

Trinity, Lancaster

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

Trinity is a resilient community. From the laying of the cornerstone of our historic church in 1880 to the present day, the generosity of our congregation has helped us grow and handle adversity. The destruction of the bell tower in 1919 became an opportunity to build the narthex. A fire in the parish hall in 1985 led to building a new parish hall. We have survived floods, fallen trees, and more. This, combined with the long-term service of our former rector, The Rev. John Whiteford, has shaped us into people who embody our motto, You are welcome at our table!

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

Our most visible ministry is Trinity Pantry, founded in 1971 by Jean Whiteford and now a separate 501(c)(3) affiliated with Feed More of Western New York. The Pantry serves families in Lancaster, Alden, Bowmansville and Elma and remains our primary outreach effort.

We have a strong Sunday school program, our youth participate in the regional Youth in Ministry program, and we have often collaborated with the Lancaster-Depew Boys and Girls Club on a range of activities.

Additionally, we have recently begun a support group for family caregivers which is offered on a hybrid basis and open to anyone in the larger community.



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

Trinity's outreach thrives through the Pantry, including our Community Garden whose produce is distributed to Pantry clients. We regularly collect school supplies for the Lancaster Youth Bureau and have partnered with a local Title I school for our Advent Giving Tree.

Our greatest strength is the welcoming presence and resilient generosity of our members who consistently offer care and welcome to everyone who walks through our doors.

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?

With new pastoral leadership from our recently called Priest in Charge, we have a renewed sense of energy and vision which has led to increased engagement with our community.

Our increased visibility outside our doors has led to Spirit-filled conversations and renewed opportunities. These have included people returning to church after conversations during Ashes to Go and the Pet Blessing, shared ministry with our

Methodist neighbors and the opportunity to host concerts with local musicians.

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

Trinity's ministry is deeply rooted in partnership with local civic organizations. We work with the Youth Bureau to collect school supplies. We host a luncheon for mail carriers and volunteers during the annual postal food drive which benefits Trinity Pantry.

Our Snowflake Bazaar and Lenten clam chowder sale coordinated by the Women of Trinity attracts participation every year from a wide range of community members. We host our neighbors during

Garden Walk and Porchfest, which are Village events, and invite our neighbors to our Pet Blessing. Each year we distribute water to the runners in the fourth of July race which benefits the Boys and Girls club.

We are currently partnering with our neighboring Methodist Church to support their new community meal ministry. On a Diocesan level we participate in the Youth in Ministry regional collaboration, and we include Creation Care in our worship and educational efforts during this season.



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

Looking ahead, Trinity seeks to deepen our role as a welcoming, nurturing presence in Lancaster and the surrounding community. We hope not only to grow in membership, but also in our capacity to love and serve our neighbors through partnerships that amplify shared ministries. At the same time, we remain committed to retaining a sense of being a family where everyone is valued, included, and connected.

A recent parish survey highlighted three hopes for our next chapter: expanding our music program, strengthening collaborations with local groups, and offering a community meal of our own. With our strong faith and resilience, we look forward to continuing to nurture our members and our community.