

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the
Vestry of Trinity Episcopal Church
September 21, 2026**

The regular meeting of the Vestry of Trinity Episcopal Church was held on Monday, September 21, 2026, in the Foster Room. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Senior Warden Paul Bugas.

The following members were present: Lindlee Baker, Paul Bugas (*Senior Warden*), Charles “Rick” Chittum, James Dungan, Mary Faulkner (*Junior Warden*), Kathy Frazier, Fred Odell, Kristin Reichert, Zebulen “Zeb” Riley, Donald Romanik, Jean-Paul Shibut, and Karen Tate. Also present were The Rev. AJ Heine (*Rector*), Molly Brown (*Treasurer*), and Phillippa Holley (*Vestry Clerk*).

The Rev. Cara Modisett (*Associate Rector*) was absent.

Fr. AJ opened the meeting with a reading from Saint Ephrem the Syrian and closed with a prayer.

Our Retreat Focus Areas are mostly on target as evidenced by the attached reports. Managing growth is being discussed especially with space and personnel concerns.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes were submitted. It was moved by Kristin Reichert and seconded by Mary Faulkner that the August 17, 2026, minutes be approved. The motion passed.

Finance and Administration: The August financial reports were submitted. Molly Brown gave an overview of the financial statements. There were no questions. The financial statements were approved unanimously.

Molly has asked Cornerstone to provide an abbreviated summary of Statement of Activities—Operating Budget for the congregation. The headings would include

- **Revenue**—Pledges and Other Contributions, Endowment Income, Facility/Other.
- **Expenses**—Mission and outreach, Parish programs, Facilities maintenance, Parish operations, Personnel expenses and Other Operating Expenses.

The abbreviated summary will first appear in this week’s weekly announcements.

Property Committee/Junior Warden’s Report: The report was submitted and is attached.

- Karen Tate showed pictures of how the ribbon tying event may look. No action was taken.
- Mary Faulkner reported that ideas for a budget to increase cleaning for the church are being explored.

- Before the moisture issue in various buildings can be properly addressed, gutters will need to be replaced. Replacing gutters on all buildings on the property is being explored.

Adult Formation Report: The report was submitted and is attached.

Youth and Children's Ministries: The report was submitted and is attached.

Mission and Outreach: The committee is not scheduled to meet until next month.

- Forty responses were received from the survey.
- There will be a concert to raise money for LA Familia on October 10.
- Anyone interested in volunteering at Grace House, October 5-9, (all or part of the week), should contact Jim Echols at jeechols@verizon.net for more information.

Community Life: The report was submitted and is attached.

Worship:Music report: The report was submitted and is attached.

Senior Warden's Report: Paul Bugas reported that he had received a positive comment because of the posting of vestry minutes and financials in the Trinity announcements.

If you know of someone who may be interested in serving on the Vestry, please submit the name(s) to AJ or Paul.

Vestry members are requested to assist in passing out pledge packets at both services on October 4 and 11.

The Salvation Army Capital Band will give a free concert on November 7 here at Trinity.

Associate Rector's Report: The report was submitted and is attached.

Rector's Report:

There were 80 in attendance at the Shrine Mont Retreat. Gen Bolena and Kristin Reichert talked with The Rev. Tom DuMontier, St John's Waynesboro Rector, who stated that St. John would like to join Trinity next year at the retreat. They would also like to work with the planning committee. Shrine Mont has been reserved for the same weekend next year and more space has been requested.

Speakers for "Trinity Minute" presentations are Bibb Frazier, C J Hill, and Wendy Amato.

The Rectory will be one of the houses on this year's Holiday Tour.

The Parish annual meeting will be November 29 after the 10:30 service. Members were asked to assist with planning the meeting.

Trinity has purchased a table at the NAACP Freedom Banquet, October 10. A few seats are still available.

Fr. AJ is planning to lead a pilgrimage to Scotland at the end of the choir's trip to the UK in July 2028.

New Business: None.

There being no further business, it was moved by Rick Chittum and seconded by Karen Tate that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 19, 2026.

Compline followed adjournment.

Fr. AJ Heine, Rector

Phillippa D. Holley, Vestry Clerk

Attachments:

- Property Committee Report
- Adult Formation Report
- Youth and Children's Ministries Report
- Community Life Report
- Music Report
- Associate Rector's Report

Minutes of the Property Committee September 14, 2026

Present:

Erik Boody
Rick Chittum
Dick Coleman
Bill Frazier
Mary Faulkner
AJ Heine
Sally James
Jeff Selnick

At 5 pm the meeting opened with Zeb Riley presiding. The meeting began with a prayer by Rev. AJ Heine.

Bill Frazier: update on the VA 250 grant and the overall repairs.

Bill presented an architectural drawing (attached) for the rebuilding of the back entrance of the church by extending the staircase out to accommodate a 3 foot platform at the top for safety entering and leaving. Bill suggests slate topping for the steps because they do not deteriorate as fast as brick. The project would probably take two weeks. We need to consider when it can be done and get a price from Allen Weekley who specializes in historic brick work.

Gutters: ongoing saga. Blue Ridge in Harrisonburg wants to replace everything. New proposal for the Sanctuary includes 6" gutters, gutter guards, etc. all copper. Blue Ridge recommends attaching the gutters to the fascia board. Same for rectory. May need new fascia board. The cost could run \$85,000. Sally suggested getting an estimate from Lynch Roofing in Charlottesville. Mary and Eric agree with getting a second estimate. There is value for scrap copper, so any scrap will be saved and sold. Mary will set up the appointment with Lynch Roofing and Jeff will meet the representative.

Eric noted that the opener for right side handicap door for church door has arrived. Should be installed soon.

Mary, on behalf of the Daughters of the King, proposes a temporary one time ribbon tying to the new fence event to acknowledge prayers. A basket will hold colored ribbons to tie to the fence. Not a money raiser. Sponsored by Daughters of the King, who will buy ribbon and take the ribbons down when done. Cloth or plastic ribbon. Committee approved. Send to vestry for approval.

Mary; Regarding deep cleaning for the Parish Hall and church. Patty does surface cleaning 3 days a week. Patty does not want more work. Mary suggests having someone additional to do deeper cleanings at an extra 10 hours. Ana thinks 10 more hours would be sufficient. Ana is prepared to move forward on this. She has names of

people who could help. Building committee recommends sending this to finance committee.

Mary: Termite/pest control. Got two bids, Dotson and Sprouse. Jeff says we have termites in Ana and AJ's offices. Dotson sprayed and treated these places but recommended doing the whole building. We had a yearly contract for termites for the sanctuary and rectory, not for Parish House. Each building has its own policy. \$68 month for Parish House termites. Sprouse \$10,000 wants treatment and \$1000 for annual inspection and retreating. Need to retreat every 10 years. Terminix never returned the call. Dotson has the other Trinity contracts. They spray all 3 buildings for bugs but do not do termites for all buildings. They claim two buildings were covered for termites but not the Parish House. AJ found email of summer 2025 for termites in the church and choir robing rooms. We need full inspection for all buildings and need to stay with one company. Jeff proposes we have someone from the church to supervise the spraying. Suggest to finance committee we stay with Dotson.

Jeff: gutter cleaning. \$1100-\$1200 each time we clean gutters. Cleaned 3 weeks ago. Usually do it once a year. Need to do it more often with these gutters, as we have no gutter guards. New gutters will have guards. We table idea for more often cleaning for now and work on replacing gutters. We could use grant money for gutters, as moisture issues were in the grant. Bigger down spouts will help with leaf problems.

Jeff: flowerbed and hedge on Johnson St. side is encroaching on the sidewalk. The flower beds and hedge hold moisture which draws termites. Emily Cochran, who has spearheaded the plantings, knows about this and is ok with removing them. It is recommended to replace these plantings with decorative rocks. Sally suggested that the grant might be used since it's a moisture issue. Perhaps Williams Brothers or Big O could pull out the hedge.

McCracken lights: Dave Brooks installed the lights over the platform and used an extension ladder to replace bulbs. Jeff can fix it. Jeff has fixed McCracken attic so other bulbs could be changed easily and safely.

Rick: AJ, Sally, and Rick met with Will Vest, a consultant from Roanoke, regarding additional in the church. Dave Brooks had recommended Vest who is a lighting designer. Rick sent Vest copies of the plans for the installation in 2000. Vest talked about the combination of pendants and uplighting. He had some suggestions for chancel lighting. We showed him the pendants from before 1957 renovation. He liked them. He recommended that we add more pendants made to complement the decorative ones now in storage. Eric guesses the cost of lighting changes at \$200,000. Rafters above are u-shaped so wiring could be placed in them. Also need to replace the dimmer panels. We need to get an estimate.

Zeb: Bicycle rack. Committee picked the composite material from Park and Pool. The total with shipping was way higher than the original cost. Zeb contacted them and they

lowered the price. Price with shipping is about \$400 more than original. Now total would be \$1,061.81. How many bikes? Is the cost worth it? Tabled this project for now.

Eric: Sound panels for choir room and McCracken Hall. Eric has measurements.

Bill Frazier: Handicap signs will be added when the door is ready. One more round of signage. Do it all at once. Have back in use. Tom Howell is working in text for interpretative

signage giving history. One pole and rectangular sign. This would come from the grant.

Kathy has sent out something for interpretative signs for us to consider. Must bundle the signs and have them put in at once. Grant paid for the signs. The large sign was about \$10,000.00.

Bill Frazier: VDOT historic marker sign needs repainting. To replace it does not cost much more and the text has an error. They do not suggest repainting but replacing. VDOT is picky now in seeing that it's historically accurate. Committee decided to get Josie to repaint it and move it. VDOT probably wouldn't know. Old signs: cut them down and leave the concrete, as it's difficult to dig out.

Meeting adjourned by Zeb at 6:30 pm

Respectfully Submitted,
Sally James
Secretary for the meeting

Adult Formation report Vestry, September 2026

Adult formation continued over the summer in a more substantial way, and with strong participation. After the series on John Fea's book *Was America Founded as a Christian Nation?* and Bill Frazier and Tom Howell's talk on Trinity history at VA250, we continued with a five-week lectionary-based small group series and then finished up the summer with three Discovery Sundays – a sort of deeper, extended approach to the traditional Ministry Fair, combining events designed to inspire parishioners to become more involved in parish ministries with formation and fellowship pieces. Working on this with AJ and Katie was an enjoyable process – Katie designed “passports” which allowed participants to sign up for areas of interest. Each Sunday morning we traveled through the “rooms where it happens,” learning about everything from Daughters of the King to the acolyte program by visiting spaces in the Parish House and the church. The middle Sunday also included a pancake breakfast.

Labor Day Sunday was the launch for Sunday School of all ages. Adult formation started with *Between the Collars*, which continues to be an enthusiastically received monthly offering with all kinds of good questions. Following that, we have launched two tracks for this year, including a new series of classes led by AJ and Shannon Riley, *Fostering Faithful Families*, designed for parents of all ages of children (not just young or school-age). The second track, our more “traditional” track, is starting with a three-week series on the sacraments built around a new curriculum from Forward Movement and the Episcopal Church. The first Sunday went extremely well. This past weekend, AJ combined both groups together for the second session, specifically on Baptism, and the third will be focused on the Eucharist.

Below I'm including the Sunday morning schedule.

Field trips are in planning stages and will be resumed in October/November. Small groups have reconvened – Rector's Book Group, Writing our Faith, Men's Bible Study and Women of Faith and we're seeing new faces. EfM started this past week, and interest has grown to the point that the group has requested a waiver to go over their max for students, and they are contemplating starting a second cohort mid-year. Writing our Faith is in the process of putting together a collection of writings to be printed/published for our wider community, hopefully this winter.

We have several new groups forming:

- Women of Faith, Evening Edition has begun meeting on Wednesdays at 5:30 p.m. Currently we are planning to follow the same curriculum as the morning group.
- Yoga is back, taught by Stephanie Otteni in the church on Wednesdays at 10 a.m.

- A women's Bible study is in the works that plans to meet at Trinity on Friday afternoons.

One last new initiative:

A group of parishioners has been in periodic conversation for a while now about developing a series of events that connect theology and the arts. We have crafted a one-year "pilot," which is designed to stand alone or be sustainable in future years depending on interest and leadership. Autumn and I will be working on a communications strategy for this in the next few days, and below is a description of the series, which is built around our music calendar – specifically, our Sunday Evensongs and Concerts @ 5.

[creating + connecting] Arts at Trinity

All events take place in Trinity Church at 5:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

Beginning in October, Trinity will host a monthly gathering/reading/open space for artists in all genres – poetry, prose, playwriting, two- and three-dimensional visual arts, dance, theater, songwriting, filmmaking.

The Call: Create pieces to be performed, read or presented in five minutes or less, responding to monthly themes anchored in Trinity's 2026-2027 music program, and then share their work at [creating + connecting] events, which are open to the public and followed by refreshments in McCracken Hall.

Artists are not required to attend the monthly music programs to create and present work at [creating + connecting]. While each theme functions as a prompt for that month's art, finished pieces do not need to be religious in nature or content.

Artists should submit a copy or description of their work to caram@trinitystaunton.org, along with a 3-5-sentence bio, by the Wednesday prior to a [creating + connecting] event.

OCTOBER

This Earth, our Island Home

St. Francis is the patron saint of animals and the environment; legend has it he would preach to the birds. He is closely connected to spirituality and theology surrounding the celebration and care of creation.

October 4: Evensong for the Feast of St. Francis

October 11: [creating + connecting]

October 7: Artists' deadline

NOVEMBER

Thin Spaces

At the end of October and the beginning of November fall three holy days – All Hallows' Eve or Halloween (October 31), All Saints' Day (November 1) and All Souls' Day (November 2). On All Hallows, with roots in ancient Celtic traditions, the veil between this world and the next is thin. All Saints remembers the saints, living and gone, who have helped change the world in big and small ways. On All Souls, we celebrate the saints of our lives – our families and loved ones whom we miss and love and remember.

November 1: All Saints Concert

November 8: [creating + connecting]

Artists' deadline: November 4

DECEMBER

In the Deep Midwinter

In the Christian tradition, Advent is the contemplative season of waiting and preparing for Christmas and the birth of Jesus to Mary and Joseph – a quieter, meditative counterpoint to the busy commercialism of the world's holiday season. Lessons and Carols pairs music with scripture readings and prayer.

December 6 Advent Lessons & Carols

December 9: Artists' deadline

December 13 at 5:00 p.m. [creating + connecting]

Trinity Adult Formation, 2026-2027 (in progress)

Sunday Mornings

September

- | | |
|----|---|
| 6 | Sunday School Open Houses for all ages: Between the Collars |
| 13 | Signs and Grace: An Introduction to the Sacraments |
| 20 | Signs and Grace: An Introduction to the Sacraments Shrine Mont parish retreat |
| 27 | Signs and Grace: An Introduction to the Sacraments |

October

- | | |
|----|--|
| 4 | Time, Talents and Treasure: The Impacts of Giving at Trinity |
| 11 | Between the Collars |

- 18 Jesus: Fully Human – Fully Divine – “Real” Man, taught by Fr. AJ
- 25 Trinity in the World: Outreach Panel Discussion

November

- 1 All Saints
- 8 Between the Collars
- 15 Trinity Talks: Nancy McDaniel et al
- 22 Advent Event

Advent Contemplative Series: November 29, December 6, 13, 20

- 29 Advent I – Illustrated Ministry, A Thrill of Hope (tentative)

December

- 6 Advent II
- 13 Advent III
- 20 Advent IV
- 27 No Sunday Formation

January

- 3 No Adult Formation
- 10 Between the Collars
- 17 Book Talk (tentative)
- 24 Book Talk
- 31 Book Talk

February

- 7 Between the Collars
- 14 Lent I (theme TBD)
- 21 Lent II
- 28 Lent III

March

- 7 Lent IV
- 14 Lent V
- 21 Palm Sunday
- 28 Easter Egg Hunt

April

4	No Sunday formation
11	Between the Collars
18	TBD
25	TBD

May

2	Between the Collars
9	Mother's Day & Youth Sunday
16	Break: Pentecost
23	Book Series 1 (tentative)
30	Book Series 2

June

6	Book Series 3
13	Book Series 4
20	Book Series 5
27	Book Series 6

September 14, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

ZOOM MEETING

Attendees: Rev. Cara, Heather Derr-Smith, Sarah Mendonca, BJ Regi, Shannon Riley, Crystal Fiechtl

Announcements:

As we start up new year, think about what other parents we could recruit to YCM and to be subs!*

Labor Day open house recap

Just a few students, not many parents- surprising because our church number was high, but maybe not enough advertisement? Do we want to continue with the experiment? Could we advertise with more food/hospitality? Let's try one more year!

Sunday School reports

Full cohort of teachers now – Shannon Coble has joined our Triniteens mentors and Kenzie Dietz and Sarah Mendonca are rotating as second teachers for Crafting Faith. **We still need more subs.*** Recommendations and recruiting appreciated!

Godly Play

From Krissy: "I feel like it has gotten off to a good start, we only had three the first week, but that may have been because of the holiday. Yesterday we had six, and it feels like these will be ones that are weekly attendees."

Crafting Faith

From John: "We have three kids who look to be regulars, Helen, Gabriel, and Zena. I pulled Bevie up because last week Helen and Gabriel were going to leave early for choir and it would have left Zena alone. Zena is a 1st grade non-reader with a request for more physical movement during class so we are going to try to include more games, and also more reading of age appropriate books. Crafting and journaling enthusiasm has been a bit low. We are working on invites to class, and may be making some progress to boost attendance. Helen and Zena have become enthusiastic about attending so that is a good first step."

Games are a hit, more engaging. More read aloud too. Sarah is going to try to find a few more resources, class is very flexible.

Cara mentions that Amazon is an ordering resource, to send her what you need.

<https://buildfaith.org/>

Triniteens

From Heather: "Our first Sunday had three participants: a 5th grader, a 6th grader, and a 10th grader whose behavior we had some concerns about. He was discussing topics that are not appropriate for younger kids. I feel like mixing elementary, middle, and high school ages is not the best practice. I also think having younger members could turn off

most prospective high school participants. The problem is, we have so few of both populations attending, so I'm not sure what to do about that. The 2nd Sunday, I was unable to lead due to a back injury, so CJ was the lead. He said there were three completely different participants, and things went well. For now, I'd like to continue to see how things go with the mixed ages and just think about it a little bit more."

From CJ: "Triniteens is off to a good start. Six participants so far. Bible study to kick off next week."

Running into the dilemma of choir vs Sunday School again. Does this mean we limit the Sundays that youth meet? We do not have the capacity to allow for both tracks right now. How can we serve non-choir youth? Sunday evenings as pizza-study night? There's already the one Sunday/month after church pizza afternoon, but not a great turn-out.

Send out invitations to youth? Sending messages through Breeze (Heather)

Diocese Updates?

Gathering with teachers- workshop with Pattie? Sunday afternoon?

Can we have Diocese calendar in advance to allow for maximum participation so it doesn't compete with choristers or others.

Youth (Jr & Sr) Pilgrimage to New Orleans (same dates as Convention)- AJ is interested in going! Melina is planning to go :)

Fostering Faithful Families

This class launched this past Sunday, led by Shannon and AJ – is designed for parents of all ages of children (including adults) as a way to share wisdom, experiences, explore faith. Hope is that it will support parents, encourage more children in Sunday School classes. We decided to run it as a parallel track on Sunday mornings to the usual Sunday offerings – on Between the Collars Sundays both groups will come together. First Sunday turnout seemed strong for both tracks (we had 10-12 in the first track).

Can we reverse advertise by going through choir/Sunday School to those parents?

On 9/18 weekend, combined tracks for Sacrament of Baptism formation

Teacher Needs

Need for more Trinity bags! We will get on it in October, it's a great problem!

Mischief & Magic

From Cara: I've ordered all the stuff for the scavenger hunt, which we'll reprise on Sunday morning of the festival weekend

Who can volunteer to hang around on that Sunday and hand out maps? (Who isn't in choir?)

St. Francis Celebration of the Animals

Hoping for adoptions from SPCA (Cara met with board contact there), as well as Planning children's activities: painting rocks in memory of lost pets, and John's suggestion on St. Francis crafts (would someone like to take the lead on the second one? See below...)

St. Francis animal blessing medallions:

- Precut circles from cardstock or lightweight cardboard.
- Children draw their pet, favorite animal, or an animal they hope to protect.
- Add a ribbon or yarn loop.
- Print around the edge: "Bless all creatures, great and small."
- The medallions can be taken home, hung near a pet's bed, or attached to a stuffed animal.

Spooky Organ Concert

Do we have bandwidth to do treats again this year? Yes...

Estimating the number of bags can be difficult- Shannon can purchase, maybe a different team to assemble (BJ did last year!)

Longer-term projects

Way of displaying student artwork downstairs

Coloring book- Can be used with Trinity books/Kids Corner (BJ and Cara to work on this)

From August minutes:

Class/Youth updates

*Can church pay for a wooden shelf for desert box?... BJ :) **THIS SHOULD BE IN OUR BUDGET. LET CARA KNOW COSTS**

*Crystal talked about using neutral figures (without faces); it's difficult to hang things on the wall because of the condition, so can we get a cork strip somewhere to hang kid artwork or posters- maybe over the chalkboard if not in use anymore (see if we can get Jeff to help with this)

*Journals for kids to communicate with clergy (pen pals!) **QUESTION ON THIS FROM CARA - I'LL RETRIEVE THESE THIS WEEK AND WE'LL START REGULAR BACK AND FORTH - ARE THEY OFF AND RUNNING?**

Game Night

-Wendy said she is open to doing one each month; she said to go ahead and schedule it and she can make sure there is a point person for each month (her or otherwise)

-Wednesday evenings? Friday evenings? Sunday evenings? Good to change it up, but don't want to interfere with choir— Fridays are best! **NEED TO SCHEDULE THESE DATES. ANY PREFERENCES?**

Cara:

-Talk to Jeff about hanging a cork strip for Godly Play (in hall or in room?) **ON MY TO-DO LIST**

-Promote Youth Event

-Work with BJ for coloring book!

-Find a person to help with St. Francis activity

-Get a office volunteer to roll Hogwarts Maps/set up the stations– also someone to pass them out on day of

-Need an electronic pencil sharpener and stapler (w/ staplers)- might also be one in Godly Play

**Community Life Coordinator
September 2026**

- Memory Café
- Volunteer spots are being scheduled and quickly filling through Summer of 2027
- We are seeing new participants each month.
- Eucharist at Baldwin Park
- AJ & Cara rotate. I hope to add Emmanuel's new rector into rotation after the first of the year.
- Tuesdays at Trinity has resumed. We have seen larger crowds with several new faces. So far each group has had to increase the quantity of food. We are putting out name tags and conversation starters on each table to encourage community and welcoming newcomers.
 - Choir
 - DOK
 - Mostly Millennials
 - Honduras (Spaghetti)
- Trinity Untapped
 - Monthly schedule established through September.
- Inner Soul
- They are growing and have decided, starting in September they will start meeting twice a month to accommodate the growth. They will meet 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at 11am in Gooch Room. Women above 70 meet to discuss and study life and spiritual needs of the group.
- Trinity Cares
 - New Team of Volunteers added (Teal Team)
- Community Life Committee meets the 3rd Thursday at 5:30 in Foster Room
- Funeral Guild Committee Continues. We are seeing an increase in funerals.
- Greeters Continues, Officially Implemented
 - Scheduling for 10:30 Service
 - Greeters will also be catchers

- Discover Sundays had a good response. Multiple people requested information and have signed up for programs, committees and other opportunities through Discovery Sundays. The feedback has been very positive.
 - August 16th Learning & Growing
 - Tour Parish House
 - August 23rd Community Inside & Out (Pancakes in McCracken)
 - Community Trivia
 - August 30th Loving & Serving
 - Instructed Worship Service
- Parish Retreat September 18-20 (turning report in prior to retreat). We have 80 people attending the retreat. We will also be hosting Parishioners from St John's Waynesboro.
- Supper Clubs have begun. I am very happy to report I attended my first one and it could not have been more successful. There are 6 Supper Groups and they will each meet once a month over the next 3 months

We are having a wonderful time expanding our Trinity community and involving as many people as possible in our growth and development I have been overwhelmed by all the support and willingness from our parishioners. We welcome all inspiration and participation from each of you. Contact me to share any brainstorm ideas you have. Thank you.

Katie Faulkner

Music Report for Vestry – September 2026

Choir Camp and Sacred Music Week

Trinity's first-ever Sacred Music Week and simultaneous Boychoir and Girlchoir experiences were a huge success this summer, in no small part due to an expanded set of incredibly talented volunteers. The week began with a duo organ concert performed by Gen and her son, Jon Bolena. Virginia Grabovsky, soprano and newest member of the internationally acclaimed vocal ensemble VOCES8, also performed.

During Choir Camp, Wallace Hornady, choral director at Woodberry Forest School and Jon Bolena, former Organ Scholar at St. Thomas, NYC, led the ten boys throughout the week as they participated in a mini-boychoir experience. The twenty-five girls ranged from age seven through 18. Kate Harrington and Lillie Harner offered daily voice lessons; Kay Buchanan served as our faithful pianist; BJ Regi used her creative genius to lead the choristers in a craft that was enjoyed by boys and girls alike; Kristin Reichert, Douglass Hopkins, Constance Harrington, Judy Mosedale did countless behind the scenes work to keep things running smoothly.

Each afternoon, a slightly smaller group of middle and high school boys and girls rehearsed music in preparation for Choral Evensong on Thursday of that week. The whole week culminated with a stellar sharing session Friday morning that included full ensemble performances and individual girlchoir and boychoir performances. The energy and enthusiasm throughout the week was extraordinary and many of the new participants joined the chorister program this fall.

Continuing Education

In July, Joel VanderZee and I attended the Noordbroek Organ Academy in the Netherlands, mainly based in the city of Gronigen. Throughout the week, we joined seven other organists from South Korea, China, and other parts of the United States in a series of masterclasses, concerts, private lessons, and lectures. We played numerous historic organs around the country and studied the organ building practices and music of the Dutch and North German composers of the 16th and 17th centuries. It was an incredible week of learning and exploring and I am excited to continue exploring the music of that time period here at Trinity. One of the deciding factors in choosing this course was the emphasis on organs built in the Dutch and North German styles. Our Taylor and Boody organ in the church was built using those same principles and the opportunity to perform and study those historic instruments has deepened my curiosity and understanding of performance practice.

Senior Choristers' Retreat at Shrine Mont

Twenty-four choristers and six adults spent a weekend at Shrine Mont in late August singing, learning, swimming, playing games, and laughing. The retreat has become an annual event that offers the choir extra rehearsal time to divide in sectionals and get a jump start on the music for the fall, Advent, and Christmas. Because there are typically choristers who have graduated the previous spring and younger choristers moving into Senior Choristers, the choir's dynamics are ever shifting and evolving. The dedicated time at Shrine Mont allows a space for those dynamics to begin to settle and feel comfortable, which in turn encourages better teamwork and camaraderie.

Organ Concert in Memory of George K. Taylor

William Porter, longtime friend and colleague of George and Carol Taylor, played a brilliant concert in George's memory on Sunday, September 6 at 5 pm. Friends, family, and colleagues from across the country traveled to Staunton for the event, which was well attended and received.

On Saturday morning, William taught an organ masterclass to five players, demonstrating his gentle way of teaching and conveying so much about the music and the instrument in so few words. It was an incredible learning experience for all in attendance. Organists came from as far as New Jersey to participate.

Update on Organ Scholar and Organ Builder Intern

The collaborative project to hire an organ scholar at Trinity and an intern at Taylor & Boody Organbuilders was unsuccessful in that the applications received were not from

suitable candidates. The candidates this position may attract are likely students in their final year of university who are making plans for the year ahead. Most of these plans are made in late fall or winter. Our position was posted in mid-April, likely after good candidates had already secured plans for the coming fall. Therefore, we will advertise once again this fall, in hopes of attracting several viable candidates. If the search is unsuccessful again, we will reevaluate.

Start of Choir Season

The choir season is off to a strong start with six members of the Prep Choir, 15 Junior Choristers, 24 Senior Choristers and about 40 members in the Parish Choir.

Approximately 70 of these folks participated in Commissioning Sunday on September 13. As our choirs continue to grow, we continue to purchase more music, vestments and folders. At last Thursday's rehearsal, we ran out of chairs and used several from nearby Sunday school rooms.

Growth is exciting and positive; music is bringing many people through our doors to be fed spiritually and emotionally. The importance of this work is vital, particularly in our shattered world. In tandem with these unarguably true statements, I have real concerns about space, budget and my personal capacity to shepherd this huge program with only volunteer support. While Joel was here as Assistant Organist, I continued to expand the program, adding two Handbell Choirs. Those choirs have not yet resumed this fall, in large part because I am unsure that I can reasonably maintain the high levels of teaching, creating, performing and ministering I have done thus far. The music at Trinity has grown by leaps and bounds over the last fourteen years, not just in numbers and ensembles but in quality and depth as well. I am hopeful that we may soon begin real discussions about solutions to this growth.

Faithfully submitted,
Gen Bolena

Associate Rector's report Vestry, September 2026

This has been a busy few weeks as fall formation has started up for all ages. I was glad to see the success of Discovery Sundays at the end of a summer of continuing adult formation, and the beginning of a program year that's seeing more and more people new to Trinity, seeking, exploring, curious, excited!

This week I've been virtually attending the Cambridge Festival of Preaching (organized by The Church Times and Canterbury Press), which has been particularly inspiring – so far especially a talk between Andrew Root and Chris Russell about preaching as a corporate act, not just an individual one.

I've been glad to be invited into some wider Church work in the last week or so as well – the FORMA conference accepted my workshop proposal on Writing our Faith for the January conference – that is a “radically hybrid” conference so part of the workshop will be recorded ahead of time and part of it will be real-time virtual.

The last few years except for 2026 (because of diocesan convention and bishop election) I have attended and helped lead worship at the Province III FORMA conference gathering at Claggett Center, run in particular by staff from the Diocese of Washington, D.C., and I've been impressed with the format and offerings there. Pattie Ames has asked me to consider helping plan that for this coming January, and I'm meeting with her to talk further about that and also about the curriculum I developed for Lent and this summer's Sunday morning formation.

Province III Synod is a strong, good group of clergy and lay leaders, and I'm thankful to have been elected to that as our diocese's clergy representative. Delaware Bishop Kevin Brown has been serving as president of the synod and has appointed me to serve as chaplain for monthly executive board meetings and two annual meetings (one online, one offline). I am appreciating the opportunity to serve our wider region and partner dioceses, support and get to know our intersecting communities through this work.

Closer to home, I'm glad for the strengthening community of our Staunton-Augusta clergy. Pastors Daniel Hess and Brett Isernhagen and I met with EMU Professor Jacob Cook recently to debrief from summer's program on Christian nationalism, and we are discussing ways to continue those conversations. I'm looking forward to our involvement in Faith250 starting next (this) week. And in late August, City Council member Blake Shepherd invited me to give the opening invocation for Staunton City Council. I'll include below a copy of the prayer I gave for that.

As always, grateful for this community of thoughtful, thinking, compassionate and enthusiastic people, and the good work being done in and through Trinity.

–Rev. Cara Ellen Modisett

Opening Prayer for Staunton City Council August 27, 2026

Creator, God, Holy Spirit, Allah, Adonai, love that holds us all together, we call you by many names.

We hear you in symphonies, the wind of storms, the quiet of trees, and the languages of all people.

We see you in the stars of the heavens, the height of our mountains, the deep of our rivers, and the streets of our city.

We meet you at the table, on the trail, in church and mosque and temple and synagogue and chapel, on the sidewalks, in hospitals and schools, and in the halls of government.

Most of all, we know you in the faces of our neighbors – the neighbors who are familiar, and the neighbors we’ve never met.

We give thanks
for the people of this city, their creativity and love for our shared home,
We give thanks
for abundance and for generosity,
for the beauty of the place where we live.

We pray for our neighbors who struggle, for those who are marginalized, homeless, ill or imprisoned.

In a time when so much divides us, help us keep finding common ground.

We give thanks for all public servants, and pray especially for this city council gathered tonight, for guidance and wisdom and inspiration in their work in and for this city.

From the prayers of Dolly Parton, a saint for our times:
Help us “to do something in this world to make it a little better than it was...”
...let us “be a light and a vessel” for good.

Amen.