

2025 Annual Report



Dec 14, 2025 Congregation Meeting
12:15pm in the Trinity Sanctuary

Members present: 69

The meeting was called to order with a prayer by Pastor Scott.



SECRETARY REPORT (Heidi Campbell)

- Motion made to approve the April 27, 2025 Congregational Meeting minutes was accepted & second made. Minutes were accepted unanimously.



FINANCIAL REPORT (Ray Caughman)

- 2026 Budget was proposed. Jodi reported about the budget, it was put up for vote & passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS/ Additional meeting notes:

- Nominees for 2026 Leadership team were presented by Jodi. The Congregation voted to approve all nominees:
 - Secretary- Heidi Campbell
 - Worship Coordinator- David Richardson
 - Discipleship Coordinator- Teana Chakravarty
 - Audit Team- David Lemcke & Joan Craig
 - Youth Representative- Abbey Christie



Closing

A motion was made to end the meeting & seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Pastor Katie closed the meeting with a prayer.



**Meeting
Minutes**

Meeting Minutes created by Heidi Campbell from notes taken by David Wickert.

President's Report 2025

This year finds me looking forward more than being reflective but there are so many wonderful things that have transpired to make this so:

- Missions and ministry are thriving. An incredibly generous Body of Christ continues to give of themselves to others in our congregation, the community of Lilburn, the greater Church, and a world in need. It's a joy to walk in discipleship with all of you.
- The building looks great! Doug Shockley and his team, as always, have done a wonderful job caring for the place where we gather to worship, study, fellowship, and share with our community. We're working hard on a financial plan to ensure that it's cared for properly without budgetary concerns.
- Connections to our community have created wonderful opportunities to share the love of Christ! Replacement of our congregation's bus came right on time for Good Samaritan – what was our bus now has a new life as a much needed means of transportation for a very special congregation.
- Our staff is complete again. Thank you Pastor Scott, Pastor Katie, John, Kristy, Larry, LeRoy, and Alex for tending our little flock so well.

Finally, while the 2026 budget process was a positive one overall, there were challenges for sure. Because we didn't collect the revenue expected in the 2025 budget, the leadership team was forced to make hard decisions in the process of trimming the budget for next year; they did so faithfully and responsibly. In a year of economic uncertainty and even scarcity for some, nearly half of all giving intentions were increased for 2026 ...wow! That growth is an incredible act of faith based entirely on gratitude for all the Lord's blessings received here – worship, opportunities to serve those in need, the community we find and make, pastoral care, and so much more – and on His promise of abundance. It's no secret that here, in this place, wonderful things happen when all that the Lord provides is shared; resources of time, talent and treasure come together and even appear unexpectedly to solve challenges and grow the Kingdom of God.

All of this has me looking ahead to Trinity's best days of ministry!

May God bless you.

Jodi Lemcke

Report To The Congregation
Pastor Scott Sessler

Greetings!

The highlight of 2025 was a quiet and unspoken, yet important milestone for me. On July 2, 2025, I celebrated 30 years of ordination in ministry. It's hard to believe I have been doing this for that long, it does not seem like it has been 30 years. I remember as a younger, newly ordained pastor that when the pastors celebrating 25 or 30 years of ordination were recognized at a Synod Assembly that I use to think about how old they looked and how out of date they must be. Now, I am one of them. And yes, I do feel older and more out of date than what I care to admit. I give thanks that God can continue to still work through older pastors like me to do God's work these many years into ministry.

As proud as I am of this accomplishment, I also find it very humbling. I've shared before that there were many times when I questioned my call to be a pastor. It is not an easy job (as the bible warns us!) and sometimes you wonder if you are making any difference in people's lives. I give thanks to God that in those moments God has sent me the right people to encourage me, the right email to lift me up, a successful venture to restore my confidence. I've had to learn this isn't about me but rather what God is calling me to do. It's not about if things go well or not, it's about remaining faithful to what I perceive God is calling me to do. If it wasn't for God constant care and nudging, I don't know where I would be today.

I am reminded of the story of Elijah and the battle with the prophets of Baal. Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal to see whose god reigns supreme – the gods of Baal or the one true God. Of course, in a display of fire consuming the sacrifice of Elijah, the one true God prevails and Elijah is victorious. Those gathered fell down and shouted out that God was the one and only God. However, when Jezebel hears of this, she vows to hunt Elijah down and kill him. At this Elijah flees to the mountains in hiding.

That's the way it is in ministry and in a life of faith in general. At one minute you are celebrating God's rule and love and the next you are wondering why you are suffering or things are not going so well. A life of faith is never a straight movement upward, it has peaks and valleys and everything in between. God only promises to be with us, not that everything will go smoothly.

I love what God does next with Elijah. He comes to him in the cave on the mountain and asks him why he is hiding out?! Elijah responds that Jezebel and her people are out to kill him and that his life is basically over. God calls Elijah out of the cave and encounters Elijah in wind, fire and an earthquake. Yet, God tells Elijah that God is not found in these mighty events, but rather in a still, small voice directing Elijah what he was to do next. The mighty act of God defeating the prophets of Baal was powerful, but so is the gentle whisper of God that strengthens, guides and encourages us in our lives of faith.

I cannot count the number of times that still, small voice has comforted me when troubled, guided me when confused, encouraged me when dejected, and forgave me when I messed up. I have had many powerful events in ministry, but the foundation in everyday life is the gentle whisper of the Spirit leading me in a life of faith.

As we enter a new year (2026), may we all continue to listen for the still, small voice of God leading us in a life of faith. May we be open to ways God is calling us in new directions as new opportunities in ministry unfold. May we be open to the Spirit comforting us in the midst of any challenges we may face. May we encounter the voice of God as we are called to reach out to others with God's love. We give thanks for the mighty acts of God that remind us who reigns supreme, but we also give thanks for the small, still voice of God that leads us daily in a life of faith!

Associate Pastor Report 2025

As I reflect on life and ministry during 2025 at Trinity, I am reminded of many blessings, opportunities, some challenges and God's provision through the people.

In 2025 we were blessed with having two adult baptisms. In a tradition where we commonly baptize children, this is less common and also truly wonderful when it happens. It was an absolute joy to journey with two different adults through their desire to be baptized as well as their baptisms themselves. To God be the glory.

Our theme for the Season of Easter was "I love to tell the story." We sang the hymn during worship on Sundays, and we talked about various ways that we can tell the story of God's love with our words and our lives.

Over the summer, new flooring was installed upstairs in the office, Hanberry Hall, the narthex as well as on the stairs. We give thanks to God and to the generosity of Trinity family as we report that the flooring was entirely funded by the congregation. Also, a huge thank you to Doug Shockley and the operations crew who oversaw the project.

Thanks be to God and many volunteers, in July we had a wonderful Vacation Bible School session. What a gift it is to share and to receive God's love through our community in this way.

To round out the good news of the summer, Trinity Community Schools purchased a used bus. That purchase made it possible for Trinity to donate the bus Community Schools no longer needed to Good Samaritan Ministries for their use. Good Samaritan is a congregation comprised mostly of refugees without vehicles. Among other things, this van is making it possible for Good Samaritan to pick parishioners up and bring them to worship.

In August, we hosted ALLIA (The Association of Liberian Lutherans in America's) annual conference. It was a weekend filled with worship, activity and fellowship with our sisters and brothers in Christ from across the world.

In October, we had Oktoberfest. The weather was beautiful. The attendance was fantastic. To help with the sustainability of the festival, we began the process of seeking sponsorships for various parts of Oktoberfest. This year, the Petting Zoo was sponsored by Dogwood Animal Hospital, the port o potties were sponsored by Reliance Mechanical and the kids carnival was sponsored by Britt Flooring. The bounce houses were sponsored by Thrivent Choice Dollars, the Dumpster was donated by Arrow Waste and the Ticket printing was donated by Gwinnett Printing. As in years past, kids 10 and under continued to receive free admission. They also received 12 free carnival tickets and the petting zoo admission and bouncy houses were free as well. The JUST Club purchased \$1,000 worth of tickets for preschool parents, teachers and staff as well as community folks. Due to the generosity of community sponsors, for the first time, all of the kids activities were free! Thanks be to God!

In the Fall, the United States experienced a government shut down which financially impacted many, many people in our community. The need for food and support that presented itself at the local co-ops was unprecedented as was the response from community.

The youth group did a food drive which culminated before the youth led worship with the food people brought being placed up around the altar before worship. The traditional

Thanksgiving Baskets and Angel Tree ministries were reworked as a “food drive” and a “toy drive” to serve the greater need and thanks be to God, the impact was incredible.

On December 21st, we were given the gift of being led by our children as they presented “The Star” for nativity worship. What a blessing it was.

Amidst these various activities, the Dementia Caregiver Support Group, Grief Support Group and ADHD parent/caregiver support group continued both for people in the community as well as folks at Trinity. Stephen Ministry also continues to seek to use their blessings to be a blessing. The majority of Stephen Ministers have at least one care receiver. We will be looking at having a training in 2026 to grow the group.

As I reflect on 2025, I give thanks to Our God who was with us every step of the way: the joyous ones, the weary ones, the uncertain ones and the miraculous ones. Together may we continue to praise God from whom all blessings flow.

God’s peace to you,

Pastor Katie

2025 Fiscal Year End Financial Audit Report

The Annual Financial Audit focuses on determining if income is properly accounted for, expenses are promptly paid, and established audit trails are followed. To do this the Audit Committee reviews the following for accuracy and reasonableness:

1. Teller and Offering Records
2. Accounts Payable
3. Payroll taxes
4. Loan Payments
5. Credit Card statements and receipts
6. Cash / Bank Account Statement Reconciliations
7. Balance Sheet

Findings from the 2025 Fiscal Year Audit Team are as follows:

Teller and Offering Records - Four random teller reports from 01/26/2025, 04/13/2025, 09/07/2025 and 11/09/2025 were reviewed . All teller reports had two signatures and matched the deposit slips. The deposits were traced to the bank statements.

- The 01/26/2025 teller report contained two cash contributions that did not have the dollar amount noted on the envelope or other paper notation.
- The 04/13/2025 teller report was missing images of six checks.
- The 09/07/2025 teller report contained one cash contribution that did not have any envelope or paper notation associated although the (memorial) fund was known.
- The 11/09/2025 teller report package contained no omissions.

Accounts Payable - All accounts payable files randomly selected were following the financial policies of Trinity Lutheran Church, therefore in compliance. There was documentation to support. I was provided with a check register for the entire year of 2025 on

the operating account. I concentrated on checks that are over \$500 and chose 29 **random checks, including voided checks. I reviewed each check, including the backup**

and payment request form. All checks reviewed had the proper 2 signatures and backup attached. No exceptions were found. The expense payments, and all requests contained two (2) signatures.

Payroll Taxes - An examination of the 2025 payroll tax reports IRS forms941, state income tax remittances, and Federal and State W2 summary statements were performed to confirm amounts matched payroll, were filed timely, and were in compliance with IRS rules.

- No issues to report on the 941 Forms, for both Dates filed and amounts reported. Taxes were filed quarterly, and amounts correspond with the information from the expense report.
- A consideration to be addressed is the Staff Christmas. If the donations for Staff Christmas are included on the member's yearend tax form, then taxes need to be taken out prior to distribution. If we do not include member's donations to Staff Christmas, then no taxes need to be taken out

Loan Payments – A review was performed for all loan payments made during 2025 on the church mortgage. The Thrivent Financial for Lutherans mortgage is the only Loan Payment Trinity Lutheran Church had in 2025. All of the Regular Loan Payments were made on time monthly by Direct Payment.

Credit Card statements and receipts – A random sampling of Credit Card statements was reviewed to confirm receipts for all amounts paid were present.

Cash / Bank Account Statement Reconciliations - Balance Sheet - I reviewed the bank reconciliations for 3 bank accounts and tied them to the Balance Sheet. The 3 accounts are: Mission Plus Investment, Merrill Lynch and Chase Bank.

- The Mission Plus Investment matched to the penny.
- The Chase Bank had a variance of a few dollars which is not material and is most likely

an error in posting periods. The Merrill Lynch account did not match as described below.

- In reviewing the Merrill Lynch bank reconciliation, many process errors were noted. First, the bank reconciliation did not match the Balance Sheet. Second, on the Balance Sheet, in the cash section, there was an extra account 199998 – Investments – Stock, which had a credit balance of \$(7,674.32). In reviewing this account, I learned that there was a stock donation that was recorded incorrectly. When searching deeper, I learned that there were in fact, 2 separate stock donations that had been incorrectly recorded. I then traced back all the journal entries that were tied to the stock donations and then calculated what the true entries should have been. The net result was a reclassification of the credit balance to the Merrill Lynch account as well as some minor entries to expense. The financials on a whole were not materially affected, however, processes should be established to accurately account for stock donations and the subsequent sale of the donated stock. The bank reconciliation process relating to stock donations needs to be updated as well.

Revenues, Expenses and Reserves - I've compared the Restricted Accounts, School Revenue and Expense and Church Revenue and Expense reports to the balance sheets. All accounts and values are accounted for and match.

Respectfully Submitted,
2025 Trinity Lutheran Church Financial Audit Team
John Lucht
David Lemcke
Shirley Connelly
Joan Craig
Assisted by,
Kristy Perkins, Office Coordinator
Ray Caughman, Financial Officer

2025 Operations Report

Thanks to my team for all the help keeping the church in good repairs. Jodi Grimes, Mike Weller, Rich Foucher, Gib Heuett, Ed Timmons, Scott Williams.

Some of the more substantial projects completed in 2025.

1. Finished the upgrade of the church lighting from florescent bulbs to direct drive LED bulbs. I estimate a 4-year payback on this lighting upgrade.
2. Upgraded the cameras for the back playground area and front entrance for better coverage.
3. Repaired and resurfaced the retaining wall enclosing the AC units at the south entrance to the church. Cost was \$11,000 to do this repair. Part of our reserve study repairs.
4. Replace a window in the Youth Room that has been damaged and unusable for a few years.
5. Asked for pledges from the congregation to replace the flooring in Hanberry Hall, Prayer Chapel, Ushers Closet, Narthex, stairways and office. Received all the money required to perform this much needed upgrade. Praise GOD. The flooring has been replaced in all these areas and looks great.
6. Installed light motion sensors for many of the rooms in the church to auto turn on/off lights in these rooms. Seem to be working fine and thanks to all tolerating any issues and dealing with unwanted light shut offs.
7. Thanks to Ed Timmons for handling bus maintenance. Also, thanks Scott Williams for taking over bus maintenance since Ed has stepped down.
8. Replaced the 2006 bus with a used bus for the preschool with a used 2015 bus. The new bus seems to be working well. THANK YOU to Scott Williams for his help in this process.
9. Installed new entrance/exit signage to help with traffic flow in/out of the church.
10. Had a rain water leak through the foundation in the nursery. Leak came from poor water drainage from roof and ground. Plans are to look at this in 2026 and make some decision on what to do. Temporary repairs have been made to keep this in check for now.
11. Plans were to level the back field in the fall of 2025, but have rescheduled that project to the spring of 2026.

Doug Shockley

2025 Outreach Mission Report to the Congregation

Here are some of the ways Trinity shared God's love with our community in 2022.

Alcoholics Anonymous: We continue to host a group of people seeking support for their recovery.

Angel Tree: Our congregation continues to provide Christmas gifts to families. This year Trinity provided more than 150 gifts/gift cards for children through the Lilburn Co-Op. Thanks to all who helped brighten the holidays for these people!

Backpack Buddies: In 2025, we supplied meals on 74 days. Each Saturday and Sunday, we provided breakfast, lunch, and dinner for 20 children, totaling 220 meals. Our Backpack Buddies ministry operates every week during the school year—if school is open, we are there delivering food bundles to children living in food-insecure environments. Thank you to all who participated in this ministry!

Blood drive: Trinity regularly hosts LifeSouth Community Blood Centers, which accepts donations that save lives. Thanks to all who donated!

Boy Scouts/Cub Scouts: Dozens of boys and girls have found a scout home at Trinity. They meet here weekly and hold special events like camping in the back field and movie nights in the parking lot.

Brown bag ministry: Each month Travis Wilhite and Tony Bush lead a team that prepares and drops off 80-100 brown bag lunches. Thanks to all who participate!

Community garden: Our volunteers have adopted several garden plots at Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church. We donated 414 pounds to the Co-Op in 2025. Over five years, Trinity has donated 3,097 pounds of produce. Thank you to all who participated!

Trunk or Treat: We've partnered with Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church to provide a safe, fun event for scores of children. A big thank you to all who participated!

Home of Hope for Domestic Violence: We continue to provide monthly meals for the 30-35 residents and staff of the Home of Hope shelter for women and children in Buford. Thank you, Doug Doblar, for coordinating this ministry!

Hunger Walk: Trinity raises thousands of dollars each year to fight hunger through the Hunger Walk. This year, we raised \$10,109. Thank you, Travis Wilhite, for your amazing work for this ministry!

Lilburn Co-op: We continue to support the co-op with food donations and other resources. Thanks to everyone who donated, and to Pastor Scott, who now sits on the co-op board.

Oktoberfest: We had another successful festival and heard many compliments from guests. The proceeds benefited three local charities. We continue to expand our partnerships with community groups to make this a true community festival. Many thanks to the dedicated group of volunteers who have made this a beloved event in our community.

Yours in Christ.

David Wickert, outreach coordinator

DISCIPLESHIP 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Many thanks to all the Discipleship groups and their leaders at Trinity for a wonderful 2025. We again had a wonderful Ministry Fair in August with over 30 groups participating. Ministries sponsored and participated in a variety of God's Work Our Hands projects and were a blessing to many.

The following Adult Ministry Team groups were active in 2025:

- Men's Breakfast – Doug Shockley, leader
- Book Club – Peggy Brown, leader
- Lutheran Community Food Ministry – Tom Pressley, leader
- Wine and Word groups – multiple groups, each with leader(s)
- Stephen Ministry – Ev English, leader
Cared for Trinity and community care receivers throughout the year.
- Green Team – Becky White, leader
- WELCA – Janice Hawkins, leader
Multiple circles with leaders
Activities/Accomplishments:
Circle Bible studies and service projects continued.
Annual Holiday Auction
Annual Women's Advent dinner
Lutheran World Relief Ingathering
- JUST Club - Carol Thompson and Cheri Jowett, leaders
- Adult Sunday School – David Wickert, leader
- Partners for Christ – Carol Thompson, leader
- Finger Foods & Fellowship – David Richardson, leader
- Knit and a Prayer – Jodi Lemcke, leader

- Piecemakers – Vicki Thiemann, leader
- Other Small Groups of which I am not aware

We appreciate the continuing efforts of the following Congregation Ministry Teams:

- Bereavement – Carolyn Yost, leader
- Prayer Lifters – Debbie Ringer, leader

Special recognition and appreciation to Pastor Katie and Pastor Scott for their leadership, support, and faithfulness.

In Christ,

Connie Rifkind
Discipleship Coordinator

2025 Year End Report – Formation Team

We started the year with a discussion around our mission:

"What do we want Youth & Family ministry to look like at Trinity?" Some key areas of focus and desired outcomes for Youth & Family Ministry included:

- Know where to find things in the Scriptures
- Loved & Welcomed by God
- Affirming place for youth
- A place of community where I can bring others
- A place to use my gifts in service

Vision statement: An affirming and safe place to experience the love of God and grow in the scriptures and service to others

Here is how we lived our vision during 2025 –

Children:

- Finished the year sharing our kids gifts with the congregation during several worship service moments in Dec with nativity and special music.
- Key Highlights of 2025: First Communion classes, several new acolytes trained, Wednesday Night programming remains strong with focus on Faith Steps, several new 3rd and 4th grade Bible recipients, Family Fun nights continued through the summer, great VBS, few new Lutheridge campers, community outreach continued with Lilburn Co-Op service projects – Cookie Jars and Soup Jars, global outreach with Global Barnyard fundraising.

Youth:

- Our youth continue to learn, share, and serve.
- Key Highlights of 2025: Continued presence at Synod events like All-GA, Affirm, SESLYO, opportunities to grow closer in God's word during Sunday school, confirmation (new program model and day started in Fall '25), SWAG, and new summer Bible study. Participating in opportunities to help serve our congregation and community with Youth Led services and many other ways. I love how our youth are involved in many of our children's programs (VBS, Advent craft day and Free babysitting, ready to fill-in as needed) as well as other ministries across Trinity (Octoberfest, Road clean-up, etc.).

Parent Support:

- Key Highlights of 2025 – GroupMe chat has been a success avenue to keep parents up-to-date on Children and Youth happenings. Frequent parent meetings hosted during the Sunday School hour have also been a great way to engage with the parents.

Community Schools:

- Finished the calendar year strong with financials in the black! Made targeted goal move of funds to the long-range planning reserves.

- Key Highlights of 2025: New Bus, New assistant director, Competitive Teacher Raises, Good enrollment (preschool slower than hoped), Positive feedback of programs from parents and community.

Looking forward to how we continue to learn, love, and grow in 2026!

Worship Ministry Annual Report – 2025

2025 was another year of blessings for Worship at Trinity. While we had to say goodbye to Kristen Passmore as our Chancel director, we are very grateful that she suggested Alex Thomlinson as her replacement. Alex and his wife Rebecca have settled in and our Chancel choir is happy to have them both. We have also added new Altar Guild members, new Acolytes, and new Crucifers.

2025 was also a year of challenges. We have been trying to simplify the audio wiring and make best use of the equipment that we have, also making it easier for the A/V Team to respond to special requests. At the same time, we were also trying to train more people to be able to assist with this ministry. We are very grateful for all of the hard work that Neil, Gib, Jon and Mike have put into making our services sound as good as we can get them and consistent in-person and online.

Throughout the year, we have had a number of new and experienced folks volunteer to help decorate and de-decorate the church for the holiday seasons (Lent, Easter, Advent, Christmas), and we are very grateful for every one of them.

We continue to work with Community Schools for Youth-Led/Community Schools Sunday and had a strong participation again this year.