolutely makes a difference.

With gratitude for all of you—all of us—doing what we do together.

Elizabeth+



The Rev. Elizabeth Molitors, Rector

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. [Ephesians 3:20]

Notes:

- If you haven't pledged in the past, maybe this is the year to do so. Every pledge, small or large, is valued and appreciated.
- If you have pledged in the past, and it's possible for you to do so, please think about making an increase this year.
- Financial giving is a spiritual practice—a tangible expression of the idea that our very lives are a gift from God, and we give back in gratitude.
- Please plan to return your completed pledge card on Trinity's **Ingathering Sunday** where we will bless the pledge cards at our worship service on **November 8, at 9:30am**. A festive brunch celebration follows the service.