

## Summary of Congregational Meeting Discussions

### April 26, 2026: Exploring Worship at Trinity Lutheran Church

Our recent conversations and meeting reflect a congregation in the midst of transitions and decision-making. There is no single feeling that captures where the Congregation is—rather, what emerged is a mix of **practical awareness, emotions (including heavy ones), and genuine openness to what God may be calling us into next.**

Many participants named a clear understanding that **our current building presents real challenges**—financially and practically—and that continuing as we are may not be sustainable. At the same time, this awareness is held alongside **deep love for this space**, long histories here, and a sense that this building has been “home” for many. There is a willingness to explore something new, including the possibility of worshiping at Trinity Lutheran over the summer. **That openness, however, comes with important questions, concerns, and a need for care as we move forward together.**

### What We Heard Together

#### A Sense That Change May Be Needed

There is a shared recognition that we are in a season that calls for discernment and, likely, change. Many expressed that while this is difficult, it may also be necessary. There is a quiet but steady sense that **we cannot remain exactly as we have been**, and that we are being invited to consider new possibilities for how we gather and live out our ministry.

#### Love for Our Building, and the Grief of Letting Go

Our building holds deep meaning. For many, it represents years—sometimes decades—of worship, relationships, and life events. The idea of leaving or changing how we use this space brings **real grief, not just preference.**

Even as people affirmed that “the church is not the building,” there was also a strong sense that **this place has shaped who we are**, and letting go of it—or using it differently—will take time, care, and support.

## **Experiences at Trinity: Warm Welcome, Mixed Experience of Space**

Many people spoke warmly about their experience with Trinity:

- People felt **genuinely welcomed**
- There was a sense of friendliness and hospitality
- Some appreciated the more intimate or “homey” feel

At the same time, the physical experience of the space raised some concerns:

- The sanctuary felt **dark or dim** to some
- Seating was uncomfortable, especially for older adults
- The layout was sometimes confusing (entrances, movement, communion)
- Hallways and gathering areas felt tight when both congregations were present
- Sound and livestream access were inconsistent

Overall, there was a sense that **the people felt right, but the space would need some adjustment** to fully support our congregation.

## **Accessibility: A Good Starting Point, with Important Gaps**

Many noted that the building is accessible in basic ways (no stairs, general ease of entry), which is a strength.

At the same time, several important needs were identified:

- Seating that is easier to use (especially chairs with arms)
- Clearer wayfinding and directions
- Better lighting
- Improved sound clarity
- Attention to how people using mobility devices experience the space

There was a shared understanding that accessibility is not just about getting in the door, but about **being able to participate fully and comfortably once inside**.

## **Worship Time: Manageable, with Some Considerations**

Most participants felt that an earlier worship time (9:00–9:30 AM) could be workable, especially as a summer adjustment.

Some concerns were raised, particularly for:

- Families with young children
- Those traveling longer distances

- Winter conditions (snow, road safety, early timing)

Suggestions included making sure livestreaming is reliable and allowing time to ease into the change.

### **Possibilities for Partnership**

There was genuine interest in what could grow through a relationship with Trinity:

- Shared service and outreach efforts
- Joint programming (music, studies, community work)
- Expanding what we can do together

At the same time, a clear boundary was named:

- A desire to remain **fully ourselves as FCCBC**, not to feel like guests or to lose our identity

### **Concerns and Questions**

Several important concerns surfaced consistently:

- How do we maintain our identity—our worship style, our practices, our sense of who we are?
- Will some members choose not to continue with us through this transition?
- How will this arrangement work in the long term—especially if our building does not sell right away?
- What will the relationship with Trinity look like, especially when differences arise?
- Are we making a lasting change, or responding to an immediate need?

**What is the thing that holds us together as a congregation, if not this building?**

### **A Need for Care, Honesty, and Continued Listening**

Participants expressed a strong desire for:

- Ongoing transparency
- Space to name grief and uncertainty
- Support for one another through change
- Leadership that is both honest and hopeful

There was also recognition that people experience change differently, and that we will need to **move at a pace that allows us to stay connected to one another**.

## A Shared Spirit Moving Forward

In closing reflections, many named a mix of emotions:

- Sadness and concern
- Hope and curiosity
- A belief that, even in difficulty, **we will find our way forward together**

There was a quiet confidence that:

- This congregation cares deeply for one another
- We have navigated hard things before
- There is still meaningful ministry ahead

At the same time, there is an understanding that this step—whatever it becomes—is significant. It will require trust, patience, and a willingness to keep listening for where God is leading.