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Welcome to the September issue of Connections!

As you grab a sweater for the slightly cooler breeze and get ready for the appearance of everything pumpkin spice, we hope you enjoy the news and stories and updates in these pages.....

Here you'll learn about the neighborhood initiatives of 3Sixty, as told by our very own Jan VanAuken. Pastor Amanda reflects on marking two years at Trinity. Ron Blaukaump helps us see the humor in Sarah's laughter. And you'll learn about our fall series on the 10 Commandments compete with a catechism class for our older kids!

Also, make sure you flip back to our Community Notes to get the latest on our bible studies and groups starting up this month, birthdays and anniversaries, the return of the 2nd Sunday Brunch, and an invitation to support Community Action House just by picking up a box of cereal at the grocery store.





Dear Trinity Family,

As September begins, I can't help but be astounded by the fact that I was installed here at Trinity two whole years ago!

Back on September 10, 2023, we began a journey together as pastor and congregation. We made vows to one another. To serve alongside each other. To seek God's will together. To try to love as Jesus loves us. And to do church together.

I preached on Paul's prayer for the church from Ephesians 3. One of my favorite passages in all of Scripture. As I reflected on the past two years and how we have grown into our vows and in our relationship as pastor and congregation, I found that the words I ended on in that sermon reverberate still today:

I pray that together as Trinity Reformed Church, being rooted and established in love, we may have power to grasp just how wide and long and high and deep is the love of the One who claims us as his own.

And that through our worship and our service, our prayers and acts of mercy, through our life together as brothers and sisters and siblings in this place, we may experience the love of Jesus so that we may then be filled up with the very fullness of the triune God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



A fullness that overflows with love to others.
To our children and grandchildren.
To our neighbourhoods and cities.
To our church and the world.

Now to the One who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is already at work within us, to him be glory in the church - and here at Trinity Reformed Church - and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!

Amen and amen. May God continue to answer this prayer for us and through us. Together.

Pastor Amanda



One of the key teachings of the Reformed tradition is that we try to live according to God's law not out of guilt or fear but out of gratitude.

Often in Reformed liturgy, the reading of the Law comes <u>after</u> the confession and the assurance of pardon. After we've confessed our sins, after we've received God's forgiveness, we ask: "As God's forgiven people, how then do we live?" Then the Law is read as the Guide for Grateful Living, teaching us and reminding us of how we can go about our daily lives so that, as the Heidelberg Catechism says, "our whole lives may show we are grateful to God" for all that God has done for us.

This fall, we will explore together each of the commandments through a particular Scripture passage and through the lens of the Heidelberg Catechism's teaching on each commandment. May we wrestle honestly and deeply with what it means to live as God's forgiven people!

Digging Deeper Sermon Discussion - Returns Sept 14! This is for everyone and all ages! Grab your coffee and join the discussion circle up at the front of the sanctuary to wrestle with what you heard in Scripture and in the sermon - sharing your questions, wonderings, insights, and learnings!

NEW! Grateful Lives Catechism Group - 4th - 8th Gr Our Upper Elementary & Middle School kids are invited to join Pastor Lydia immediately following the service for a 15 minute discussion to wrestle with what it looks like to live the 10 Commandments at home and at school. September 14 - #1 Only God Exodus 20:1-3 // HC Q&A 94-95

September 21 - #2 No Idols
Deuteronomy 4:15-31 // HC Q&A 96-98

September 28 - #3 The NameMatthew 5:33-37 // HC Q&A 99-102



TRINITY KIDS' CORNER



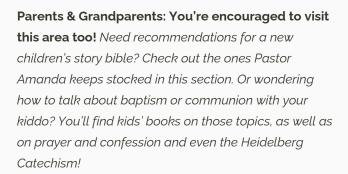
Introducing our new Volunteer
Coordinator for Children & Worship:
Lori Kooyers!

"Children and Worship is a program that is near and dear to me. Our room is a special place where we can meet and worship God! The wondering questions we ask and the responses are precious in His sight. I'm excited to get started!"

Sunday, September 7 - Welcome
Back to Children & Worship!

All kids (and their adults!) are welcome to join Mrs. Lori to chat about the summer, sing songs, and decorate the Children & Worship Space together!

Whether kids go to Children and Worship or stay in "Big Worship" with the rest of us, they're invited to visit our Children's Worship Area in the sanctuary. Here kids can grab a bag and fill it with a kids' bulletin, a children's bible, and some colored pencils to take back to their seat. This helps them keep their minds and hearts on God in ways that meet them where they are at. There are even little olive wood crosses for kids to hold to help them focus while we pray. The books and bulletins and activities change weekly and with each series so keep coming back!













This month's Trinity volunteer is Jan VanAuken!

Jan volunteers with 3Sixty, a non-profit community organization that works to connect neighbors and build community in the Eastcore of Holland.

3Sixty began with two neighbors getting to know each other and wanting to make a difference in their neighbourhood.

3Sixty is now a non-profit that partners with area churches, social service agencies, and the City of Holland to address pressing neighborhood issues like affordable housing and public safety, as well as host local events to fundraise for new projects and initiatives.



28% of American do not know any neighbors by name

-Pew Center Study



Connecting Neighbors. Sharing Resources. Building Community.

Jan: Think about your neighborhood for a minute. How would you describe it? Is it urban, small town, or country? How close are the dwellings? Are they mostly single family, apartments, or condos? Are there businesses or services in the neighborhood or is it entirely residential? Would you characterize it as peaceful, busy, noisy, chaotic, friendly, neat, or tense?

Now think about the people who live there. Would you say it is homogeneous or diverse? Is it composed of families, couples, retirees, students? How well do you know your neighbors? How do you greet one another when you pass? Would you recognize them in a different setting? Do you know their names? I once had a neighbor who described herself as "someone you can borrow a cup of sugar from." Do you have a neighbor who fits that description? How many have been in your home, and how many of their homes have you entered? Do you ever have coffee together or share a meal? Is there anyone you can call for help with changing a light bulb or fixing a leaky faucet? Do any of your neighbors speak a different language from you? How do you communicate? If you were to move, is there anyone you would miss from this neighborhood? How do you go about solving problems or conflict with your neighbors? If you could change something about your neighborhood, what would that be?

Holland is composed of a number of neighborhoods; some have names, and some are not yet named. In 2005 my son-in-law Brian Wolthuis started an organization for his neighborhood surrounding 16th Street east of River, and named it 3Sixty.



Brian and his neighbors wanted to connect more with each other and build community. They worked together to identify needs and in 2009 became an official non-profit organization. They expanded to include partnerships with area churches, social service agencies, and the city of Holland to address pressing neighborhood issues like affordable housing and public safety. Many volunteers from the neighborhood as well as from outside worked together to build connection. **Some of the neighbor initiatives have been: starting up 8th Day Farms, opening a Tool Library, and hosting regular spring & fall clean-ups.**

In 2018 Jake Norris became the new director, and the neighborhood from 13th Street to 24th Street, between River Avenue and Lincoln Avenue, chose a name: Eastcore. The center of Eastcore's community development is at the 3Sixty Midtown Hub at 27 W 16th St., above Petrino's Pizzeria. Jake is assisted by two full-time employees Lexi and Lori, who are very familiar faces in the neighborhood, a communications manager, a board, and many volunteers, of which I am one. I do claim seniority, since I have been their bookkeeper since 2010 when Brian needed help, and my husband Bill and I offered what we could: Bill using his handyman skills to remodel the offices and two houses, and me offering to learn bookkeeping, which is an ongoing process 15 years later.

One of the ways 3Sixty supports neighborhood work is by serving as a hub of information and help. Neighbors can sign up to learn about events, resources, neighborhood stories, & community opportunities. Two of the most recent events have been the development of the linear park along Central Avenue, and the Tulip City Walls Mural Festival. The Mural Festival was launched in 2022 in response to the neighborhood's desire for connection and beauty, and has brought color and a fresh narrative to this historic Holland community. Come & check it out this year on September 5-6. There will be mural artists at work, activities, food, and music. You can get more details by going to the website, 3-sixty.org, or by showing up at 14th Street Christian Reformed Church on those dates.



You can view murals from previous years in the area around 16th and Central to River, and off of Columbia Avenue between 16th and 19th.

In recent years, 3Sixty has been expanding its connections with other neighborhoods in Holland, and is also providing support and coordination for Montello Park and West of Washington.

As 3Sixty grows, that means that this bookkeeper needs to keep expanding her skills in Quickbooks and record keeping, in order to support the important work of neighbors building community & healthy neighborhoods.

Thank you to Jan, Bill, and all the 3Sixty partners and volunteers in the Eastcore neighborhood!



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

Rex- My guest today comes to us from the distant past. Sarah is known to us as Abraham's wife and mother of Isaac. Welcome, Sarah.

Sarah--Hello, Rex. Your world today is vastly different from my lifetime almost 1500 years ago. I suppose individual people haven't changed much though. What should we talk about?

My readers sent in various questions that I should ask you. One of the most frequent questions was about your meeting with the angels and the news that you and Abraham would have a son. The history of that time says that you laughed derisively at that news. Did you laugh and was it a derisive laugh? What were you thinking?

Oh yes, I remember that incident clearly. Abraham and I were camped near the Jordan River in a fertile valley called Mamre. We had a big company with lots of animals, lots of herders, a small army, etc. Abraham had just celebrated his one hundredth birthday. I was ninetyeight. Our personal tent was by the

big sycamore fig tree there. These three "men" came walking by at siesta time and Abraham invited them to stop and have dinner with us. They sat in the shade and rested. I made bread. Abraham had a calf butchered and some steaks roasted. We had milk and a cheese board. Our best for our guests!

I was in the tent but could hear their conversation. One said, "Where's Sarah?" Abe said, "In the tent." The man said, "When I come here next year, you and Sarah will have a son!" I couldn't believe what I just heard. I have been post-menopausal for thirty years, at least. I managed to keep my laugh to myself, "in my head," but come-on! Ninety-eight year-old women with centarian husbands don't get pregnant. I didn't know much medicine, but I did know that much.

Somehow the "man" knew what I was thinking and asked me why I laughed. He scared me.

I lied and said I didn't laugh, but he knew. He then said,

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

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.

This month's column is inspired by the story of Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 18 when Sarah laughed at God's promise to give the couple a child in their old age.

PS. This interview has a Part II so look for that one in next month's issue of Connections!



"Anything is possible with God!" Well, yah, anything is possible, but not too probable, you know?

To answer your question, yes, I laughed, but it was internal or mental and yes, it was derisive. The whole idea was humanly ridiculous. But, he was right. Anything is possible with God. Abraham got "randy" with Hagar that night (with my encouragement, I must add) and she got pregnant. Three months later he made me pregnant. He was pretty proud at 100 to be such a stud.

Question 2---The history writer says that "God" met you and Abraham there. Then in the next sentence the writer says God appears as three "men." How did they appear to you?

It is pretty strange language, for sure. I think the language means they were angels or messengers of God, not God personally. They had the appearance of 30 year olds in their prime of life. They were tall and imposing--very confident, you know. They didn't glow or have pointed ears, but you just knew they had Authority, with a capital A. They wore typical clothes, but very fine fabrics. They oozed power.

The writer recounts that Abraham argued with the leader after he said he was walking over to Sodom to see if it was as wicked as it seemed. Did you hear that argument too?

No, Abraham told me about it afterward. Our nephew Lot and his family lived there. Abraham was afraid they would be destroyed with the rest of the city--"collateral damage." The leader seemed amused by Abraham's persistence and seemed to enjoy the care Abraham was showing for Lot and his family.

So, Sarah, your impression of these "angels" is that they appear as just very powerful and imposing men?

That's it exactly.

One more question now if you don't mind. Tell us about your maid Hagar.

Hagar was my newest maid. She was 21, as I remember. She was beautiful and capable. I thought she was very loyal. I thought maybe she could be the mother of Abraham's child that we could adopt, so I encouraged Abe to have sex with her if he could.

Surprise! Surprise! When she got pregnant so quickly, she began to despise me for my barrenness. It just got worse as the boys grew and she was pushing for Ismael, the eldest, to inherit the elder's portion. I finally had to ask Abe to send her and the boy away. I suppose she was being a good mother looking after her baby's interest, but so was I and I was Abe's wife, not "concubine."

I heard that God blessed her and Ismael. She married a sheik and they prospered to become a great clan. I really was happy for her, but hurt that she changed so from what I thought her to be to me.

Thanks, Sarah. I really appreciate your chatting with me. I had one more big question, but our time is long passed. Maybe we can talk again about Abe's command to sacrifice Isaac and how you all thought about that?

I wondered if that would be your first question. That was so traumatic. It probably deserves a session all to itself though. What a command! If that doesn't make you question God, nothing will! Bye!





Hop on board and join the fun by signing up using the QR code below



Women of the Word

Book of Acts

Women's Bible study will now meet on **Tuesday mornings** and will resume meeting on **Tuesday, September 9th** at 9:30AM in the

Reflections Room.

We will be studying the Book of Acts.

Interested in joining us?
Reach out to Dee Hubbard for more information.

Women's Bible Study

Now on Tuesdays 9:30-11:00am Reflections Room

Contact: Dee Hubbard 616-566-5520

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Men's Bible Study

Have you wondered why the gospels don't all record the same events in the life of Jesus? Did you know that each of the gospels was written with a different audience in mind? Are you interested in sharing your biblical questions and thoughts with a group of non-judgmental fellow believers, wonderers, and men desiring to understand the message of the bible?

On **Wednesday mornings** the men's group continues looking at the three synoptic gospel accounts using the book Gospel Parallels by Burton Throckmorton. We also consider how the book of John fits in with the early Christian desire to reveal to the world the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ.

Our first fall meeting is **September 3 at 7:30AM** in the Connection Cafe. Come check it out.

Questions? **Contact Bill Van Auken!**

Second Sunday Brunch

Sunday, September 14



Missional Opportunity after brunch



Oatmeal & Yogurt Breakfast Bar

Please join us after the Sunday morning worship service. Further details on how you can participate and RSVP can be found at the Welcome Desk.

Add a touch of love to a Sack Supper! Sack Suppers are a nutritious, ready-to-eat meal delivered right to a child's school or community site, ensuring children have access to the healthy food they need to thrive.

Bags and decorating tools will be provided.

CEREAL DRIVE TO BENEFIT COMMUNITY ACTION HOUSE



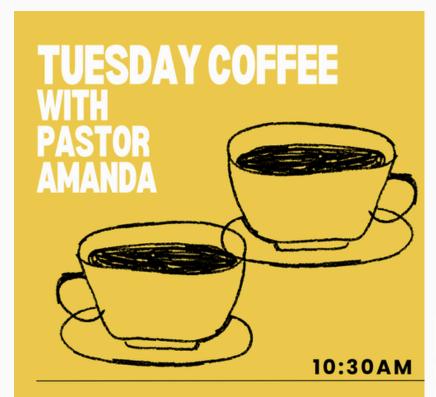
ACCEPTING DONATIONS SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7 + 14

YOU CAN HELP BUILD A STONGER, HEALTHIER COMMUNITY



Direct food donations are critical for supplying our guests with essential food. We use an average of 765 cereal boxes each month - an essential item for families - but also a costly item for us to purchase!

Questions? Give us a call at (616) 392-2368 ext. 155, or email foodrescue@communityactionhouse.org



While I've met many folks, there's always more to learn about each other. And there's folks I haven't gotten to know yet. Let's have coffee together!

I set aside every Tuesday morning at 10:30am for coffee. Your house. A local coffee shop. My office. Whatever works best for you.

Just sign up in the Church Office for an upcoming Tuesday, then I'll reach out and confirm details.



Thank you for the geneway Musion
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Thank you for the Gateway Musion
Store this is agreat blessing to our
Community. We will distribute them
to members seeking work and
members are in need and will
restack much needed items in
our toutique. Thank you for
your fuerhelship and Support,
Lakeside Clubhouse

Budget Report

July 2025

Budgeted Income	\$34,718.92	Actual Income	\$14,534.63	Income YTD	\$182,750.63
<u>Budgeted</u> <u>Expenses</u>	\$34,718.92	Actual Expenses	\$32,991.50	<u>Expenses YTD</u>	\$223,170.91
		<u>Net Income</u>	\$(18,456.87)	Net Income YTD	(\$40,420.28)

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.



Cover to Cover Book Club will meet the 4th Thursday of every month. Participation is limited to 12 people. If you are interested in joining, please see Sharon Kruse. September | The Stark Beauty of Last Things by Celine Keating October | Becoming Mrs. Lewis: the Improbable Love Story of Joy Davidman and C.S. Lewis by Patti Callahan November | From Here to the Great Unknown by Lisa Marie Presley and Riley Keough *No December meeting January | Tom Lake by Ann Patchett February | I'm Glad My Mom Died by Jennette McCurdy March | Killers of A Certain Age by Deanna Raybourn April | The Echo of Old Books by Barbara Davis May | Page Turner by Viola Shipman Cover to Cover Book Club will meet in The Reflections Room at Trinity

September Birthdays

			/
Sandra Coverstone	09/01	Karen Brandsen	09/22 (
Linda Johnson	09/02	Simon Garza	09/22
Robin Dryer	09/16	Mary Verburg	09/27
Steve Lundy	09/18	Beth Borgman	09/28
Shirley Vereeke	09/19	Judy Blauwkamp	09/29
Teresa Harrington	09/20	Nita Bos	09/30
Neil DeBoer	09/21		

September Anniversaries

Dave + Judy Tanis Dick + Anita Boss John + Penny Houting 09/01 Dan + K 09/08 Doug + 09/12 Ron + Ju

Dan + Kim Schrotenboer Doug + Dawn Schurman Ron + Judy Blauwkamp 09/19 09/24

09/29

September 2025

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
8:00am - 9:00am TRC Worship Team Rehearsal 9:30am - 11:00am TRC Worship 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	1 Labor Day 5:00pm - 7:00pm Bread House Praise & Worship Practice	2 7:00pm - 9:00pm Bread House Bible Study	3 7:30am - 8:30am Men's Bible Study 10:00am - 11:00am Folding Group	4 6:30pm - 9:00pm Bread House Family Night 7:00pm Community Connections Meeting	5 6:00am - 7:30am Holland Middle Wyldlife	6 10:00am - 2:00pm Quilt/Craft Group Meeting	
8:00am - 9:00am TRC Worship Team Rehearsal 9:30am - 11:00am TRC Worship 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	8 5:00pm - 7:00pm Bread House Praise & Worship Practice 6:00pm - 8:00pm Finance Team Meeting	9:30am - 11:00am Women of the Word Book of Acts 6:00pm - 7:30pm Girl Scout Troop Meeting 7:00pm - 9:00pm Bread House Bible Study	10 7:30am - 8:30am Men's Bible Study 10:00am - 12:00pm Care Closet 10:00am - 11:00am Folding Group	11 Patriot Day 6:30pm - 9:00pm Bread House Family Night	12 6:00am - 7:30am Holland Middle Wyldlife	13	
14 8:00am - 9:00am TRC Worship Team Rehearsal 9:30am - 11:00am TRC Worship 10:45am - 11:45am TRC Second Sunday Brunch 11:00am - 12:00pm BH Coffee & Pastries 11:30am - 12:00pm BH Set-up + Rehearsal 12:00pm - 4:00pm Bread House Worship	15 5:00pm - 7:00pm Bread House Praise & Worship Practice	16 9:30am - 11:00am Women of the Word Book of Acts 6:00pm - 7:00pm Deacons Meeting 7:00pm - 9:00pm Bread House Bible Study 7:00pm Elders Meeting	17 7:30am - 8:30am Men's Bible Study 10:00am - 11:00am Folding Group	18 9:30am - 10:30am Third Thursday Breakfast 6:30pm - 9:00pm Bread House Family Night	19 6:00am - 7:30am Holland Middle Wyldlife 6:00pm - 9:00pm Bread House Leadership Meeting	20	
21 8:00am - 9:00am TRC Worship Team Rehearsal 9:30am - 11:00am TRC Worship 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	22 First Day of Autumn 5:00pm - 7:00pm Bread House Praise & Worship Practice 7:00pm - 9:00pm Worship Life Meeting	9:30am - 11:00am Women of the Word Book of Acts 11:45am - 12:45pm Staff Meeting 6:00pm - 7:30pm Girl Scout Troop Meeting 7:00pm - 9:00pm Bread House Bible Study	7:30am - 8:30am Men's Bible Study 10:00am - 11:00am Folding Group	25 6:30pm - 9:00pm Bread House Family Night	26 6:00pm - 9:00pm Bread House Prayer Meeting 6:00am - 7:30am Holland Middle Wyldlife	27	
28 8:00am - 9:00am TRC Worship Team Rehearsal 9:30am - 11:00am TRC Worship 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	29 5:00pm - 7:00pm Bread House Praise & Worship Practice	30 9:30am - 11:00am Women of the Word Book of Acts 7:00pm - 9:00pm Bread House Bible Study	1 7:30am - 8:30am Men's Bible Study 10:00am - 11:00am Folding Group	2 6:30pm - 9:00pm Bread House Family Night 7:00pm Community Connections Meeting	3 6:00am - 7:30am Holland Middle Wyldlife	4 10:00am - 2:00pm Quilt/Craft Group Meeting 1:30pm - 6:30pm TBD Moreno Rental	



Trinity Consistory

Elders:

Gregg Harper, Vice President
Teresa Harrington
Dee Hubbard
Bob Koning
Lynda Simmons

Deacons:

Jay Lynn Wheeler, *Chair*Matt Oom, *Clerk*Warren Kooyers, *Treasurer*Steve Lundy
Shirley Perez

Trinity Staff

Rev. Amanda Bakale, Pastor Hope Ward, Assistant Treasurer Samantha Valentine, Office Administrator Jim Allen, Facilities Coordinator Dan Kruithof, Custodian amanda@trinityrc.org hope@trinityrc.org samantha@trinityrc.org jhallen_48@yahoo.com dan@trinityrc.org

Church Office Hours Monday - Thursday | 9am to 1pm

After Hours Emergency Contact Pastor Amanda | 616.402.4671



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