

# TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

## Branford, CT





## Brief History

The Episcopal Society of Branford was formed in 1748. A congregation was formally organized in 1784 under the newly consecrated Bishop of Connecticut, Samuel Seabury. Fifty-four families contributed to the construction of a small wooden framed structure, completed in 1786, on Branford Town Green. The earliest record of the name 'Trinity Episcopal Church' is from 1818. The present church building was completed in 1852. The parish hall, completed in 1916, served as an infirmary during the Spanish Flu pandemic later that decade. The undercroft was excavated beginning in the 1930s, and the Parish House and connector to the undercroft were constructed in the 1950s.

## Mission

It is our Mission that all may know themselves to be beloved.

## Vision

We believe ...

- God gives us the gift of life through *Christ*.
- God's glory is reflected in all that we are and all that we do.
- Ours is a position of both trust and responsibility.

We commit to ...

- grow in our love for God and one another.
- live our lives as faithful and grateful guardians of God's resources.
- regularly attend worship, prayer and strengthening fellowship.
- use our time, talent and treasure in ministry serving others.
- support the financial health of Trinity Church through proportionate giving and pledging.

We invite each person to ...

- share the joy, wonder, and mystery of God's presence.
- actively participate in our church *community*.
- show *compassion*, love and generosity as our faith response to God's gifts.

## Organization



Trinity Church is in the Episcopal Church in Connecticut (ECCT) under the leadership of the Rt Rev'd Jeffrey Mello, Bishop Diocesan, and the Rt Rev'd Laura Ahren's, Bishop Suffragan. Delegates represent Trinity at the Annual Convention of ECCT.

Executive Leadership at the Parish level includes the Priest-in-Charge and the following Officers: Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Clerk, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer.

The Vestry is the governing board and, in addition to the Priest and Officers, includes nine members elected to three-year terms. The Vestry meets monthly. An Endowment Committee, separate from the Vestry, manages and advises the Vestry on investment matters. The Endowment Committee meets quarterly.

The Annual Meeting of the congregation, held each year on Trinity Sunday, elects Officers and Vestry members as well as delegates to the Annual Convention of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut.

The Staff includes an Organist/ Music Director, an Office Administrator, a Bookkeeper, and four section leaders in the choir. All these positions are part-time.

Ministry Teams, including members of the parish-at-large, focus on such areas as Building and Grounds, Community Engagement, Creation Care, Faith Formation, Parish Life, Pastoral Care, and Worship. Ad hoc committees and task forces include the Annual Fair Planning Committee, a Budget Committee, and a Nomination Committee.



## Adult Faith Formation

Report submitted by Father Tom



Adult Faith Formation programming provides an opportunity for participants to engage in relevant and meaningful topics, dialogue with and learn from one another, raise questions, and grow deeper in faith.

The 2023-2024 Program Year included the following offerings on Wednesday nights.

1. *A Community-Based Approach to Ending Poverty*: a three-part series, facilitated by Father Tom;
2. *The Food Waste Crisis- Implications for Branford*: a three-part series organized by *Living Wisely and Well*, featuring guest presenters Sherill Baldwin, Malaine Trecoske, Erica O'Brien, Tyler Bowne, and others;
3. *Dialogues on Race*: two sessions, facilitated by Father Tom, using a curriculum published by Sparkhouse;
4. *Rome to Canterbury*: a five-part series, facilitated by Father Tom, geared especially towards those who have come to the Anglican/Episcopal tradition by way of the Roman Catholic Church;
5. *Making Sense of Scripture*: a seven-part series, facilitated by Father Tom, using a curriculum by David J Lose and published by Augsburg Fortress;
6. *Planning for the End of Life*, a three-part series exploring Advance Medical Directives, Last Wills and Testaments, and Funeral Planning, featuring presenters Charlene Bruce, Andrew Cambell, Cynthia Sheppard, Jeffrey Klarman, and John Klarman.

A new set of topics is being planned for the 2024-2025 Program Year.

## Community Engagement Initiative

Report submitted Janet Hager

The name change from “Outreach Ministry” to “Community Engagement Initiative (CEI)” reflects our wish to pursue social justice projects in a more hands-on way.



Trinity's Closet (TC) is one of Trinity's most successful ongoing initiatives. The ministry provides a bi-annual 'shopping day' for Branford families facing challenges. Clients are screened and referred by local agencies. Items collected include laundry detergent, cleaning products, shampoo, deodorant, shaving products, paper goods, and feminine hygiene products: items that cannot be purchased with SNAP funds. More than 100 people were served in November 2023, and more than 80 people were served in April 2024. The TC is scheduled for November 4, 2024.



We continue our longstanding support of Columbus House (CH) in New Haven: helping individuals and families transition out of homelessness. Our involvement has shifted from prepping meals to assembling 'Welcome Kits' for those moving from homelessness into their own homes. In February we delivered Welcome Kit with items ranging from dishes and pots and pans to sheets and towels. Items for the next Welcome Kit will be collected in August and delivered in September.

In our annual Christmas gift drive: we purchase gift cards for local families identified by Branford Counseling and Community Services. With these gift cards, parents and children have the dignity and pleasure of purchasing Christmas presents for their own families.

New this year was a monetary appeal in Lent benefitting the general fund of Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD). \$2,654 was raised. In May 2024, Bob Barnett spearheaded a special appeal, administered through ERD, for assistance to the people of Gaza. \$326 was raised.

To address food insecurity in our community our support continues for:

~ Branford Food Pantry (BFP). Non-perishable food items are collected in baskets in the back of the church on an ongoing basis and regularly transported to BFP.

~ Community Dining Room (CDR). We offer monetary support to CDR which helps feed and support families along the shoreline. We field volunteers to assist in serving CDR's Tuesday evening summer dinners on the Branford Green. We provide space for a yoga class that donates their profits to CDR.

~ Caring Cuisine. We offer monetary support to Caring Cuisine, a program at A Place to Nourish your Health (APNH) that provides daily healthy meals (200+ per day) to people in the New Haven area facing health challenges. APNH is one of the few supportive locations for LGBTQ+ individuals and families in our area, providing medical and social assistance from Yale professionals.

~ Thanksgiving Turkey Drive. In November 2023, donations for the Thanksgiving Turkey Drive, an annual project of several area churches, provided over 250 Thanksgiving meals.

We have had some discernment about the possibility of joining CONNECT (Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut). This coalition of congregations in Fairfield and New Haven Counties identify pressing social justice issues and lobby local and state governments to bring about meaningful change.

## Creation Care Team

*Report submitted by Margaret Sipple*



The Creation Care Team focuses on helping Trinity become a community that grows in its love of Creation. In the last year we have

1. Offered weekly “Tips for Reducing Carbon Emissions” as part of our Season of Creation observance;’
2. Offered weekly “Creation Care” tips in Trinity in Touch;
3. Planted trees in honor of those celebrating special Rites;
4. Offered Food Composting at Parish events.
5. Encouraged reduction of single-use products;
6. Provided a new parish poster identifying 5 ways to “Shrink Your Trash”;
7. Mounted a Trinity exhibit and offered a children’s project at the Branford Earth Day Fair.
8. Held a Repair Café at Trinity in conjunction with Sustainable Guilford.



## First Sunday Breakfast

Report submitted by Mitch Rucinski



Our basic mission is to bring together Trinity parishioners and anyone who appreciates spending time together and socializing over a casual and relaxed breakfast.



## Music Ministry

Report submitted by Ron Baldwin



In addition to Sundays the choir sings at services on several special holy days throughout the year. The ensemble also enhances the liturgy by providing special choral anthems. The choir presents a short choral concert preceding the late-night Christmas Eucharist.

Ecumenically, the choir sang at the service commemorating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the tragic death of Matthew Shepard. We were the “host” choir on Ash Wednesday and were part of the afternoon Good Friday service. Several members were part of the choir at the Tenebrae service at Tabor Lutheran Church.

On April 28 organist and published composer John S. Dixon played the prelude and postlude at the 10:00 Eucharist. In the afternoon he performed an enjoyable public recital of some of his compositions. The choir hosted a wonderful reception afterwards.

## Parish Life Team

Report submitted by Lisa Davis Rucinski

We are a team of parishioners interested in pursuing, supporting and encouraging fellowship opportunities. Members can be seen supporting Mitch Rucinski's first Sunday breakfasts, as well as the following activities:

Progressive Dinner
Parish Picnic
Fair
Pizza in the Parish Hall
Trinity's Closet
Father Tom's and Chad's Holiday Party at the Rectory
12 <sup>th</sup> Night Celebration and Dinner
Mardi Gras cake and small "bead" project for Trinity's youth at Coffee Hour
St Patrick's Day Theme at Coffee Hour
Trinity's Closet
Kid's Theme at Coffee Hour
Hot Cross Buns at Coffee Hour
"Red" Themed for Pentecost

Upcoming activities:

June 23 <sup>rd</sup>	1:00 bike ride along the Farmington Canal
July date TBD	Sea Mist Tours
August date TBD	Parish Picnic
September date TBD	Piecrust-making event
September 21 <sup>st</sup>	Fair
October 6 <sup>th</sup>	First Sunday Breakfast
October 18 <sup>th</sup>	Friday Pizza Night
November 17 <sup>th</sup>	Sunday Soup Night
December 8 <sup>th</sup>	Rectory Party





## Pastoral Care Team

Report submitted by Peter Otis



Pastoral Care is faithful, constant and quiet work, lovingly given, not always seen, not always known. It takes a caring heart, patience, spiritual strength and wisdom. Sometimes there's a crisis that clergy respond to, like an unexpected hospitalization or death. Other times the need is remembering the frail in nursing homes, or unwell homebound, as well as those who are having surgery or recovering from surgery or illnesses.

For our Trinity Church family, the Pastoral Care ministry is active in many ways. Our committee meets monthly and in December attended a full

morning Diocesan workshop devoted to pastoral care. Current members are Jim Atkinson, Sandy Baldwin, Fr. Tom, Beth DeLancy, Francine Lombardi, Peter Otis, Suzanne Remington, Cathy Seibyl and David Smith. Beth Mishler and Kathy Shaffery served as the team's liaisons to the Vestry.

We are also grateful to Jane Dougherty who remains critical to passing along important pastoral care messages from parishioners to the members of our Pastoral Care ministry team.

Each week prayers and invitations for prayer are offered through *Trinity in Touch* and *Weekly Prayers from Trinity Church*. We also participate in a prayer chain for Trinity family members in need of immediate prayers.

We visit Trinity's families in hospitals, Hospice and homes offering comfort and communion. Our weekly Wednesday noon healing services and Evening Prayer via Zoom provide special healing times, convenient for some members who find it hard to personally attend services here. Likewise, the Sunday Livestream/YouTube 10AM service is another aspect of staying in touch with others. As our Pastoral Care-created *Prayers of the People* have evolved, everyone is encouraged to orally or silently pray for those we are concerned about. Monthly we take our Eucharist service to Trinity residents of Evergreen Woods.

Lovely iconic images of Trinity, sent for condolence, support and congratulations, make up the core of our cards ministry to parishioners and other messages might be sent via email and/or text messages. Our flower ministry focuses especially on altar flowers, Advent poinsettias and Easter-tide lilies/ daffodils.

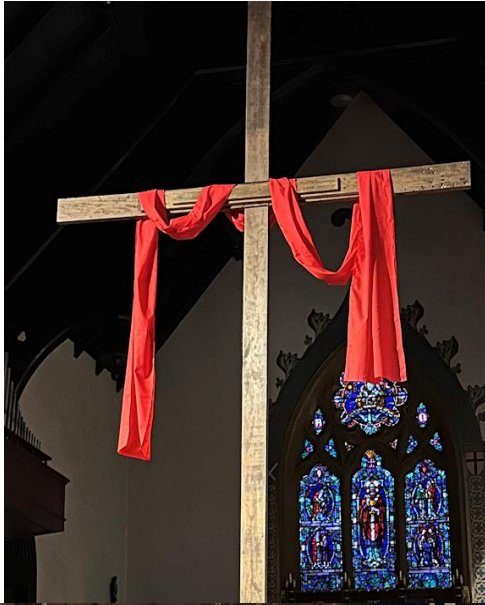






## Worship Team

Report submitted by Father Tom



The Worship Team, working collaboratively with the Priest, helps guide the liturgical life of the congregation and attends to details of worship services on Sundays, Wednesdays, All Saints' Day, Christmas, Epiphany, Candlemas, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Ascension Day, as well as for baptisms, weddings, funerals, and other occasions.

In the 2023-2024 Program Year, the Team worked out logistics for restoring use of the Common Cup, sponsored a training session for Altar Servers and Eucharistic Ministers, and worked collaboratively with the Creation Care Team on Season of Creation liturgies and with ecumenical partners on Ash Wednesday, Good Friday, and Blue Christmas liturgies.



The Team planned monthly outdoor services in the warmer months, provided Hot Cross Buns on Palm Sunday, sponsored an Easter Egg hunt on Easter Day, arranged for the distribution of red geraniums on the Day of Pentecost, and organized a parish brunch after the Annual Meeting on Trinity Sunday.

As a special project, Leila Daw was approached to design and oversee the creation of a new parish banner, and she accepted the invitation. Her design is stunningly beautiful, and the Team is very grateful. A parish "sew-in" day is being organized as a next step for the project.

## Youth and Children's Faith Formation

Godly Play, based on the Montessori style of learning, is offered each Sunday at 9:45 am.

Faith in Action, a service program, includes

1. Gardening and harvesting and delivering produce to the local Community Dining Room.
2. Regular visits to and interaction with residents of local nursing and assisted living facilities.
3. Participation in the local Earth Day Fair, Blessing of the Animals, and other events on the town Green.

First 'Informed' Holy Communion Class. Some children, as is the custom in The Episcopal Church, receive Communion as soon as they're baptised. Others, particularly in families who have come from the Roman Catholic tradition, observe the custom of a First Communion when they are older. The class is open to all children who wish to learn more about our tradition.

Youth Confirmation Class is open to youth who will be at least sixteen years old at the time of the scheduled Confirmation.

Scouts. Trinity sponsors scout troops that meet regularly in our facilities and are part of the life of our community.

Blessing of the Backpacks. Occurs annually at the end of August in the context of a 10:00 am Sunday service.









