



ANNUAL REPORT | 20  
23

# Table of Contents

## Table of Contents

### Leadership

A Message from the Dean. . . . .	4
Our Mission. . . . .	5
Our Core Values. . . . .	5
A Message from the Sub-Dean . . . . .	6
From the Senior Warden . . . . .	7

### Events

The Year in Pictures. . . . .	8
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### Operations

From the Junior Warden. . . . .	9
Treasurer's Report. . . . .	10
Endowment Report . . . . .	10
Pledge Analysis. . . . .	10
Trinity Cathedral 2023 Finances . . . . .	11
2023 Cathedral Parish Statistics . . . . .	12

### Music

From the Director of Music . . . . .	13
A Note of Thanksgiving . . . . .	14
Trinity Cathedral Ringing Society . . . . .	15

### Ministries and Guilds

Pastoral Care . . . . .	16
The Daughters of the King. . . . .	17
Altar Guild. . . . .	17
1884 Legacy Society. . . . .	18

### Formation

Children, Family, and Youth Ministry . . . . .	19
Acolyte Report . . . . .	21

### Community Outreach

Matthew 25 Committee. . . . .	22
Early Childhood Education Program . . . . .	25
Broadway Community Garden. . . . .	26

# Leadership

## A Message from the Dean

Grace and peace to you through our Lord Jesus Christ!

My heart is full of joy, gratitude and love for all our Cathedral has been and done this year! I am honored and privileged to serve as Dean and Rector of this Cathedral and Diocese!

2023 brought us closer to “normal” since my arrival in August of 2020. I have had the great privilege to meet more of our members in person. Every Sunday our attendance grows as more and more people find their way back to in-person worship and social occasions. We also fell into a good rhythm of celebrating major feasts of the year like the Easter Vigil and All Saints’ Day. And, we found more and more ways to invite our community into the Cathedral; occasions like Mardi Gras and Choirster camp.

This year brought some unusual gatherings for the Diocese. The Cathedral was honored to host one of our “Meet and Greets” during the Bishop search; and, of course, welcoming and seating our new Bishop in the Cathedral. All together, each day brought opportunities for us to fully realize our vocation and thrive as the Cathedral for our people, our city, and the Diocese of Arkansas.

One area of ministry I am most excited about is

our growth in Children and Youth ministries. Emma Mitchell has spent the last year investing in our young people. She cares deeply about them, treats them with respect and care, and empowers the adults in their lives. Emma’s faithfulness means that our Koinonia worship continues to grow: her ministry ensures we have a meal, well planned liturgy, and safe community. (Thank You Emma!)



Of course, none of us minister alone. Dawn Howe works hard to make sure our Catechists and Nursery have all they need to care for our youngest members. And this year brought Celina Kobetitsch to the Cathedral. In her role as Associate Director of Music, she has been an integral part of our chorister program. Because of these three ministers, in collaboration with all our staff, children and youth ministries are thriving at the Cathedral.

Two areas of ministry that I hope you will consider joining are Pastoral Care and serving in the liturgy.

Our Sub-Dean, The Reverend Dr. Canon Lisa Corry, has faithfully brought together a Pastoral Care team. Their goal is to connect with our parishioners as they journey through all the changes life brings.

## Trinity Cathedral Staff

### Dean and Rector

The Very Rev. Amy Dafler Meaux

### Clergy

The Rev. Canon Dr. Lisa Corry  
The Rev. Susan Payne

### Lay Staff

Kristine Barbaree  
Reta Dean  
Jack Dowling  
Joe Harris  
Dawn Howe  
Celina Kobetitsch  
Dr. Colin MacKnight  
Missy McCain  
Emma Mitchell  
Ricky Parks

### ECEP

Christy Poindexter

## The Vestry - 2023

Senior Warden  
Steve Bethel  
Junior Warden  
Mary Margaret Wippo  
Treasurer  
Grant Wallace  
Clerk  
Melonese Clarke  
Member at Large  
Kelly Wassell

Susan Allen  
Jack Harvey  
Sarah Henry  
Josh Hill  
Christoph Keller  
Grady McCoy IV  
John Milwee  
Lara Schock  
David Turner  
Marcia Wayland

### Chancellor

Clarke Tucker

This includes welcoming and baptizing children, preparing for or recovering from surgery, and being with those who are dying and those who love them. Our Pastoral Care team also serves our homebound members, offering regular visits and communion.

It is not uncommon for parishioners involved in pastoral care to also be engaged in liturgical ministries. This includes serving the chalice, ushering, reading, or offering our prayers. All of these ministries are essential to our community. By our baptism, we are made ministers of the Gospel; our care for one another is an expression of our baptismal ministry.

If you are interested in serving in any of these ways, please contact me or Reverend Corry. Either one of us would be thrilled to empower you for ministry in our community.

As I anticipate ministry in 2024, I look forward to watching these ministries grow. I'm also excited to welcome a curate onto our staff. Curates are clergy in their first years of ministry. These years are especially formative, offering real-time training in parish ministry. Our curate will focus on Adult Formation, including reviving our Insights Lecture Series. 2024 will also bring growth in our committees and clarity for our community partnerships.

Every member of the parish has a vital ministry here. I hope you'll join our staff and Vestry as we steward our Cathedral's ministry. There is a place for everyone in our parish and Cathedral ministries!

Please join me as I give thanks for our leadership. To our Vestry, especially this year's officers: Steve Bethel, Mary Margaret Wippo, Grant Wallace, Melonese Clark, and Kelly Wassell. Our leaders consistently offer themselves to our community! Thank you!

Please join me as I give thanks to our staff. In the midst of a lot of change, they never faltered. Tuesday morning staff meetings have become a source of strength and stability as we care for one another and serve our Cathedral. We have great fun laughing and praying together! They also never shy away from doing hard things and, for this, I am especially grateful. Their leadership guides and directs us in thriving, sustainable ministry. Thank you!

Most of all, Thank YOU! This year we faced some financial challenges brought about by the maintenance of our beautiful Cathedral buildings. Your faithful pledges and ongoing contributions enabled us to care for one another, offer hospitality to our Diocese, and grow in ministry. More than that, you are generous with your own selves. Again and again, you do more than show up. You are faithful in worship, prayer, and ministry: loving God and our neighbors. You inspire me to live fully into my vocation as your Dean and as a beloved child of God. Please remember that my door is always open to you. Thank YOU for your ministry! I look forward to many more moments of ministry with YOU.

Yours in Christ,  
Peace be with you,  
Dean Meaux+

## Our Mission

The mission of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral is to proclaim the Word of God by sharing our gifts, ourselves, and our properties through ministry to each other, our neighbors, and our community as we serve God and represent the Episcopal Diocese of Arkansas.

## Our Core Values

Beautiful worship in the Anglican tradition, in an atmosphere that feels welcoming and warm.

Caring community that values diverse people, perspectives and ideas.

Spiritual formation for all ages: lively programs in attractive spaces that open pathways deeper into faith, hope, and love through common study, prayer, and action.

Artistic expression, through glorious music, inspiring spaces, colorful and fragrant flourishes, and memorable performances.

Community engagement [that leads to] strong partnerships with other groups and churches for the vitality of Little Rock and the common good.

As a beacon of faith in Little Rock Trinity Episcopal is a source of vitality and strength in worship, community, formation, expression, and engagement for the Episcopal Church throughout Arkansas.

## A Message from the Sub-Dean

2023 was a year of growth for me in both depth and breadth through involvement, in the diocese, and beyond.

As Sub-Dean I found myself through various parts of the calendar 'subbing' for the dean at meetings and preaching with a bit more frequency. Running point when needed helped me to go deeper in the relationships with lay leaders that give so much. It also helped me understand more the history of this wonderful Cathedral.

In preaching I have found some developments shake out from experience here at the Cathedral over the last six and-a-half years. This has been meaningful to me, and I hope to the parish. I look forward to ongoing progression this year by attending a preaching conference with a focus on the environment in April.

I have continued this year to participate weekly in ECEP chapel and it is always a joy. Jack Dowling, Emma Mitchell and I seek to communicate spiritual truths in accessible ways to three and four year olds – quite a challenge and so much fun!

Small group experiences have been meaningful this year, and I hope fruitful for participants. Last year this included *Walking the Mourner's Path* and a new convocational experience, a book discussion on *Nature's Best Hope*. This involved thoughtful conversation as well as a convocational field trip to hear about indigenous plants. Additionally, each week the Centering Prayer group has met and evolved to include a contemplative Eucharist. My hope over time is for us as a parish to become a congregation of small groups giving relationship, growth, and contribution to all.

I have observed this year that we've had a lot of loss. I found myself helping with, leading, and traveling through the diocese to help people honor and bury their loved ones. This allowed time for relationships to grow, comfort to take place, and for the provision, anticipation, and assurance that we are a people who have our eternal destiny together with God and one another.

A privilege of the year was serving on the Bishop's Search Committee and within that service leading the interview sub-committee. This was challenging

and rewarding as we walked through the calendar of interviews – on paper, over zoom, and in person. It took lots of time and allowed me to meet people from all over the diocese and nation. It has expanded my experience and view of the Episcopal Church in such positive ways.

As I reflect on the last year, in heart and mind, the tornado of March 31st looms large and continues to be an area of follow up commitment. We began by checking in with those in the path to listen and help. Thanks be to God no one was physically hurt, but that does not mean that lots of repairs and reconstruction weren't needed, and people's well-being did not need support.

In the follow up to the tornado I began attending meetings of a group of non-profit, city official, and church leaders on responding. This has had to do with communication, facilitating grants and relief funds as well as discerning construction needs. Over time I have become a member of the steering committee for this Long-Term Recovery Committee in Pulaski County.

Another community involvement for me and Trinity is our participation

with Arkansas Opioid Recovery Partnership. I have received training to equip others to distribute NARCAN and through this we function as a NARCAN distribution location. This is a needed and wonderful way to uniquely connect with people across the city of Little Rock.

One last way I was able to be involved in the community and diocese in 2023 was as a *Soul Shop* presenter. This spiritual movement offers workshops addressing suicidal desperation.

Finally, I had a wonderful professional development experience at the Alumni Lectures at Sewanee. This was a three-day conference in October that focused on Baptism and both theological and pastoral sacrament and experience. It was challenging and fun to bat around ideas from lectures with other alums.

I find myself full of gratitude for the past year and eager to see what 2024 holds for us here at Trinity.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Lisa M. Corry



## From the Senior Warden

As I write this letter recounting the blessings and challenges of 2023 at Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, I remember first being asked by Dean Meaux of my interest as serving as Senior Warden during my final year of vestry service. My first reaction was that I was not a worthy candidate to hold this position for various reasons in my mind. However, after some personal reflection and my experience serving on the Dean's search committee, I enthusiastically accepted this role primarily for the opportunity to work closely with Dean Meaux, the vestry, and staff to further the mission of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral to our parish, diocese and general community.

Our parish continues to flourish spiritually with a noticable increase in attendance at our services over attendance in 2022. Music liturgy also continues to be a focal point of our spiritual worship. The Cathedral choir performed regularly at weekly church services and at special events such as the Electing Convention, Remembrance Day, and Thanksgiving Day. The choir's trip to England to perform in various cathedrals across the country provided a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to share talents and spiritual worship with our brothers and sisters in the United Kingdom.



Trinity had the unique and historical opportunity to participate in pivotal roles in the transition to a new Bishop of Arkansas. Parishioners and Trinity staff participated in both the search and transition committees for the selection of a new bishop. Trinity hosted a meet-and-greet session for the final two bishop candidates open to all members of Diocese of Arkansas. Finally, and with much fanfare, the official seating of

the Right Reverend John T. W. Harmon as Bishop of Arkansas was held at Trinity on January 7. We have the utmost gratitude for Bishop Benfield's seventeen years of faithful service to the diocese and we look forward with great anticipation to Bishop Harmon's leadership in the



future.

Trinity remains intently focused on enhancing and collaborating with our immediate and larger communities. The Matthew 25 Committee faithfully supports traditional ministries and nonprofits such as St. Francis House, Gaines House and Dorcas House while expanding relationships with new community partners including Life Skills for Youth and El Zocalo just to name a few. Trinity also was fortunate to be able to offer land on Broadway and partner with the Arkansas Hunger Alliance and Tito's Block to Block program to develop a community garden. The Nooristani family, residing in Harrison House for the past couple of years, was finally able to secure permanent housing in large part due to the dedicated work of parishioners relentless in their pursuit of that goal.

As illustrated above Trinity's vibrance in our daily lives is evident. We continue to face challenges such as supporting our beautiful aging infrastructure while increasing our gifts of worship and liturgy for our parishioners and raising the impact to our larger community. With everyone's help and effort, we can rise to the occasion.

Respectfully submitted,  
Steve Bethel  
Senior Warden

# Events



*Burning of the Greens*



*Mardi Gras/Shrove Tuesday*



*Mardi Gras/Shrove Tuesday*



*Palm Sunday*



*Palm Sunday*



*Easter Egg Dash*



*Confirmations*



*Deb Cooper's farewell*



*Bishop Candidate Meet and Greet*



*Electing Convention*



*Trunk or Treat*



*Trunk or Treat*



*Blessing of the Animals*



*Mary Hodge's Retirement*



*Mary Hodge's Retirement*

# Operations

## From the Junior Warden

It is that time of year that we look back and see what all we improved on our buildings and grounds last year, and I have to say, this year was a doozy!

We replaced 9 HVAC units (one of which was 44 years old!!). All of these replacements were necessary, but this was definitely an unexpected hit to our budget. We should now be in really good shape with our HVAC equipment. It is very unlikely that we will ever have so many go out in the same year again. Replacing so many in one year was partly due to our renovation of the Hodges Building where we needed 5 new ones.

Our biggest project this year was renovating the Hodges Building to get it ready for ECEP classrooms to move in. The project is almost complete, and it looks fantastic over there. All the classrooms are filled with natural light and are so cheery. We expect the classrooms to be filled with students by mid- February.

While updating the Hodges building with the necessary WiFi they will need there to run their classrooms, we also installed WiFi to the front part of Chancellor's Hall and to the Higgins Building. This covers the Crow's Nest (Youth Group Room), and we all know how important that is to the teenagers. 😊

Mainly through grants secured by our ECEP director, Christy Poindexter, we were able to completely renovate our big playground. The kiddos are loving having all new equipment, and it looks great now!

We installed new path lighting, downlighting in the trees, and lights on the stairs coming out of the Cathedral. This has really improved visibility at night.

We laid sod and mulch in Treadway Garden and greatly improved the look of that beautiful and sacred space.

One of my favorite projects that we worked on this year is our new community garden. We secured a grant to build this garden that will hopefully be an important resource to people in our community. We had so many wonderful volunteers show up to help build it. It will be such an asset once it starts producing. I'm excited to watch this ministry grow!

I have enjoyed serving as your Jr. Warden these past two years. It has strengthened my connection to all of you and our beautiful church. Please continue to care for our grounds and buildings as lovingly as you all do now. It takes all of us to ensure that our campus remains in good condition.

Mary Margaret Wippo / Jr. Warden



*Images: top, Treadway Garden sod project; bottom, new ECEP classroom furniture being assembled*



## Treasurer's Report

This is the financial report for the Cathedral for the operating year 2023. The Cathedral started 2023 with a cash on hand balance of \$297,093 and ended the year with a cash on hand balance of \$171,382. The budget that was approved by the Vestry for 2023 included income totaling \$1,727,661 and expenses totaling \$1,933,979 for an operating deficit of \$206,318. Actual income for the year totaled \$1,798,815 and actual expenses totaled \$1,976,309 for an actual deficit of \$177,494. There was a draw from the Keller/Stephens funds taken in the amount of \$230,000 versus the budgeted amount of \$250,000. The following are breakdowns between budgeted and actuals for 2023.

As you can see from the snapshot on the next page, the markets rebounded nicely for us, and the draws we had to take were done off of our earnings and not into principle. We continue to remain in a very stable and solid performing portfolio.

I have appreciated being able to serve as your Treasurer. Please feel free to reach out to me with any suggestions, questions or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,  
Grant Wallace, Treasurer

## Endowment Report

by Scott Tabor

The Federal Reserve Board continued their most aggressive Fed Tightening Cycle since 1980. The Federal Funds rate was increased another 1% in 2023 after 4.25% of increases in 2022. The fears of a looming recession eased some in 2023 due to a combination of solid economic activity, better than expected corporate earnings, easing of inflation pressure, and most importantly an apparent end to this Fed Tightening Cycle. Considering the fact the U.S. experienced 3 of the 5 largest bank failures in U.S. history the markets were resilient. Your Endowment accounts all consist of a balanced asset allocation and produced good results in 2023. Withdrawals in 2023 consisted of \$100,000 from the Keller/Stephens Legacy Fund for misc operating expenses, \$156,000 from Keller/Stephens Building Fund for general maintenance around the Cathedral grounds, and \$11,750 from the Stephens Music Endowment for various musical events hosted by Dr. MacKnight and the Cathedral. Heres to a successful 2024

## Pledge Analysis

Item	Year						
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
No. of Pledges	247	256	255	241	236	210	190
New Pledges	31	34	28	32	22	21	17
Discontinued Pledges	31	27	19	33	45	34	
Total Pledged	\$1,099,914	\$1,238,061	\$1,327,475	\$1,265,000	\$1,311,819	\$1,254,270	\$1,185,104*
Average Pledged	\$4,453	\$4,836	\$5,192	\$5,107	\$5,558	\$5,973	\$6,237.39**
Total Pledges Paid	\$1,050,163	\$1,386,377***	\$1,331,461	\$1,243,540	\$1,326,034	\$1,197,899	

\* Pledged to date - This number is expected to increase by ~\$100k

\*\* 70 households increased their pledge by an average of 18%

\*\*\* Includes previous Dean's Challenge of Salary Return of \$90,000

## Trinity Cathedral 2023 Finances

<b>Income Source</b>	<b>2023 Budget</b>	<b>2023 Actual</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Pledges	\$1,261,411	\$1,197,899	-5.0%
Contributions	\$70,000	\$200,369	186.2%
Plate Offerings	\$15,000	\$20,313	35.4%
Reimbursements/Rental	\$79,000	\$77,244	-2.2%
ECEP	\$47,000	\$55,505	18.1%
Keller/Stephens	\$250,000	\$230,000	-8.0%
Other	\$5,250	\$17,485	233.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,727,661</b>	<b>\$1,798,816</b>	<b>4.1%</b>

<b>Expense Source</b>	<b>2023 Budget</b>	<b>2023 Actual</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Outreach/Inreach	\$8,501	\$7,177	-15.6%
Diocesan Support	\$138,097	\$138,540	0.3%
Liturgy	\$6,200	\$1,800	-71.0%
Music	\$25,150	\$24,418	-2.9%
Ministry-Gen Pastoral	\$26,253	\$33,177	26.4%
Adult Formation	\$2,102	\$506	-75.9%
Youth Formation	\$25,827	\$6,470	-74.9%
Children's Formation	\$15,500	\$7,237	-53.3%
Communications	\$24,101	\$13,701	-43.2%
Buildings and Grounds	\$452,150	\$507,455	12.2%
Trinity Property Expenses	\$85,412	\$86,499	1.3%
General Office	\$70,600	\$72,436	2.6%
Finance	\$17,451	\$16,376	-6.2%
Conitnuing Education	\$10,501	\$5,914	-43.7%
Salaries	\$788,912	\$811,177	2.8%
Benefits	\$237,222	\$235,583	-0.7%
Fire Expenses	\$0	-\$13,449	
Operational Exoenses	\$1,933,979	\$1,955,018	1.1%
Designated Expenses	\$0	\$21,292	
Restricted Expenses	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$1,933,979</b>	<b>\$1,976,309</b>	<b>2.2%</b>

### Investments

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Starting Balance</b>	<b>Ending Balance</b>	<b>Gain/Loss(Unrealized)</b>
Traditional (Lott/Berry/Memorial)	\$1,187,132	\$1,330,625	\$143,493
Keller/Stephens Building	\$2,120,098	\$2,216,007	\$95,909
Keller/Stephens Legacy	\$2,122,324	\$2,276,464	\$154,140
Stephens Music	\$1,020,602	\$1,133,689	\$113,087
Music Surplus	\$74,711	\$80,405	\$5,694
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,450,156</b>	<b>\$6,956,785</b>	

## 2023 Cathedral Parish Statistics

### Communicants

Last Reported	874
Added by Baptism	13
Added by Confirmation	12
Received by the Bishop	0
Added by Transfer	3
<b>Total Gained</b>	<b>28</b>
Lost by Death	11
Transferred Membership	17
<b>Total Losses</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Total Parishioners</b>	<b>874</b>

### Children's Formation

#### Episcopal Youth:

3-year-olds – 5th grade	69
Youth 6th Grade – 112th Grade	87

#### Active Participants:

3-year-olds – 5th Grade	35
6th Grade-12th Grade	26
Adults teaching	12

#### Adult Formation

127

*Includes: Dean's Forum, Pilgrim's Path,  
Lenten series, Adult Catechesis, Sacred Ground*

### Special Vestry Committees

Cathedral Connections Committee	2
Liturgy and Music Committee	7
Communications Committee	7
Theological Enrichment Committee	10
Stewardship Committee	5
Building and Grounds Committee	5

Matthew 25 Committee	17
Early Childhood Program Committee	4

### Members in Parish Organizations

Acolyte Program	26
All Saints' Guild	26
Altar Guild	16
Cathedral Choir	34
Cathedral Handbell Choir	11
Cathedral Tower Bell Ringers	7
Children's Choir	7
Daughters of the King	8
Eucharistic Visitors	6
Episcopal Youth Community	26
Flower Guild	32
Greeters	18
Intercessors	18
Lay Eucharistic Ministers	23
Lectors	32
Pastoral Care Team	10
Stewpot	3
Ushers	33
Vergers	5
Wedding Guild	10



*Christmas Eve Family Service*

# Music

## From the Director of Music

Dear friends of Trinity,

2023 was a banner year for our music program. First, personnel changes: This spring, we hired Celina Kobetitsch as Associate Director of Music. Celina comes to us with an international musical background that includes schooling in the US, France, and Germany. Celina has become an instrumental (pun unintended) part of our music program in many ways, not the least of which are organizing our first annual chorister camp and becoming the primary choir accompanist.

I'm also pleased to have filled two long-term vacancies in the Trinity Schola. This fall, we welcomed Stephanie Smittle back to the alto section and John Willis to the tenor section. Their leadership has been invaluable in the Trinity Choir. Additionally, our choral scholar program has grown; new members starting in 2023 include Julia Branton, Samantha Stover, and Michael Wayland.

Moving to our younger singers, 2023 saw a great boost to our chorister enrollment, due in large part to our first chorister camp. The camp had nearly 50 participants (in its first year, no less!), making it clear that this should be an annual offering. I'm very grateful to Celina (who I charged with organizing this camp very early in her tenure) and Emma Mitchell for their leadership and enthusiasm for this endeavor. This fall, we also decided to start a new ensemble for very young singers called the St. Cecilia Singers. Celina directs this ensemble, which rehearses every other week on Koinonia Wednesdays and gave its debut performance at the Christmas Pageant Service.

Another exciting new ensemble formed this year is the Trinitas Chamber Choir. Trinitas is a concert choir comprising 16 professional singers from around central

Arkansas and is, to my knowledge, Arkansas's only professional chamber choir. The inaugural performance took place in September at St. Edward Catholic Church, one of Little Rock's best acoustics for choral music.

Over 200 people attended this performance, indicating that there was indeed a niche and market for a professional choir in central Arkansas.

Dwindling bell choir participation has been a challenge since the ensemble resumed after COVID, but where there are challenges, there are opportunities! The Trinity Bell Choir members have combined with the St. Luke's Bell Choir so that now these two groups have enough members to be able to tackle more ambitious repertoire for more ringers. They will then have two venues to perform the repertoire they've prepared.

One of the highlights of 2023 was the Trinity Choir's residencies at Lichfield and Southwark Cathedrals in the UK. The choir (and several guest non-singers) spent nine days together, singing six evensongs and one eucharist

while also enjoying various excursions around Lichfield and in London. Not only was this trip great fun, but it raised the level of our choir and immersed us in the world of daily choral services in the Anglican tradition. I am extremely excited that we already have another residency lined up at Canterbury Cathedral in late July/early August of 2026!

In addition to this trip, the Trinity Choir had two educational highlights this year: conductor residencies with James O'Donnell and Connor Lidell. James O'Donnell was Organist and Choirmaster of Westminster Abbey from 2000 through the end of 2022. In March, he spent a weekend in residency rehearsing with the Trinity Choir, conducting them



*top: Chorister Camp rehearsal  
bottom: Choristers performing*

in eucharist and evensong, and offering a lecture as part of the Insights series. In October, we had a similar weekend with Connor Lidell, a Dallas-based baritone singer and vocalist. Rather than giving a lecture, Connor presented a fabulous voice recital (accompanied by Celina, who is also a gifted pianist) on Friday night. During Connor's last residency with us in 2022, a few choir members asked for voice lessons, so for this second residency, we made the voice lessons an official part of his schedule and offered a 30-minute private voice lesson to all choir members.

Technically, our new portative organ did not arrive until the first week of 2024, but it was due to arrive at the end of 2023, so it warrants reporting. This beautiful instrument was made by Taylor and Boody Organ Builders of Staunton, VA, one of the most reputable organ-building firms in the US, and will transform our performances of early music (c. pre-1800). While this may sound like a narrow purpose, the dedication concert on Friday, March 1 at 7 pm will show the breadth of this instrument's usefulness, its beauty, and its practicality. Come have a close look at the organ one of these days;



*Rehearsing in Lichfield*

it includes carvings of the shields for Trinity Cathedral, St. Peter, and St. Paul, as well as depictions of St. Cecilia playing an organ and St. Michael slaying the dragon.

So many people contribute so much to our music program. First, thank you to everyone who participates in the program, whether it is through singing, ringing, or driving children to and fro. Thank you to Pat Sullivan for serving as Choir Librarian and Judy Barger for caring for our vestments. Thank you to Josiah Wheeler who assisted with the children's choirs

until Celina's arrival in May. Thank you to the Trinity staff who, in addition to their own responsibilities, do so much to assist the music program. Thank you to Celina for all her diligent practice and enthusiasm in her new position. Thank you to Dean Meaux for being tirelessly supportive of the music program. Last, thanks to all of you for your support of the music program, whether that support takes the form of a donation, volunteering, participating, or simple encouragement! I look forward to another wonderful year together.

Yours sincerely,  
Colin MacKnight

## A Note of Thanksgiving

*"I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart, before gods, I will sing your praise." Psalm 138:1*

Dear Parishioners,

I wish to give thanks to our church, Dean Meaux, and our choir director and organist, Dr. Colin McKnight. I was blessed to travel to England with the choir and hear them as they sang in Lichfield, Worcester, and Southwick Cathedral. I have traveled to England and Europe for many years, and I have never heard a choir that sang and praised God the way our choir did! I was fortunate to have my 17-year-old great granddaughter, Lily Ann, with me who loved the experience also. The cathedrals were beautiful, and the voices were uplifting.

All of the choir members sang to perfection. We are very blessed to have Colin to lead these beautiful voices. I wish to thank them from my heart for all that they do to bring God's message of life in the form of music. I will continue to give them support and prayers that they will continue to praise God in body, mind, and spirit! I look forward to the days ahead.

Thank you again Trinity Cathedral for your love and support to Colin, the choir, and the music programs. May they grow in many ways to bring us closer to God.

With love and thanksgiving,  
Carolyn Hartstein



*The choir in Lichfield Cathedral*

## Trinity Cathedral Ringing Society

2023 was a busy year for the Trinity Cathedral Ringing Society. The church's eight change ringing bells were rung by the members of the Society before almost every 10:30 a.m. service throughout the year. We currently have 12 bell ringers, who attend weekly practice sessions at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesdays. This year we rang for three weddings and tolled ten funerals. We also rang prior to the opening service for diocesan convention on February 17th and the special convention to elect our new bishop on August 19th.

We hosted the Seven Towers Festival, a gathering of bell ringers from towers in the United States and Canada, April 27-30. On the festival's closing day, many of the visiting ringers performed with our band before and after the 10:30 a.m. service.

We are always glad to have visitors in the tower. On August 8th we hosted children in the Cathedral's Chorister Camp to learn about the history of our bells and see a demonstration of them being rung.

We sponsored two events this year to make our parishioners aware of the bell tower. Bell Sunday, held on April 30th, acknowledged the contributions to the church community of both the tower bells and the Cathedral hand bells. The tower bells were rung before and after the service. An open house on December 17th was an opportunity to introduce parishioners to the bells and encourage them to consider learning how to ring. A special demonstration took place after the 10:30 a.m. service, and spectators were given the opportunity to ring a bell and climb into the belfry.

A major effort is underway to install mechanized steel doors in our belfry that can be opened and closed from the ringing chamber. This will eliminate the need for our bell ringers to make the precipitous climb up three ladders to manually open and close the shutters in our belfry. The project is being funded entirely with private donations.

The Trinity Cathedral Ringing Society is a volunteer ministry and new members are always welcome. If you are interested in learning more about the bells please email Tower Captain Julie Keller at [juliekeller2@me.com](mailto:juliekeller2@me.com) or Ringing Master Scott Whitfield at [scottwhitfield@yahoo.com](mailto:scottwhitfield@yahoo.com).



# Ministries and Guilds

## Pastoral Care

Pastoral care has gotten post pandemic traction and worn grooves of structure over the course of this year.

Our staff most directly connected with pastoral care meets each week and takes time, while guarding needed confidentiality, to talk through any updates and actions we all need to know about. There are four core staff: Dean Meaux; Dawn Howe, our prayer list admin and Children's Ministry Director; Emma Mitchell our Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries; Susan Payne, our retired Priest Associate; and me.

training, and committee relationship. Philosophically, the tether is ministry taking place in the context of relationship and accountability. As we grow and form a structure for ongoing committee relationship and function, three people have agreed to join in on this format: Herschel Cast, Linda Pneuman, and Sally Fittsizer.

There is much to consider, and it is a bit of "Goldilocks" discovery: A committee not too big, not too small but "just right" that includes the staff and clergy



As we reflect together, we consider acute needs, chronic needs, and new and developing needs for pastoral care. This discussion leads to decision making regarding pastoral care visits. Each person carries great care and commitment. And it also informs decisions for our parish prayer list. This meeting utilizes our Notebird database for new and ongoing updates for care.

Currently our pastoral care focus for this group is:

- o Eucharistic visits
- o Grief Care
- o Homebound/Long-term challenge visits
- o Acute care and support visits
- o Phone calls.

The structure of pastoral care as a committee is guided by Trinity's parish committee structure, meaning we have a vestry liaison and a committee chair. Our vestry liaison is Marcia Wayland, and our committee chair is Greg Albert. We are just beginning to get our feet wet as we consider needs, confidentiality, ongoing

involvement.

As we continue into the new year, I look forward to laying more groundwork to build our lay leadership team around the values of relationship, accountability, and ongoing training. This will take time and intentionality and I believe it will bear much fruit.

I invite you to consider joining this ministry of relationship and care. Please contact me with any interest or questions you may have by email or phone: [lisa@trinitylittlerock.org](mailto:lisa@trinitylittlerock.org) or 978-590-8382.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa M. Corry  
Sub Dean

## The Daughters of the King

The Order of the Daughters of the King Trinity Cathedral chapter meets in Baker Parlor on the third Sunday of the month after the 10:30 a.m. service.

The members of the Trinity Cathedral Chapter follow a Rule of Life which includes praying daily:

- For the unity of Christ's church
- For the spread of Christ's Kingdom, especially among women and girls
- For God's blessings upon the members of The Order
- For the spiritual growth of our parish and for the clergy of our parish

We were very happy to install three new members this fall: Denise Albert, Sarah Henry, and Lara Schock.

Other members are:

Melissa Whitfield, president

Marti Thomas, vice-president

Pam De Gravelles, secretary/treasurer

Lisa Corry

Carolyn Hartstein

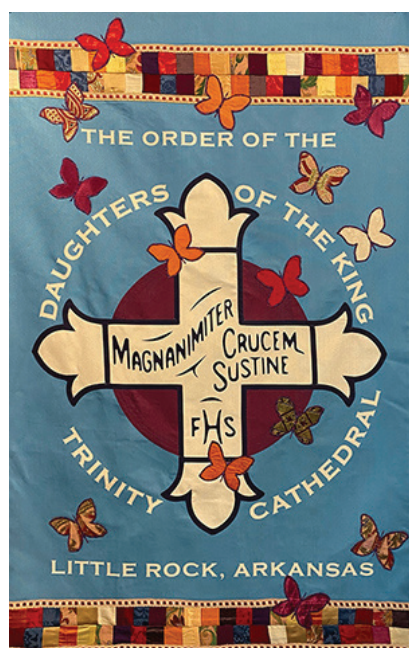
Melissa McDaniel

Valerie Smith

Our current service projects include providing a cake and birthday cards each month to Dorcas House so that residents there may celebrate birthdays at the first of the month and packing period products for Arkansas Women's Outreach, which provides feminine hygiene products for women in need.

Later this year, we will offer a "Come and See" event for any women of the parish who want to learn more about our chapter and discern if they want to join The Order. Please contact any member if you might be interested. All women of the parish are welcome.

Please let us know of any prayer requests you may have. All requests are confidential. You can speak to any of our members or you can contact us at [dok@trinitylittlerock.org](mailto:dok@trinitylittlerock.org).



## Altar Guild

The Altar Guild is a ministry, a gift of time and talent, to prepare all that is necessary for celebration of the Eucharist or other sacraments. Altar Guild members care for the altar, vessels, altar linens, candles, frontals, hangings



and at times the Pascal Candle. The high altar and credence tables are set for each service. The settings vary by service and celebrant. Currently, the services include two Sunday Eucharists and often a Eucharist after Even Song, Wednesday Healing Service with Eucharist, Baptisms, Ordinations, Funerals and Weddings when the Eucharist is celebrated. Services without Eucharist require filled candles, and may require changes in frontal, hangings and placement of candles. Frontal, hangings, and veil vary by season, occasion and Saint's Days.

Guild members clean, wash, polish and store vessels, linens, clean the altar area and Sacristy after each service, consume or properly store consecrated elements, fill candles, and prepare portable communion kits. Wine, wafers, cleaning supplies, candle oil and oil for unction are kept well stocked. At least one guild member is usually present in the Sacristy during Celebration of the Eucharist. Brass rails are polished after most services or as needed.

Since her retirement, Mary Hodges has taken over laundry and ironing of linens. Myra Kinnebrew continues to do laundry of Fair Linens.

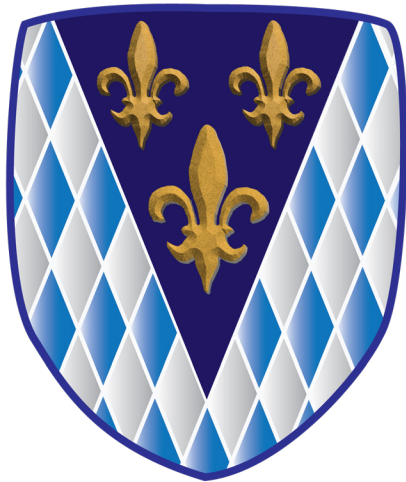
2024 Altar Guild members include Herschel Cast, Melonese Clarke, Nina McIntyre, Myra Kinnebrew, Lee Kinnebrew, Michael McNeely, Karen Johnson, Melissa Christopher, Vicki Keck, Mary Margaret Wippo, Toga Tuite, Mary Hodges and Linda Pneuman.

**We look forward to welcoming new members.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Linda Pneuman



# 1884 Legacy Society



1884  
*Legacy Society*

The focus of the Legacy Society Committee has been one of education this year.

During Lent, Dean Meaux led a series of talks focusing on the administrative realities of death: planning a funeral, caring for your financial legacy, and being intentional about your spiritual legacy. This program was well attended and filled with thoughtful discussions.

We have created two videos, in a series of three, about creating your legacy and planning for your future and beyond. The first is an introduction to the mission of the Legacy Society and why it is important to make a plan for your estate. It is presented by Jack Harvey and Dean Meaux. The second covers the nuts and bolts of creating an estate plan. Gayle Corley presents this information in a clear, concise and easy to understand way.

Visit our web page, [www.trinitylittlerock.org/legacy](http://www.trinitylittlerock.org/legacy) to watch the videos and gain access to some printed resources. If you would like to talk to someone about including Trinity in your estate plan, contact Jack Dowling. He will be happy to talk about the possibilities.

## Publications



## Videos



# Formation

## Children, Family, and Youth Ministry

This year we recruited a new group of members (commissioned at Advent) who will help set the vision and strategic goals for the children and youth programs of the parish. This committee will meet quarterly to engage in this work as well as provide volunteer recruitment and program support. 2024 will be the first full year for this group and everyone is encouraged to communicate with committee members about their hopes for these ministry areas.

### CHILDREN'S MINISTRY (Nursery - 5th grade)



2023 was a full year for the Children's Ministry program. We are steadily welcoming many young families and we love seeing all of your children in church and during other program offerings.

On Sundays, we offered two classrooms during the formation

hour before church: The Good Shepherd Atrium for PreK-1st grade and the True Vine Atrium for 2nd-5th grade. Thanks to our returning volunteers and new volunteers we are able to host children in both spaces and provide high-quality lessons in a welcoming environment. Our goal with Sunday Morning Formation is for children to encounter the stories and traditions of their faith in a way that allows for wondering and deeper understanding. Sunday schedules are complicated and we're grateful when families make time for Sunday school because consistent attendance helps build momentum for this program.

We also have a dedicated group of volunteers who lead Children's Liturgy of the Word (the children's chapel during the 10:30 a.m. service). Depending on the day, this can be a group of two children or a dozen! These volunteers stay flexible, and we are grateful for it, as they offer a chance for children to pray and hear the gospel story of the day in a more accessible way during church.



Children & Youth Ministry would not be possible without our dedicated staff and volunteers.

### Staff

Emma Mitchell Youth & Family Ministry  
Dawn Howe Children's Ministry  
Bekah Smith EYCollab Minister

### Program Volunteers

Otis Howe Acolyte Master/Catechist  
Jerry Shurgar Catechist  
Melissa Whitfield Catechist  
Susan Penick Children's Liturgy  
Sarah Gibson Children's Liturgy  
Frances Mitchell Children's Liturgy  
Marcia Wayland Children's Liturgy  
Rettina Hill Children's Formation  
Kristen Castillon Children's Formation  
Eliza Gaines Children's Formation  
Mary Margaret Wippo Children's Formation  
Lisa McNeir Youth Formation  
Joe & Olivia Ramsey Parent's Formation

### Nursery Staff

Charmaine Smith  
Awartha Smith  
Marivel Avila  
Lori Richards

### Children & Youth Ministry Committee

Laura Keller Chair  
Grady McCoy Vestry Representative  
Betsy Rhodes  
Victoria Tackett  
Chalmer Wayland

## Ways you can support the Children & Youth Ministry of Trinity Cathedral...

### **Pray** for our youth and families.

Remembering the young people, their concerns and hopes, and the adults who guide and support them in your personal prayers is a wonderful, and often neglected, way to support young people in their faith journey. Prayer matters and your spiritual support for our youngest parishioners matters.

**Subscribe.** By subscribing to the Children & Youth weekly newsletter and following along on Instagram (@trinitylittlerockyouth), you will be better equipped to answer the question, “What is offered for children at my church?”

### **Get to know** our youngest members.

A delightful part of being the body of Christ is that we all learn from one another. By actively welcoming and engaging with youth, you help them to know they are loved and supported by their faith community. “Intergenerational worship” is more than just a trendy word, it’s a way of being as a church community.

### **Spend time** discerning your gifts.

Finding the place where you can contribute most effectively to children and youth programs is so important. Not everyone is called to direct ministry with young people, but can contribute in other ways. Seek and listen to the ways God might be calling you into deeper ministry within your church, and where young people might fit into that.

In addition to classroom spaces for children, we began a Parent’s Formation class hosted by Olivia and Joe Ramsey in the upstairs library. This is for anyone who helps to raise children and is interested in a space where they can share coffee and conversation with others.

As always, providing Nursery Care on Sunday mornings and during large parish events is a priority. We are grateful for the current Nursery staff who have committed this year and provide quality childcare for our youngest parishioners.



On Koinonia Wednesdays, we have formed a consistent group of about 10-12 families who attend dinner and the family-friendly service that follows. Having Trinity Choristers and the St. Cecilia choir rehearsals offered beforehand help to make Wednesdays feel

like full and complete evenings at the church. As this program has found its footing, we love that the children participating have begun to form a routine and relationship with the church space and eagerly participate in worship. This service also hosted the Christmas Pick Up Pageant, alongside the ECEP students, and by all accounts worked well! We hope to continue to grow this program, and especially to invite children (and their parents) who cannot always attend on Sunday mornings, or prefer a shorter service that allows for more movement.

Finally, we offered several large events for children, youth and families in 2023 including: Mardi Gras (& Gumbo Cookoff), the Easter Egg Hunt, Vacation Bible School, Chorister Camp, Trunk-or-Treat, and our Christmas Pageant. All were well attended, both by Trinity Parishioners and members of other churches and from the surrounding community, and we received an abundance of positive feedback. We aim to offer them all again in 2024!

### YOUTH MINISTRY (6th-12th grade)

This year was focused on continuing our partnership with St. Michael’s and St. Margaret’s for EYCollab (youth group), supporting the existing places youth participate in the life of our parish, and maintaining pastoral relationships with the youth who are currently active in our church.

After gathering feedback and participating in ongoing program assessment, EYCollab shifted from a seasonal



6-week offering to a weekly time slot in fall of 2023. We have a small but consistent group that attends regularly. We hired Bekah Smith to serve as our EYCollab Minister; Bekah provides a caring and consistent weekly presence while participating clergy and lay ministers contribute to the content of the program. In 2023, youth participated in service projects such as stuffing Manna Bags and Hope Sacks for the public library, painting our new Little Free Pantry, and helping plant native plants at St. Margaret's. Our goal for 2024 is to focus on fun and wellbeing as we build camaraderie across the different participating parishes.

In Spring 2023, held our first overnight Confirmation Retreat and confirmed 8 youth in May. This was the first time to try out a model of an intensive



retreat followed by individual meetings and worship attendance (as opposed to a 6-8 week class) and seemed to work well. We hope to build on that momentum in 2024 by opening the retreat up to

other confirmands from around the diocese.

Over the summer, our youth attended and volunteered at summer camps at Camp Mitchell, as group leaders for Vacation Bible School in June, and at Chorister Camp in August. We also have a dedicated group of youth who attend Diocesan Events such as Spring and Fall AYE.

Throughout 2023 we offered various opportunities for youth to connect and discuss topics of interest to them. In the spring, we held a coffee hour for senior high students who met at Community Bakery after church and continue to offer an hour for Youth Formation before church. Attendance at these is hit or miss, but that is the reality of teenagers' busy schedules and energy levels today.

Our program with the steadiest youth commitment is our acolytes. Trinity is unique in its number of youth acolytes and this was especially notable during the recent



consecration of our new bishop. We are glad for the consistent and caring leadership of our acolyte masters and for the youth continually contributing to worship through acolyting, as well as lay reading and singing in the choir.



## Acolyte Report

January 2023 to January of 2024 has been a busy time for our Acolyte Guild, the oldest guild at Trinity Cathedral. We moved back into our Acolyte Vesting Room in the Dean's Hall this past January. We had lots of volunteers who helped move all the vestments from the library upstairs in the Parish House back into our newly remodeled Acolyte Vesting Room. Trinity Cathedral Parish has 22 young people, 6th -12th grade participating. We trained 1 new acolyte in August. Acolytes serve not only on Sunday mornings, but at funerals, weddings and many of the special services held at the Cathedral throughout the year. A total of 21 of our acolytes participated in the Consecration Service for Bishop John Harmon and at the Seating for our new bishop the next day. Our acolytes served at the Diocesan Convention opening service and at the Diocesan Bishop's Election opening service. I would like to thank the acolytes and their parents for their faithful participation in the life of Trinity. We welcome all young people 6th grade and older to participate.

Respectfully submitted,  
Otis Howe  
Acolyte Master

# Community Outreach

## Matthew 25 Committee

The Gospel challenges us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, comfort the lonely, help the prisoners, care for the sick and injured and bring hope to those who have none.

The Matthew 25 Committee is tasked to be the outreach arm of Trinity Cathedral and bring the gospel to life in our parish. While there has never been a line item in the parish budget for this level of outreach work, Initially, we have benefitted from donations from parishioners to specific projects. Eventually, the Bliss event became a source of funds for the works of the committee.

2023 began with adequate funding through the highly successful Bliss event. Projects began to be developed and implemented. Early in the year at Dorcas House, a mission providing help for women and children suffering from domestic violence, a much-needed renovation of two bathrooms was finalized and a bedroom was renovated to house a mother and her children.



In late March the tornado that ravaged neighborhoods in Little Rock and Wynne, Arkansas presented a challenge for the committee and the parish. The tornado hit on a Friday afternoon and by Monday morning the committee was making plans for relief to the tornado victims. Clothing and food were pouring into the Central Crisis Center but a quick needs assessment revealed that the people were in need of cleaning supplies to aid in recovery. By Wednesday over 60 large tubs of needed supplies were being assembled, taken into hard hit neighborhoods, and given to families who could remain in their damaged homes. An appeal went out to the parish to bring cleaning supplies and

tubs on the following Sunday for further distribution. So effective was the Trinity response that other organizations would bring supplies to Trinity to make sure they were taken to the right place. When the Crisis Center put out an urgent call for more cleaning supplies the committee went to work and within 24 hours



delivered a large amount of needed materials. According to the crisis center this was the most rapid response of any organization. The following week the committee followed up the “Cleaning Tub Campaign” with “Undie Sundie,” reaching out to the parish to provide much needed undergarments to those victims who barely had a shirt on their backs. The next week brought “Gift Card Sunday.” Gift cards were solicited from the congregation to help storm victims. Storm debris had blocked streams within the city and large rains caused home flooding twice in one week. The cards were handed out to the victims of the flooding. It was immediate and unexpected aid. Still recognizing the aid needed from the event, plans are underway to seek funding and support to reforest those hardest hit neighborhoods that lost all of their major trees and shrubbery.

The Trinity “rapid response” capability for disaster assistance will need supplies and storage facilities to be effective in the future.

The traditional Mother’s Day Purse gathering event was suspended and disaster donations were requested in their place. This event will resume in 2024.

Past efforts and projects at Saint Francis House and The Stewpot had addressed major equipment and capital needs each was facing. It was time to broaden into other

areas of need. A process was implemented to allow for sharing of food and other donations between the two organizations.

The Stewpot continues to serve an average of 130 people five days a week. Covid response forced the closure of in-house dining and a shift to sack lunch distribution. Tasty and nutritious meals are prepared by teams of volunteers. Trinity has been a part of The Stewpot since its inception in 1976 and continues to provide volunteers and board members.

El Zocalo Immigrant Resource Center provides a variety of employment, educational, health and legal services to the immigrant community in Little Rock.



They requested assistance to provide intermediate level English as a Second Language classes, as an extension to the beginner level classes they offer. Funds were given to supply teachers for two sessions. The classes were deeply appreciated. Additional assistance opportunities will be explored in 2024.

Life Skills for Youth is a program in Southwest Little Rock that offers educational, social and personal development services and mentoring to children and youth. Trinity was able to help provide instructional support for the children enrolled in the summer program. The program is designed to prevent vacation time eroding of achievement. 96% of the children in the program at LSY increased or maintained reading proficiency. 26% increase proficiency and achieved the next benchmark. This program obtained the top results out of all the summer programs. Life Skills for youth was voted the 2023 best minority non profit program because year after year they have documented significant academic improvement utilizing national standardized testing with outcome-based measures. This will be a program that deserves significant support in the future.

The Dorcas House Spa Night is a special evening for the residents. They are invited to Trinity for a night of good food, companionship, and pampering. The evening meal was catered by Scallion's Restaurant and a treat for

all. Massages were available along with facials and hair styling. The ladies had the opportunity to decorate a hat of their choice for a fun craft. Tours of the Cathedral were given and some ladies came to services the next week. Children were treated to games, a goody package and a story time. The best part of the evening was the bond that was created between the ladies and members of the committee.

Gaines House for women was discovered to have numerous structural and safety issues that needed addressing. The kitchen cabinetry was replaced, and shelves were repaired. The interior stairs were deemed unsafe and needed major repairs. The landing balcony was too low and presented another hazard. These problems were addressed and were resolved. Thanks to the Trinity Cathedral Ringing Society the exterior doors were painted and made to look inviting. Kitchen utensils have been donated and will be installed. The laundry room is still in need of repairs this will be addressed in 2024.

A team of Matthew 25 volunteers served Thanksgiving noon meal to the residents of Dorcas House. The dining facility was decorated in a Thanksgiving theme. The food and the fellowship was appreciated by all.



A Christmas Eve noon meal was a special treat for the women at Gaines House. The dining room was decorated in a festive theme and the catered meal was enjoyed by the women and Matthew 25 volunteers.

This year's Warm Fuzzy Tree provided warm coats and other clothing to over 150 children, youth and adults at El Zocalo and Dorcas House. Special thanks to Pat Sullivan for her outstanding contributions making this such a large success this holiday season.

The Feed the Hungry (FTH) ministry at Trinity continues to serve Little Rock's needy and vulnerable citizens at the Salvation Army facility downtown. FTH has volunteers from Trinity and other area churches

that prepare and serve breakfast for individuals on Wednesday mornings. FTH feeds prepares and serves between 40 to 60 breakfast meals weekly. Plans to expand the volunteer network for greater service capacity remains a top priority.

The second Thursday of each month a M25 volunteer picks up supplies at the Foodbank. These supplies go to both Stewpot and Saint Francis House. These supplies average close to two thousand pounds of nutritious commodities and meals to be given out to those in need.

At Christmas an anonymous donor contacted M25 about making a meaningful donation to a group that is often overlooked. Phoenix Recovery House, a facility for women recovering from alcohol and substance



abuse, was selected and a truckload of food and cleaning supplies was assembled and delivered.

#### Future Needs and Plans:

A stable source of funding is needed to give a secure base for planning future activities. As projects are developed, there will be needs and opportunities for volunteers for service. Examples include:

- Serving as mentors or teachers to young people at Life Skills for Youth
- Assisting with immigrant assimilation
- Helping serve meals at feeding programs around the city.
- Getting dirty helping restore landscaping to damaged neighborhoods
- Picking up donations for other organizations
- Helping refurbish facilities at various programs

A request for help will be sent to the parish when opportunities present themselves.

Respectfully submitted,  
W.G. Shurgar - Chairman



*Warm Fuzzy Coat Drive*



*Gaines House Thanksgiving*

# The EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM

## AT TRINITY CATHEDRAL



GROWTH! Look at how we have grown this year! Our new playground, garden, Koinonia, children's chapel, music, gymnastics, OPT (Organization for Parents and Teachers). All this, plus the regular development of about 100 children who are here Monday through Friday.





## Broadway Community Garden

On a rainy Friday morning in October, over 70 volunteers gathered to transform an overgrown, trashy lot on Broadway Street into a community garden. The ongoing project is a partnership between the Cathedral and the Arkansas Hunger Alliance with major support from Love, Tito's, the philanthropic effort of Tito's Handmade Vodka.

Arkansas ranks near the top of states with food insecurity. Access to healthy food is a priority for State policymakers. One way to help eliminate food deserts and food insecurity is by developing community gardens throughout the area.

Brandon Chapman, Project Manager from the Hunger Alliance, did some preliminary work to prepare for the volunteer day. He laid out the raised bed locations, installed irrigation stub-outs, and built a safety fence along the retaining wall. Other than that, the transformation was completed in the pouring rain in a just about six hours.

Volunteers built a fence around the garden, removed two dumpsters full of trash and organic debris, installed weed cloth, constructed 24 raised beds, spread gravel around the beds, and moved about a ton of soil to fill the beds. A storage shed was delivered and set in place.

It took careful planning and a zoning change to make the project a reality. Tommy Jameson helped draw up a site plan and prepare documents to get approval from Capital Zoning. Central Arkansas Water had no account on file for that property, so a new meter had to be installed.

Phase 2 of the project will begin in the Spring. A crop plan will be put together, and preparations made for a second volunteer work day on April 19. During that project, the beds will be seeded, a green house and covered pavilion will be assembled, and a vertical growing wall installed.

Kathy Webb, outgoing director of the Hunger Alliance says, "By early summer, we should start seeing the results of the work. She envisions not just a garden for planting and harvesting but also a space for cross-pollination of ideas. She sees the project benefiting not only the immediate community but also becoming a resource and teaching garden for the downtown area and neighboring neighborhoods.

Mayor Frank Scott stopped by to see the work in progress and made note of it in his Mayor's Monday Memo. He commented that, "the City is seeking solutions for food insecurity on multiple fronts, including addressing the issue of food deserts, or the

lack of availability of fresh fruits and vegetables in some neighborhoods."

Dean Meaux, who is on the board of the Alliance, expressed her joy in watching the empty lot slowly transform into a tiny slice of Eden. She shared, "There's so much going on in our world ... that's devastatingly hard," she said. "We all want to do something, right? And this is a way for us to at least try, to love our neighbors and to love God."

The Love, Tito's Block to Block program, which is funding both phases of the project has a goal to make fresh food accessible and inspire healthy eating. They team with nonprofits nationwide to help make this goal possible. Their model is to provide financial support and to gather community members to complete the projects.

Come be part of Phase 2. We will gather on April 19 at 8 a.m. at the community garden for an exciting, transformative day. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

We also be welcome people who want to have an ongoing relationship with the garden either through physical work or financial support. If you are interested, contact Jack Dowling.



