

Trinity Church, Buffalo

What are some significant moments in the history of your church that have shaped its identity today?

Since founding the Trinity Cooperative Relief Society in 1877, Trinity has founded three other social service agencies to serve the Buffalo community that continue today. When its church building was completed in 1886, it was furnished with stained glass windows created by the innovative studios of John La Farge and Louis Comfort Tiffany, among others. This unique collection of windows is an artistic dialog between these two major figures, showing the development of the opalescent stained glass movement. The parish's early commitment to social justice and the humanistic ideals embodied in the windows continue to shape the life and ministry of Trinity Church to this day.

What makes your church unique in the region and the diocese?

The Trinity campus is presently home to 8 not-for-profit agencies and three therapy practices that serve the Buffalo Community and reflect the inclusive progressive Christian values of the congregation. Trinity is known for coloring outside the lines of the Book of Common Prayer in its innovative worship offerings, using experimental language, contemporary poetry and jazz music alongside more traditional forms of liturgy and church music.



What are the most vibrant ministries or strengths of your parish today?

Trinity is not only a community of people who gather for worship and fellowship. It is also a community of organizations that serve the needs of the Buffalo community and beyond with professionalism and expertise. Among them are two agencies serving the needs of immigrants in this border city, an environmental justice organization, an agency supporting formerly incarcerated people struggling with addiction, and several others. One of the others is the Stained Glass Association of America, the professional association of the stained glass industry.

Describe a moment in your community's life when you felt the presence of the Holy Spirit moving among you. What made that moment possible?

Every year, Trinity has a float in the Pride parade in Buffalo, with as many as 15 or 20 LGBTQ+ members and allies marching or riding the float. The experience of marching in clerical garb, locking eyes with the most outlandish parade goers along the route and watching their faces as I bless them can get overwhelming. Trinity is not merely welcoming to LGBTQ+ folks. Trinity is a congregation in which queer joy is part of the culture of the parish because many members are LGBTQ+ folks who serve in every form of leadership in the life of the parish.



How does your church engage with the local neighborhood, the civic life of your community, or diocesan and/or Episcopal Church-wide initiatives?

Trinity engages with the neighborhood by holding worship outdoors in the summer, by opening its doors to 5,000 visitors during an annual art festival outside its front doors, and by supporting the social service agencies as they serve our neighbors and invite them into the buildings for various educational events and services. We also offer musical performances by our Sunday morning jazz pianist as well as by our organist.

What are the hopes and dreams of your congregation for its next chapter?

Trinity makes good use of a campus that is much too big for the needs of the parish program of the present congregation. But to be able to maintain the architectural and artistic treasures that comprise the campus, we need even more intensive community use that includes ways that community partners can help pay for the upkeep. We are currently firming up plans to build affordable housing on an undeveloped part of the property and we are hoping to hire someone who will cultivate the community partnerships that will increase activity and income.