

The Monthly Newsletter of Trinity Reformed Church

CONNECTIONS

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Welcome to the May Connections!

This month's issue of Connections brings us to the one year mark since launching our current newsletter format with a new lay-out and new columns and new ways to connect and learn about each other.

Over the past year, we have enjoyed the monthly installments of two special columns: the Jerusalem Temple Gazette and Trinity Volunteers.

A big thank you to Ron Blauwkamp for his thoughtful and thought-provoking interviews as Rexilius, investigative scribe from 33AD. What a way to engage with Scripture, hear old stories in new ways, and get our imaginations working!

And a big thank you to all those who shared with us about how they volunteer. Each story and each picture have been a glimpse into the amazing ways that Trinity is blessing and being blessed by our community and neighbors!

As always, if you have ideas for future columns or have a story or something to share in these pages, we'd love to hear it.



A bright pink Tulip Tree blooms near Trinity's Entrance!



NOTE FROM PASTOR LYDIA

Dear Trinity Family,

This May will be the first anniversary of my graduation with my Master's of Divinity. Last year, I would have been wrapping up exams, preparing for my family to visit, and anticipating my first summer living in Michigan. Without a job, without a home (our lease ended in June), and without my routine classwork.

I had studied divinity for 3-years at that point. I transitioned from studying undergraduate Biochemistry in Oregon to a job as an analytical chemist in Connecticut, and then to a remote-student in Florida, and then finally to Michigan. I felt hope for a new direction in my life when I began Seminary.

This May has arrived, and I have been pastoring for about 8-months now. I've accepted a call to serve here at Trinity and a greater call to share the love of Christ through my line of work.

I've loved finding my footing here at Trinity, and I've loved following the Spirit as I discover a new role to Trinity – a Pastor of Community Engagement and Outreach.

This May, I'll be taking some steps to add resources to the Welcome Desk. I've brainstormed with staff and congregants on how and what to share at the Welcome Desk to ensure our wonderful ministries at Trinity are as accessible as possible and the radical welcomeness of Christ as apparent as possible.

I've created this little "Welcome Desk Culture" map that will help inform what resources I craft. Take a look if it peaks your interest! Share with me what you think as the Welcome Desk shifts. What helps you feel welcome?

In Faith and Curiosity,
Pastor Lydia





CHURCHES IN MISSION UPDATE

Wait – What is Churches in Mission Again?

Trinity has started to participate in something called "Churches in Mission". Pastor Lydia and a team of 4 congregants have begun embarking on a 1-year outreach program called "Churches in Mission" with the help of WTS's curriculum and support. This program is intended to help churches explore the needs present in both their neighborhoods and congregations. Then, it provides a framework to identify guiding questions, tension points, and next steps. The hope is to clarify next steps for our local mission by getting to know others, wrestling with what's heard, responding with action, and discerning Trinity's expression of ministry in this season!



Churches in Mission Team!

Want to learn more? Wondering how to Engage?



Pray



Ask about
**Participating or
Volunteering in the
Interviews!!**



Make a
Suggestion or
Ask a Question

Interview Time!

The Churches in Mission Team has been given our first task from WTS's curriculum:

It's time to interview people!

Not like a job interview.

Instead, each member of the team will be asking five congregants and five neighbors a few questions about how they experience Trinity, and what their perspectives are on their communities.

No names will be written down. We will combine all the interviews and see if there are any emerging themes, stories, or needs.

With a multitude of voices, we will discern where God is leading Trinity.

So, if one of our team members approaches you this month and asks if they could set up 20-30 minutes to chat... you'll know why! And please consider saying yes, we'd love to hear from you!



On any given day of the week, a Trinity member is out in our community serving or in our church helping. Ranging from the youngest among us to the oldest, we are each finding a way to reach out and bless others.

Last year we began this monthly column to honor National Volunteer Month and to take the opportunity to stop and notice all the ways our church family serves and cares for our neighbors and each other.

Since April 2025, we have highlighted just how Trinity is volunteering in each issue of Connections - with stories to share and folks to thank. From the first column where Sandra Coverstone shared about her volunteer hours at Lakeside Clubhouse to our latest one by Anne VanderZiel highlighting the gospel transforming lives in prisons, we have learned so much about each other AND about how God is at work through us and in us.

As we bring this column to end, let's take the opportunity to give thanks to God for all the ways we're called to serve and love our neighbors!





girl scouts



Evergreen Commons



CROSSROADS
PRISON MINISTRIES



Thank you all for loving and serving our community!



CURRENT SERMON SERIES

As we continue to travel from Easter Sunday to Pentecost Sunday, we are exploring the many different ways Scripture describes the Holy Spirit. Each week we are exploring a different description and image: wind, seal, river, breathe...and more!

Later this month, when we come to Pentecost on the 24th, we will revisit the scripture from Acts 2 when the Holy Spirit descended with wind and tongues of flame, we'll hear the familiar story in a new way with added depth and beauty about just how our God is at work in our world and in our lives.

May 3 | Spirit as Oil

1 Samuel 16;

May 10 | Spirit as River

John 7:38-39

May 17 | Spirit as Breath

Genesis 2:7, Ezekiel 38:7-10

May 24 | Spirit as Fire

Acts 2

Q&A 53

Q. What do you believe concerning “the Holy Spirit”?

A. First, that the Spirit, with the Father and the Son, is eternal God.¹

Second, that the Spirit is given also to me,² so that, through true faith, he makes me share in Christ and all his benefits,³ comforts me,⁴ and will remain with me forever.⁵

¹ Gen. 1:1-2; Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4

² 1 Cor. 6:19; 2 Cor. 1:21-22; Gal. 4:6

³ Gal. 3:14

⁴ John 15:26; Acts 9:31

⁵ John 14:16-17; 1 Pet. 4:14

This is part of the Heidelberg Catechism’s teaching on the Holy Spirit.

Take time this month to read through this Q+A and look up each of the Scripture passages in the footnotes.

Consider the following questions...

How does our exploration of the biblical images help deepen your understanding of what we believe about the Holy Spirit?

What’s your favorite image for the Holy Spirit?

How does your image help you know or trust the God who is with you?



JERUSALEM TEMPLE GAZETTE

by Rexilius, investigative scribe of the Jerusalem Temple Gazette, AD 33 or so

Rex--Hi, Amanda, Welcome to AD 33. I've only interviewed time travelers from the past or from early church history in the Bible. You are my first interviewee from the far future. I understand that you are Senior pastor of Trinity Reformed Church in a village called Holland in some province called Michigan in a nation called United States on a continent I've never heard of on the other side of this globe called "Earth."

Almost everything about you boggles my mind and I have a thousand or more questions I'd like to ask but I'm pretty sure I wouldn't understand most of your answers. So, welcome anyway.

I understand you have some questions of me. Our roles are reversed this time, so this will be a new experience for me. It's a real "sandal's on the other foot" kind of thing.

Amanda--Hi Rex. It really is a pleasure to meet you in person. We have been publishing one of your interviews each month in our church's newsletter. Several questions have been raised that only you can answer. Let's start with the most frequent. Of all the interviews you have done (and I believe I saw a list of 64 or 65), which one was your favorite interview and why?

Rex--Well, my first response is to say that I don't have a favorite. I feel a bit like a parent who is asked which of his/her kids is the favorite. Each is different and special in their own way. I've learned a lot about how God has interacted with human individuals from many nations and how individuals have envisioned God and followed His way or their way. Each interview has answered some questions and raised others. Each has been fascinating. People are just people whether they lived thousands of years ago or were born yesterday. I will bet a lot of shekels that your people in Holland in 2026 aren't much different from Abram, Sarah, Hagar, and all the others I interviewed.

That being said, I enjoyed the interview with James and John's mother very much. Being Jewish, my mother is very much like her. I think most people know some parent who is pushy, loud, aggressive almost, and almost totally unaware of how they come across to others in support of their kid or kids. They are so clueless that they are funny in a strange way. I found a number of my interviewees had a much greater sense of humor than I had expected. I found that quite refreshing.

My earlier phrase, "People are just people," was my greatest take-away from all the interviews.

Rexilius, an investigative scribe from AD 33, is the pen name of our very own Ron Blauwkamp!

Ron started writing these interview style historical pieces many years ago as a way to process what he heard in sermons and deepen his own engagement with Scripture.

After a year's worth of Jerusalem Temple Gazette, we are saying good-bye to Rexilius with one last column. And for this final interview, Rexilius is the one interviewed!

Read on for one more column filled with all the wit, wisdom, and insight that we've come to expect from this investigative scribe....



God loves all people of all the different nations and works with people with a lot of differing skill sets, as long as they recognize that "there is only one God and it isn't me!"

Amanda--Very interesting! I wish I had time for you to "Tell me more." I'd love to hear more about Mary and Joseph as Jesus' parents, and a lot of other stories, but onward.

The second question (or set of questions) was why did you start interviewing these Biblical characters and how did you pick those you interviewed?

Rex--I started the interviews because I got this job at the Jerusalem Gazette and my editor said, "Rex, a lot of people have asked me which ancient character would I talk to if I could and what would I ask? I think there might be a column in there somehow." The more I thought about it, the more I agreed. I did have a lot of questions to ask various Biblical people. And readers have a lot of curiosity, especially about important people in the Scriptures. They would jump at the chance to meet these people in person and really talk to them.

I don't know if they really time traveled or dream traveled or something else. They appeared and I talked with them. I found them quite real and truthful and genuine.

(BTW--Are you really here now or am I having a dream?). Anyway, the

conversations were enlightening to me and raised a number of alternative possibilities. They made the Bible come alive and real.

How did I pick the ones I interviewed? I don't have a clear answer. "The spirit moved me" is probably the most accurate. There was probably something in the context of my life, some news, some crisis, some random connection, that made me reread their story and ponder their answers.

Amanda--If you don't have a favorite interview, do you have one that was especially poignant? Did any one change your thinking a lot?

Rex--That is a great question. It reminds me of "What book changed your life?"

Two interviews stand out in my mind at this moment: Isaac's account of Abram's attempted sacrifice and Judas's account of his betrayal of Rabbi Jesus. Both raised emotional issues I had not considered before.

I had never "walked in Isaac's or Sarah's sandals" and considered how Abram's actions would have looked to them. How would a son (or mother) look at a father ever after who had tied him up and was about to butcher him?

Also, I had never considered that Judas might have had a real Messianic motive for betraying Jesus. "Surely I can force His hand

and make him use his power to oust the Roman occupiers and be the Messiah we all expect!"

Amanda--One last question. What key advice do you have for the readers of this interview in the far future in 2026?

Rex--Hmmm! I don't know them and their "lens by which they view the world." But, I do believe people are just people, so what is true of my readers now is most likely true of your readers then.

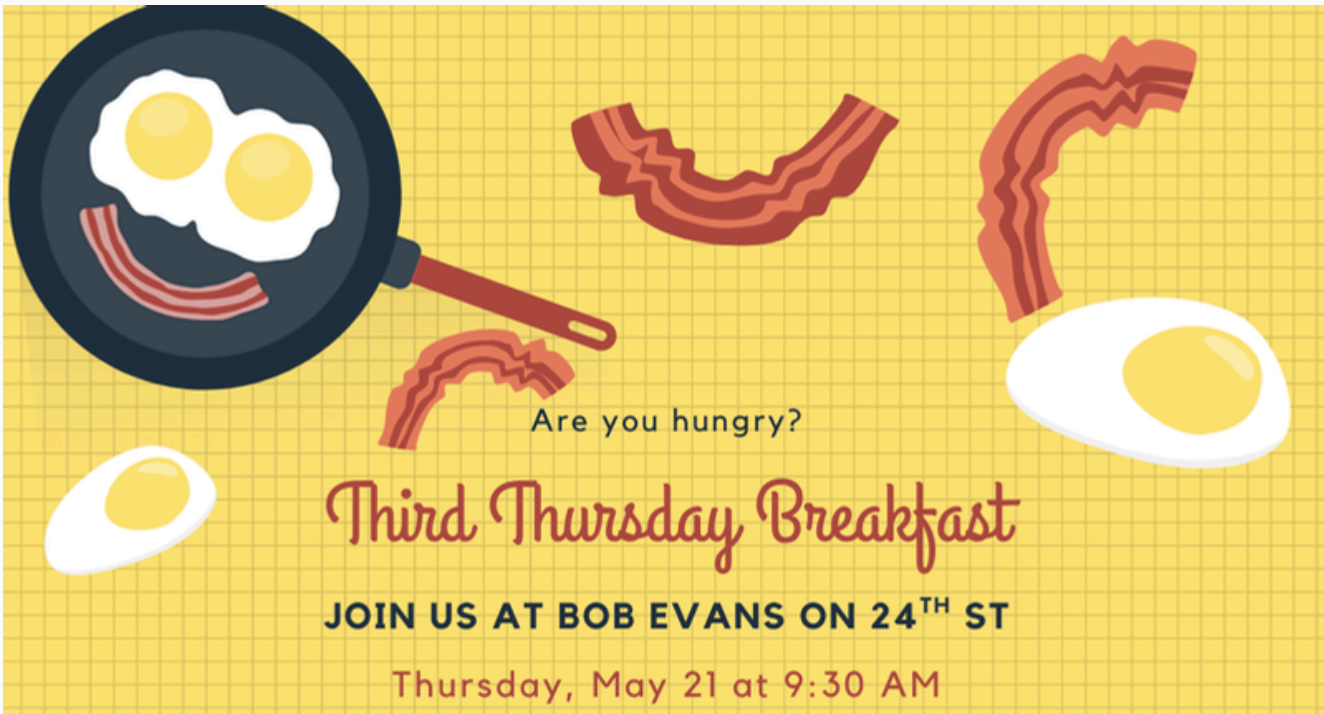
Here's my advice:

Read carefully and wisely. Read poetry as poetry, history as history, prophecy as prophecy, etc. Know you are reading other people's mail, so ask about who is writing and to whom?, why is this written?, how would the original recipient have understood the message? and all of those important questions. Do not read everything from a literal, historic mindset.

And, most important, test everything with Jesus' rule--"Does my interpretation fit with loving God with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength and does it fit with loving my neighbor (those Samaritans or those Ninevites)?"

Amanda--Thank you so much, Rex! For your interviews, for your curiosity, and for sharing all this with us here at Trinity Church!

COMMUNITY NOTES



Are you hungry?

Third Thursday Breakfast

JOIN US AT BOB EVANS ON 24TH ST

Thursday, May 21 at 9:30 AM

Sign up
using
the QR
code
below



Cover to Cover Book Club

The 2025/2026 Book Club will meet for the last time this season on Thursday, May 28
If you are interested in joining in the fall, please see Sharon Kruse.

May | Page Turner by Viola Shipman

Cover to Cover Book Club will meet in The Reflections Room at Trinity

Trinity Care Closet

This month, Care Closet needs the following items. Would you please consider making a donation to assist our neighbors who could benefit from some extra support?

Look for the donation basket located on the Welcome Desk!

Thank you very much for your continued support of Trinity's Care Closet.

Donations of the Month

MAY
ALUMINUM FOIL
+
LIQUID FABRIC
SOFTENER



Child oh child
my beloved son
the one who sees love
not hate in every one
Wars and wars and wars to come
Life lies in destruction
People torn from houses
Poverty exists everywhere
Hate seems from almost everyone
No food no life little love given
Where is God
Where has love gone
Oh child oh child of mine
Little can be done you go and say
But wait my little one
Have you prayed
Not once not twice but every day
Suffering is here too in us today
Forgive me Lord when I do not pray

*Written and submitted by
Linda Louisa Johnson*



Hug-a-Horse | Friday, May 8, 2026 from 5p-6p

FREE Event! All are welcome to join us in the horse barn for horse snuggles and grooming. We hope this unstructured time is a chance to take a deep breath alongside a few of our treasured equine friends. Please wear closed-toed shoes.

Mindfulness | Friday, May 8, 2026 from 6:30p-8:00p

Are you looking for a unique way to manage stress and improve your well-being? We invite you to join us in our heated indoor arena to spend unmounted time alongside a few of our equine friends while being guided through various mindful experiences. We have the privilege of learning from the best teachers of mindful living: horses!



Please note, the cost is \$15 per participant, and participants must be at least 16 years old. Please use the QR code to register.

The QR code also gives information about volunteering at Renew!

If you like to walk, what better way to get your steps in than to side walk during a therapeutic riding lesson! Renew will train you to do this!

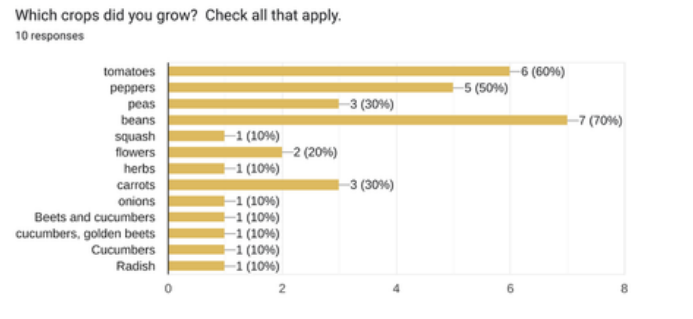
You can log a couple of thousand steps in a single lesson AND help bring a positive life change through interactions with horses! Blessings All Around!



Hello Gardeners!

We still have garden beds available! Please contact Teresa Harrington ASAP if you want to garden with us this year!

Look at some of the fun stuff we grow!
Many, many sunflowers and wildflowers were vivid as well!



The requirements are that you donate 10% of your harvest to the church table for distribution or to someone YOU KNOW in need of healthy, delicious, fresh produce! You will need to commit to taking care of your box (weeding, planting, weeding, harvesting, WEEDING) and assist with refilling water barrels (if physically able) or general garden needs from time to time.

It's a GREAT TIME to be together in the summer sun!

Contact me ASAP to reserve YOUR box!

Phone: 616.403.4769

Email: teresah8547@gmail.com

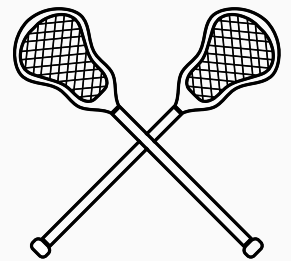
May Youth Events:

Trinity has been invited to come and support Kimy!

Kimy has lacrosse games at **Whistlestop Park in Byron Center**

Tuesday's on the 5th, 12th, and 19th | 5:30-6:30pm

Thursday's on the 7th, 14th, and 21st | 5:30-6:30pm



Do your kiddos have events (sports, theatre, music programs, etc) coming up that you'd like to share with the congregation? We would be happy to share the information! Please reach out to Pastor Lydia!

May Birthdays

Rylee Silva	05/01	Lori Borgman	05/17
Doug Schurman	05/02	Warren Kooyers	05/18
Tom Bos	05/03	Dan Schrotenboer	05/19
Anita Boss	05/04	May Kubera	05/25
Jenna Kroll	05/04	Darlene VanHeest	05/26
Linda Lampen	05/04	Ken Brondyke	05/27
Anne VanderZiel	05/09	Karen Kane	05/28
Penny Houting	05/10	Lori Kooyers	05/29
Donna Berglund	05/11	Paul Moker	05/30
Joy McSorley	05/14		
Linda Sal	05/14		

May Anniversaries

Randy & Joy McSorley	05/15
Warren & Lori Kooyers	05/16
Tim & Jenna Kroll	05/16
Bob & Barb Long	05/25



Please know you can mail your contribution or use the link on our website or the QR code to the right if you are unable to worship with us.



May 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 6:00am - 7:30am Holland Middle Wyldlife	2 Church Building Closed at 8pm
3 8:00am - 9:00am TRC Worship Team Rehearsal 9:30am - 11:00am TRC Worship 9:45am - 10:45am Children & Worship 10:45am - 11:30am TRC Post-Service Coffee 11:00am - 12:00pm Bread House Coffee & Breakfast 11:00am - 11:30am Digging Deeper 11:30am - 12:00pm BH Set-up + Rehearsal 12:00pm - 4:00pm Bread House Worship	4 11:00am - 1:00pm Executive Team Meeting 5:00pm - 7:00pm Bread House Praise & Worship Practice 6:00pm - 8:00pm Finance Team Meeting	5 7:00pm - 9:00pm Bread House Bible Study	6 7:30am - 8:30am Men's Bible Study 10:00am - 11:00am Folding Group	7 National Day of Prayer 1:00pm - 2:00pm Escape Ministries 5:30pm - 6:30pm Bread House Set- up 6:30pm - 9:00pm Bread House Family Night	8 6:00am - 7:30am Holland Middle Wyldlife	9 Church Building Closed at 8pm
10 Mother's Day 8:00am - 9:00am TRC Worship Team Rehearsal 9:30am - 11:00am TRC Worship 9:45am - 10:45am Children & Worship 10:45am - 11:45am NO Second Sunday Brunch 10:45am - 11:30am TRC Post-Service Coffee 11:00am - 12:00pm Bread House Coffee & Breakfast 11:30am - 12:00pm BH Set-up + Rehearsal 12:00pm - 4:00pm Bread House Worship	11 5:00pm - 7:00pm Bread House Praise & Worship Practice	12 9:00am - 10:30am Care Closet Packaging 6:00pm - 7:30pm Girl Scout Troop Meeting 7:00pm - 9:00pm Bread House Bible Study	13 7:30am - 8:30am Men's Bible Study 10:00am - 12:00pm Care Closet 10:00am - 11:00am Folding Group	14 11:00am - 1:00pm Executive Team Meeting 11:00am - 12:30pm Vandenberg Pest Control 1:00pm - 2:00pm Escape Ministries 5:30pm - 6:30pm Bread House Set- up 6:30pm - 9:00pm Bread House Family Night	15 6:00pm - 9:00pm Bread House Leadership Meeting	16 7:00am - 4:00pm BH Rummage Sale Church Building Closed at 8pm
17 8:00am - 9:00am TRC Worship Team Rehearsal 9:30am - 11:00am TRC Worship 9:45am - 10:45am Children & Worship 10:45am - 11:30am TRC Post-Service Coffee 11:00am - 12:00pm Bread House Coffee & Breakfast 11:00am - 11:30am Digging Deeper 11:30am - 12:00pm BH Set-up + Rehearsal 12:00pm - 4:00pm Bread House Worship	18 5:00pm - 7:00pm Bread House Praise & Worship Practice	19 12:30pm - 2:30pm Consistory 7:00pm - 9:00pm Bread House Bible Study	20 7:30am - 8:30am Men's Bible Study 10:00am - 11:00am Folding Group	21 9:30am - 10:30am Third Thursday Breakfast 1:00pm - 2:00pm Escape Ministries 5:30pm - 6:30pm Bread House Set- up 6:30pm - 9:00pm Bread House Family Night	22 6:00pm - 9:00pm Bread House Prayer Meeting	23 Church Building Closed at 8pm
24 Pentecost 8:00am - 9:00am TRC Worship Team Rehearsal 9:30am - 11:00am TRC Worship 9:45am - 11:30am TRC Post-Service Coffee 11:00am - 12:00pm Bread House Coffee & Breakfast 11:00am - 11:30am Digging Deeper 11:30am - 12:00pm BH Set-up + Rehearsal 12:00pm - 4:00pm Bread House Worship	25 Memorial Day 5:00pm - 7:00pm Bread House Praise & Worship Practice 7:00pm - 9:00pm Worship Life Meeting	26 11:45am - 12:45pm Staff Meeting 6:00pm - 7:30pm Girl Scout Troop Meeting 7:00pm - 9:00pm Bread House Bible Study	27 7:30am - 8:30am Men's Bible Study 10:00am - 11:00am Folding Group	28 1:00pm - 2:00pm Escape Ministries 5:30pm - 6:30pm Bread House Set- up 6:30pm - 9:00pm Bread House Family Night 7:00pm - 9:00pm Cover to Cover Book Club	29	30 Church Building Closed at 8pm
31 Trinity Sunday 8:00am - 9:00am TRC Worship Team Rehearsal 9:30am - 11:00am TRC Worship 9:45am - 11:30am TRC Post-Service Coffee 11:00am - 12:00pm Bread House Coffee & Breakfast 11:00am - 11:30am Digging Deeper 11:30am - 12:00pm BH Set-up + Rehearsal 12:00pm - 4:00pm Bread House Worship	1 11:00am - 1:00pm Executive Team Meeting 5:00pm - 7:00pm Bread House Praise & Worship Practice 6:00pm - 8:00pm Finance Team Meeting	2 7:00pm - 9:00pm Bread House Bible Study	3 10:00am - 11:00am Folding Group	4 5:30pm - 6:30pm Bread House Set- up 6:30pm - 9:00pm Bread House Family Night	5	6 Church Building Closed at 8pm



Trinity Consistory

Elders:

Teresa Harrington, *Vice President*
Dee Hubbard
Bob Koning
Tom Lampen
Jan VanAuken

Deacons:

Jay Lynn Wheeler, *Chair*
Neil DeBoer
Rick Fisher
Warren Kooyers, *Treasurer*
Dianne Moker

Trinity Staff

Rev. Amanda Bakale, *Pastor*

Rev. Lydia Ribich, *Resident Pastor*

Hope Ward, *Assistant Treasurer*

Samantha Valentine, *Office Administrator*

Jim Allen, *Facilities Coordinator*

Dan Kruithof, *Custodian*

amanda@trinityrc.org

lydia@trinityrc.org

hope@trinityrc.org

samantha@trinityrc.org

jim@trinityrc.org

dan@trinityrc.org

Church Office Hours

Monday - Thursday | 9am to 1pm

After Hours Emergency Contact *Pastor Amanda | 616.402.4671*



712 Apple Avenue Holland, MI 49423
(616) 396-6526
www.trinityrc.org | info@trinityrc.org