



“Behold, I am making all things new.” – Revelation 21:5

Happy New Year! As we step into 2025, I find my heart overflowing with hope and anticipation for what God has in store for us. This past year has been one of growth, transformation, and deepening connection. Together, we have laid strong foundations, and now we look ahead to build upon them—renewed in purpose and ignited by faith.

Our theme for the year, **"Igniting Faith: A Year of Spiritual Renewal,"** reflects a vision for our community that is both bold and rooted. Bold because we are called to trust God's Spirit to breathe fresh life into every ministry, every heart, and every corner of Holy Trinity. Rooted because true renewal happens when we draw deeply from the living waters of Scripture, prayer, worship, and community.

Throughout the year ahead, we will embark on this journey of spiritual renewal together:

- **Through Worship** that invites us into the sacred presence of God and centers us on Christ.
- **Through Discipleship** that equips us to live as God's people in a world longing for grace and truth.
- **Through Outreach** that extends the love of Jesus to our neighbors, especially the vulnerable.
- **Through Fellowship** that binds us closer together in love, laughter, and shared life.

I believe God is preparing us for a season of revival—one where our faith is not just maintained but ignited. As we walk this path together, let us remain open to where the Holy Spirit may lead us, even if it stretches us beyond our comfort zones. After all, renewal is never about standing still; it's about leaning into God's promise of “making all things new.”

This month, I encourage you to pray about what spiritual renewal might look like in your own life. How is God inviting you to grow deeper, serve faithfully, or connect more intentionally? I am confident that as we say “yes” to God's invitation, we will see the fruit of renewal in both our lives and our congregation.

Continued →

Let's make 2025 a year where we *know Christ more fully, love Him more deeply, and share Him more boldly*. I am so grateful to be on this journey with you.

**With joy and hope,
Pastor Ryan Henkel STS**



A HEARTFELT THANK YOU FROM PASTOR RYAN AND CODY

We are overwhelmed with gratitude for the outpouring of love and kindness we have received this Christmas season. Your thoughtful cards, delicious treats, and generous gifts have truly brightened our days and reminded us of the beautiful bond we share as a church family. Your expressions of care and encouragement mean more to us than words can convey. Thank you for blessing us so abundantly and for being a constant source of joy and support in our ministry. May God's love and peace continue to fill your hearts as we journey into the new year together.

*With love and gratitude,
Pastor Ryan & Cody*



A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

As we move into 2025, I look forward to connecting our parish to new Bible studies, providing more resources to Sunday school teachers, restarting some small group ministries and even looking into new offerings. It will be an exciting time! Stay tuned for more!

**Cody Carpenter
Pastoral Assistant**

THE COFFEE HOUR AT GILMORE'S MERCANTILE Wednesdays Beginning January 15 - 9:30 a.m.

Starting January 15, Pastor Ryan and Cody Carpenter invite you to join them for a time of fellowship and meaningful conversation over coffee at Gilmore's Mercantile (137 E. Franklin Blvd) every Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. This is a wonderful opportunity to connect, ask questions, and share in the joys and challenges of life together. Whether you're seeking spiritual guidance, looking to deepen your faith, or simply enjoying good company, we would love to see you there! Come as you are and bring a friend!

VETERANS' LUNCH ON THE 4TH TUESDAY *January 21*

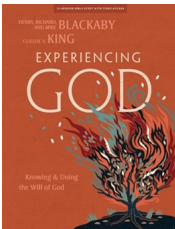


Soup and Sandwich
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
PLC



All Veterans are welcome!

WINTER LADIES' BIBLE STUDY Beginning Wednesday, January 15 - 6:30 p.m. *(After the first week, meetings will be on Tuesdays)*



In support of our 2025 church-wide theme, **Igniting Faith: A Year of Spiritual Renewal**, we will kick off the year by exploring our own personal relationship and ministry by journeying through Henry Blackaby's *Experiencing God: Knowing & Doing the Will of God*.

Over the years, God has used the truths of *Experiencing God* to awaken believers to a radically God-centered way of life. As a result, millions have come to know God intimately, to recognize His voice, and to understand His will for their lives. This new edition is revised, updated, and ready to help you again—or for the very first time—experience your Creator.

God is inviting you into an intimate love relationship through which He reveals to you His will, His ways, and His work. When you recognize where God is working, you can join Him in what He is doing. Carefully listening to His voice will anchor you in His plan and set you free to live it with boldness and freedom. Then you will experience God doing through you what only He can do.

Since this study will overlap with Lent, **we will meet on Tuesdays** rather than Wednesdays. **However, the first session will be on Wednesday, January 15 at 6:30 p.m.** This will primarily be an in-person study; but, a Zoom link will be provided for those who prefer to participate remotely. Please **contact Anna Houser (704-813-6560 / annaplus2girls@gmail.com)** if you are interested in participating. The church will purchase and provide the book. A love offering will be collected to supplement the cost.

JANUARY FESTIVAL & COMMEMORATIONS

Join Us For Vespers to Commemorate These Saints

As we enter the season of Epiphany, we are invited to reflect on the profound truths of Christ's mission and the Church's foundation through two significant commemorations: the Confession of St. Peter and the Conversion of St. Paul. These two festivals frame the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, calling us to remember the bold witness of the apostles and to strive for unity in the Body of Christ.



The Confession of St. Peter – January 18

“Who do you say that I am?” This question, posed by Jesus in Matthew 16:15, led Peter to boldly declare, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” On this evening, we will gather for worship to give thanks for Peter’s confession, which reminds us of the foundation of our faith in Jesus as the Messiah. Peter, despite his failings, stands as a testament to God’s grace and the transformative power of the Gospel.

The Conversion of St. Paul – January 25

Paul’s dramatic encounter on the road to Damascus, as recorded in Acts 9, reveals the life-changing power of God’s call. From persecutor of the Church to its most fervent apostle, Paul’s story reminds us that no one is beyond the reach of God’s mercy. Join us for worship as we reflect on how God uses even the most unlikely people to proclaim His glory.



We will celebrate both of these festivals with Evening Prayer (Vespers) at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. Through the beauty of liturgy, Scripture, and song, we will lift our hearts to God, remembering the faithful witness of Peter and Paul. Following each service, we will gather for a time of fellowship and refreshments in the PLC.

These commemorations are more than a celebration of the past; they are a call to live boldly in faith, confessing Christ and sharing His love with the world. We look forward to worshipping and rejoicing together as we grow in unity and purpose as the body of Christ.



MEN'S MINISTRY NEWS

The Men's Ministry February get-together will be at TopGolf in Charlotte. More information will be coming in the near future.





YORK CHESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL JANUARY COLLECTION

The York Chester Middle School box is located in the PLC hallway.

For January we will be collecting the following:

- Deodorant for boys and girls
- Tooth paste, tooth brushes, chapstick
- Kleenex
- Sanitary napkins for girls

Thank you for your ongoing support and gifts to the York Chester students.

Diane George
Holy Trinity York Chester Contact



OUR NEXT BLOOD DRIVE IS COMING UP! *Monday, February 24 ~ 2:00-6:30 p.m.*

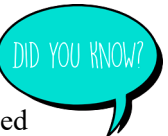
Our next blood drive will be Monday, February 24 from 2:00 - 6:30 p.m. Contact Charlotte and John Sautner at 2sautners@gmail.com or 704-860-3399 to set up an appointment.

Let's roll up those sleeves and make this our best blood drive ever!

Charlotte & John Sautner
Holy Trinity Blood Drive Coordinators

DID YOU KNOW?

The Circle of Goodness has been providing a meal for Displaced Roses on the 3rd Wednesday of the month since late spring of 2024. They prepare a meal of a meat-based casserole, fruit, dessert and drinks for 48 people.



If any other individuals or groups would like to this on a different Wednesday, please contact Danielle Webb.



WOMEN'S MINISTRY NEWS FOR JANUARY

On December 7, fifteen bakers enjoyed learning from Janet Green how to start with a cake mix to create a delicious product and receiving a recipe booklet to assist with their baking. Diane Campbell (especially appreciated by Marty) and Heather Peoples won the raffle. Donations for the raffle were used toward an item from the Giving Tree.

SAVE THE DATES

GIRLS' NIGHT OUT: Tuesday, January 14 at 6:30 p.m. at Taxco on Garrison Blvd. Enjoy time fellowshiping with other female disciples. No reservation needed.

**Girls
Night Out**

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25: We will be having our **Annual General Meeting** and our postponed retreat from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. in the gym. Since present team members will be completing their two-year terms in 2025, we will not need any elections. We hope you will join us for the recap of 2024 activities and a fun, serviced-themed retreat with lunch. Reservations will be necessary and can be made by responding to the e-vite on line or contacting Ana Matthews at 704-718-2646.

January Circle Meetings

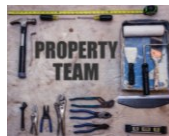
This is a time of fellowship, snacks, a program led by a Circle member and service projects that are for Holy Trinity Disciples and people in the community. These groups are always open to new members. **Please join us!**

Circle of Patience:	Sunday, January 5	Following 11:00 Worship	PLC Room 25
	Program:	Valentine cards	
	Hostesses:	Michelle Lanier, Elizabeth Lethermon, Harriett Lethermon, Martha Sofley	
Circle of Goodness:	Thursday, January 9	10:00 a.m.	PLC Room 25
	Program:	Marilyn Kosak	
	Hostess:	Judy Zander	
	Card Ministry:	Judy Zander	



HOLY TRINITY FAMILY MINISTRIES Thank you!

2024 was a great year! Our youth group has grown steadily, we have added a preschool ministry, and our cradle roll is bustling. Thank you to those of you who have prepared meals, volunteered with youth group, taught Sunday school, chaperoned events, or have supported us by prayer or other contributions. It truly takes a village to raise our children. Stay tuned for new and exciting ministry opportunities in 2025!



HOLY TRINITY PROPERTY UPDATE

We are pleased to share some exciting updates regarding the progress and improvements with the Holy Trinity properties.

Office Construction Progress: The construction on the office side of the building is substantially complete. Our contractor is currently addressing the punch list items, focusing on the flooring and trim to ensure everything meets our high standards.

Roof Repair Plans: To maintain the integrity of our building, we are planning roof repairs aimed at keeping our roof leak-free both now and in the future. This proactive approach will help us avoid potential issues and ensure the longevity of our facilities.

Playground Updates: We are happy to announce that the playground mulch installation is complete. Looking ahead to the spring, we plan to refurbish and improve the playground swings and other equipment, providing a safe and enjoyable space for our children.

Community Involvement: Although not part of our church's property, we would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the youth volunteers who participated in the Rake and Run event. Your willingness to give your time to help others is truly appreciated and makes a significant impact on our community.

Richard DeFreitas
Council Representative Property

*Endowment
Grants*



ENDOWMENT HIGHLIGHT
Africa Inland Mission

Established in 1895, **Africa Inland Mission (AIM)** is a Christian mission-sending agency focused on Africa and African beliefs around the globe.

Africa Inland Mission has been leading people into meaningful ministry for over 100 years, but the work is far from finished. As we press on, we lean into the critical task of mobilizing, equipping, training, and sending local African believers and missionaries toward this great calling. We continue to adapt and embrace creative ways to bring the message of Christ to an ever-changing world.

Today, hundreds of Africa's unique ethnic people groups remain unreached – that's over 300 million people with no viable witness to the good news. Africa Inland Mission serves, equips, and mobilizes churches and believers from the global Church to advance the gospel among Africans who have the least opportunity to hear about Jesus.

Africa Inland Mission's stated mission is to see "Christ-centered Churches established among all African peoples." Their goal is to introduce Jesus Christ to those who have never heard of him. AIM seeks to help new believers grow strong and healthy in their faith and to see new believers enfolded into a maturing church. The organization aims to invest in the lives of current and future church leaders so they can effectively affect the lives of others who can in turn reach out to the vast population of Africa and beyond. The Mission Handbook gives AIM's goal "to plant maturing churches...through the evangelization of unreached people groups and the effective preparation of church leaders."

AIM's passion and the passion of those who serve as missionaries of the Good News is to see the worship of Jesus Christ spread among Africans around the globe through individual lives fully committed to him

Holy Trinity Endowment has supported David and Danetta Kellar and their work with AIM over the past years, and an Endowment grant was approved again for 2025 for their life changing work to continue.

"How can they hear unless someone tells them?" Romans 10

**In His Service,
The Endowment Committee**



COUNCIL PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I contemplated what to write for the first message of 2025, I read back over what I wrote for the January 2024 article. It's probably a good thing I did since, in my head, I was drafting nearly the same message. Even so, I can't help but feel the same as I did this time last year.

There's an excitement and hopefulness of approaching a new year. When we have a bad year, it's a time of closing the door on the past and being hopeful about the future. At Holy Trinity, it's been a year of blessings as Pastor Ryan, Natalie, Jonah, and Hannah have joined our church family. And, we've had a lot to celebrate as we recognized our 125th anniversary.

It's also been a year of struggle as many in our congregation have and are facing a difficult medical diagnosis. Our collective heart breaks for them. Additionally, we've lost staff members and dealt with an onslaught of property issues.

So, we look forward to 2025 with hopeful anticipation that the struggles will diminish and the blessings will increase. Of course, God expects us to actively participate in the blessings. After all, we are the hands and feet of Jesus. How is God calling you to be a blessing to others, to the church, to the community?

In Priscilla Shirer's devotional, *Awaken*, she speaks of God's Word as it is tailored to each of us individually:

How good of God to multiply what He's given to others [pastors, teachers, parents] so that even we can be blessed by it. And yet we should not become overly dependent. The sign of spiritual maturing and growth is that we should crave personal encounters with God's Spirit that He addresses specifically to us, designed to give us tailor-made, handpicked, personal direction and guidance, hemmed in and firmly rooted in the Scriptures.

Our theme for 2025 is **Igniting Faith: A Year of Spiritual Renewal**. Please ponder that theme and pray about what it means to and for you. God has a tailor-made Word for you and your personalized ministry whether it be specific to your family, work, or church. God calls us ALL into ministry. And, when we all serve within our calling, we collectively make a significant impact on the community at large.

I can't wait to see what God does through us this year!

**In His Service,
Anna Houser
2025 Council President**



CHURCH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

From the December 16, 2024 Regular Meeting

At the December 16th meeting of the Church Council, the following actions were taken:

- Received and approved November financial report from Council Treasurer, Lee Stadther (see Herald article page 11).
- Approved the allocation (housing/salary) of the Lead Pastor compensation for 2025.
- Approved compensation packages presented by Personnel for a Music Director and an Office Administrator contingent on qualifying requirements.
- Approved a motion to halt our commitment to Cancer Companions for 2025 due to lack of congregational involvement.
- Welcomed new Council members: Donna Allen, Tess Gibbons, Marsha McLamb, Frank Moxham, and John Walker.
- Heard parting comments from Council members rolling off Council: Rick Jones, Steve McLamb, and Judy Zander
- Elected 2025 Council Officers: Anna Houser (President), Richard DeFreitas (Vice-President), Donna Allen (Secretary), and Lee Stadther (Treasurer)
- Discussed Council ministry assignments.
- Received staff and attendance reports.
- Next Council meeting: January 20, 2025

2025 CHURCH COUNCIL

2023-2025	2024-2026	2025-2027
Richard DeFreitas (VP)	Martin Brown	Donna Allen (Secretary)
Anna Houser (President)	Bill Eaker	Marsha McLamb
Tess Gibbons	Donna Motsinger	Frank Moxham
Lee Young	Lee Stadther (Treasurer)	John Walker



HOW DO YOUR FINANCIAL GIFTS GLORIFY GOD?

¹⁶ *Three times a year all your men must appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose: at the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks and the Festival of Tabernacles. No one should appear before the LORD empty-handed:* ¹⁷ ***Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you.*** (Deuteronomy 16: 16-17 NIV)

We see in this verse, three times a year every male was to make a journey to the sanctuary in the city, that would be designated as Israel's religious capital. At these festivals, each participant was **encouraged to give what he could in proportion to what God had given him.** God does not expect us to give more than we can, but we will be blessed when we give cheerfully. For some, 10 percent may be a burden. For most of us, that would be far too little. **Look at what you have and then give in proportion to what you have been given. What is your response to those blessings God has bestowed on you?**

For those that like numbers...

Noted below we show our November 2024 offerings compared with our monthly budgeted ministry plan. Our staff and leaders continue to manage our expenditures. Our church leadership is doing their best to be good stewards of our financial resources.

	Month of November 2024	YTD through November 2024
Gifts Received:	\$43,223	\$439,517
Budget for Ministries:	\$48,534	\$570,266
Difference:	(\$5,311)	(\$130,749)
Previous Year (2023) Comparison:	\$47,185	\$455,561
Difference between 2024 and 2023:	(\$3,962)	(\$16,044)

Thank you for your continued support of the ministries of Holy Trinity.

Lee Stadther
Church Council Treasurer 2024



Dear Holy Trinity Church family,

Mere words cannot fully express how much your love, prayers, and support have meant to our family after the death of my mother. Thank you all so much for all the cards and phone calls. We are so blessed to be a part of such a loving body of brothers and sisters in Christ.

In His Love, Teleena & Lee Stadther

Dear Holy Trinity Family,

We are thankful and blessed for your support, love and prayers during this time. In our darkest days, you've been God's light of peace and comfort.

Thank you for loving us and loving Trey. We know he will be missed by all who knew him.

With heartfelt gratitude, Wil, Jodi & Caleb Barkley

Thank you for packing shoeboxes! We appreciate your partnership in bringing great joy and the Good News of Jesus Christ to boys and girls in need around the world. Each shoebox you packed will communicate God's love to a child and their family, reinforcing the message of eternal hope shared with them by our local ministry partners. Please join us in celebrating that more than 220 million children in over 170 countries and territories have received a gift-filled shoebox and more than 50 million of these recipients have been disciplined through programs such as The Greatest Journey. We praise God for each life transformed by the Gospel!

May God bless you, Franklin Graham, President Samaritan's Purse

\$125 for the 125TH

Many have asked how much we collected for the special offering during our **125th Anniversary Celebration**. At last tally, we had collected an additional **\$8,346**, and a little birdie told me recently that another gift or two had been received. So, **thank you** Holy Trinity family for your tremendous generosity!

WORD OF THANKS

First and foremost, thank you to Pastor Ryan Henkel and Seminarian Cody Carpenter for the thoughtful and inspiring Advent and Christmas services! These services helped us to focus on the true meaning of the Season - the coming of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. Our worship spaces were beautifully adorned for Advent and Christmas. Many thanks to all who had ANY part in the attention to detail. Crews decorated the trees in the PLC and the church, decorating them with all the Chrismos or monograms of Christ that have been made over the years. A special word of gratitude to Hugh Sherrill (former parishioner) and James Green for hanging the wreaths between the windows and the swag at the back entrance to the nave. David Stephens added the pew candles for just the right touch for our Christmas Eve services. Thank you!

The PLC and Nave of the church were adorned with gorgeous poinsettias from Upchurch Greenhouse in Cherryville. Many in the congregation sponsored a plant in honor or in memory of friends and loved ones. Harriett Lethermon and others watered and cared for the plants so that they looked beautiful for the duration of their stay in our worship spaces. Thank you!

The outdoor Nativity has been displayed following the account in the Gospel stories. The stable and animals stood alone awaiting Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the Christ child. The Wise Men are still on their journey to find the Babe of Bethlehem. And so the scene will not be removed until after Epiphany, January 6. Special thank you to Cody Carpenter, Tim O'Donohue and the others who have placed the figures at just the right time!

Seasonal Decorations and the Worship & Music Committee appreciate all the hard work and planning that went into making Christmas such a meaningful one for Holy Trinity!

Pepie Jones
Chairperson Worship & Music Committee





- **The family of Winston Martinez**, friend of the DeFreitas family, who passed away on December 15.
- **Cissy Belton**, for gastro-intestinal issues. Endoscopy on 12/31
- **Marilyn Kosak**, pneumonia
- **Gene Keller**, pneumonia
- **For friends and family dealing with cancer:** John Barreto, Peggy Kies, Alisha Woody, Marque Jabbar, Gene Keller, Doug McSpadden, Kelly Palmer, LaRae Campbell, Dennis Christman, Maria Brimmer, Pastor Kristen Phillips, Barbara Zinke, Rebecca Cloninger, Alex Melvin, Dean Lawson, Melanie Henry, Beth Rudin, Julie Hill, Jim Siedel, Teresa Hartman, Kelly Powell, Octavia Glenn, Margo Schopper, LeaAnn Buckwell, Tina Heracklis, Braxton Morris
- **Homebound:** Caroline Banker, Pinkney Froneberger, Paul Kaiser, Janie Norton, Kathy Wallace, Iris Work
- **Family and friends actively serving in the military:** Braeden Lawing, Brett Boyd, Logan Cape, Mae Dodd, Josh Holland, Andrew Lambert, Luke Saylor, Liam Overby, Ryan Wallace, Jacob Lawing
- **For healthcare workers and first responders:** William Niemeyer, Chuck and Bridget Niemeyer, Beth Michaels, Melodie Garrison, Kailey Hinds, Cindy Isenhour, Lynn Ledbetter, Anna Murphy, Reggie Parlier, Jennifer Sutley, Jon Michael Brackett
- **Robin Simmons**, for her health
- **All the persecuted**, including Leah Sharibu
- **All missionaries**, including the Thorstad family and the Voice of the Martyrs
- **For those outside the Church**, that they may be brought to faith in Christ Jesus
- **For the youth and children of Holy Trinity**, for the Holy Spirit to guide them
- **For all our ministry partners**, and for the Holy Spirit to stir us up to serve our neighbors in need
- **For the North American Lutheran Seminary System and for an increase in vocations to the ministry**
- **For our Bishop, Dan, our dean, Steven, and for all clergy and people of the Carolinas Mission Region**

Upcoming Birthdays

With special joy, we recognize and celebrate these birthdays in the months of January & February. We are thankful for the life and spirit of the birthdays we celebrate. May the blessings of God flow in the life of each of you.



1	Cindy Garrison, Kyoko Kaiser
2	Shaina Hinds
3	Braden Oakes
6	Frankie Lewis
8	Gabriel Mathews, Joshua Mathews
9	Holly Hawkins, Steve McLamb
11	Rebecca Cloninger
12	Evan Peoples
15	Hannah Henkel
19	Bob Ferguson, Henry Gompers
22	Bruce Garrison
23	Barbara Parlier
26	Carla Oakes, Charlotte Sautner
27	Iris Work
29	Gary Linsenmayer
31	John Peoples



1	Lee Allen
2	Janet Green
3	John Ratz
4	Kathleen Kaiser, Teleena Stadther
6	Morgan Bryant
8	Diane George
9	Charlie Currie
11	Jeff Dulin
12	Elizabeth Lethermon
15	Anne Cloninger
19	Harriett Lethermon, Oyebode Orija
20	Margaret Miller
21	Kendall Parsons
22	Claye Hodge
23	Maggie-Grace Lanier
25	Katie Stroupe
26	Ken Kies
27	LaVerne Davis



SPECIAL & HOMEBOUND SAINTS OF HOLY TRINITY

We have a Special & Homebound Saint that has a birthday in January.
Please help us wish her a Happy Birthday by sending a card!

Iris Work will turn **95 years young** on **January 27**.
1351 Robinwood Road, Apt. A-220, Gastonia, NC 28054

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
805 SOUTH YORK STREET
GASTONIA, NC 28052

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Knowing, Loving and Sharing Christ

Phone: 704-864-0378

Website: www.holytrinitygastonia.org

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Organist
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Custodian

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