

# Tidings



A Monthly Publication from Trinity United Methodist Church, Tallahassee, FL

## A Look Back at 50 Years in the Preschool

by Stacey Duggar, Preschool Director

**T**rinity United Methodist Preschool (TUMP) first opened its doors in the fall of 1973. Mary Blackburn and Claire Nash were our co-founders and classroom teachers. We began with seventeen children aged three and four and met three times per week for three hours each day. In 1975, Mary Blackburn assumed full director duties, as well as teaching the four-year-olds.

Through the years, we have added a two-year-old program, Mother's Morning Out, infant and toddler care, lunch hours, early morning drop off, afternoon care, and finally, a summer program. All of these changes resulted in us providing care for children aged three months to five years of age; we continue to offer both part-time and full-time care.

When Mary Blackburn retired in 1996, Nancy Duncan became the director and led the school for 8 years. (She had also been a teacher here for a number of years.)

In 2004, our current director, Stacey Duggar took over director responsibilities after having taught the two and three year olds classes at TUMP for six years.

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Cover photo is at Trinity UMC Preschool (Class of 1985-1986)

In June of 2005, Trinity United Methodist Preschool was awarded the Gold Seal for Quality Care for the first time. This Gold Seal is recognized nationwide and symbolizes Trinity's commitment and dedication to quality care. We have been re-accredited every three years since that time.

In August of 2005, Trinity joined with other schools across the state by becoming a Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Provider during the inaugural year of the program. The Preschool also took over the Mother's Morning Out program; we merged and now operate together as one unit.

During the calendar year of 2009, many changes took place that made a great impact on the school. Improvements included:

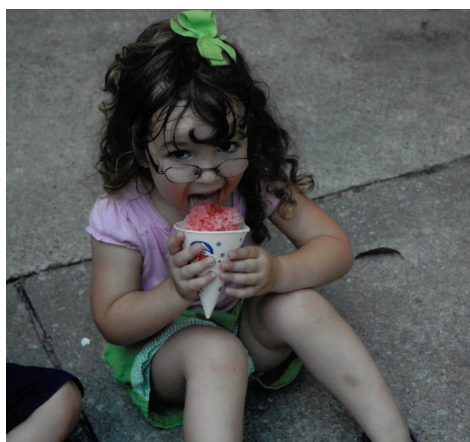
- The bathrooms in-between rooms 106/107 and 103/104 were renovated and now include two toilets in each room. What a big change! The school went from four toilets to six. Did we have fewer accidents? You bet!
- What was a supply closet inside the preschool for 35 years became the Director's office. (The Director's office had previously been a shared space in the Resource Room.)
- The newest playground was installed and with it, new ground cover. This ambitious project was two years in the making and was made possible by a donation from the estate of Gwen V. Roberts. We are very grateful to her and her family and have renamed the playground, the Gwen V. Roberts Playground at Trinity United Methodist Church.

In May of 2013, we celebrated our 40th anniversary with a party! Over 250 current and former students and staff came together to reminisce and reconnect. We had a bounce house and face painters for the littlest preschoolers, and tables with memorabilia for the older alumni and their families.

In 2017, we enhanced the playground by replacing all of the sand/dirt with a pour-in-place rubber product that is designed to be attractive and gentle on falling preschoolers.

In 2020, we closed the school for four months due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. Upon reopening, the staff implemented new procedures and policies that included the wearing of masks, physical distancing, and prohibiting parents from entering the building. By the start of the 2022-2023 school year, most of these protocols were relaxed.

Present day: We celebrate our 50th anniversary with great anticipation and know that God continues to work wonders in and through the children who attend, their families, and the staff that work here. God is good!





# Meet Our New Director of Youth Ministries!

*by Irene Gonzalez, Director of Youth Ministries*

Hi! My name is Irene Gonzalez, and I am so excited to be serving as the Director of Youth Ministries here at Trinity! I grew up in Tallahassee, graduated from Florida State University, and have previously worked as an ER and ICU nurse (which means I work well in chaos). I realized that I wanted to work in ministry for the first time when I was in middle school and, over the last two years, God has worked in my life to make that dream possible.

One of my favorite verses is 1 John 4:19, “We love because He first loved us.” The most important lesson I learned while working as a nurse is that our relationship with Christ is the only thing that really matters. The way He loves us changes everything. My hope is that God will work through me and through our youth group to show that love to our church family, the Tallahassee community, and to whoever we meet wherever He takes us. I really can’t put into words how excited I am for this opportunity to worship and serve here at Trinity with you all!

If I haven’t met you yet: Reading this doesn’t count, please come say hi!

There’s a pin board by my office door with paper and pens: if you need prayer over anything, please leave a note on the board or slide it under my door.



*Irene Gonzalez and her boxer, Ra's*

## Local Missions Spotlight

*by Pat & Lyn Bevis, Local Missions Committee Co-Chairs*



We have had a busy summer as we:

- Continue to collect food and books for distribution through the Frenchtown community which is less than one mile from the church, so truly “our neighbors.”
- Support our IRC Team which is working with our 9-person family of Syrian refugees on a regular basis. This is a most rewarding and challenging experience for the team.
- Collect gift cards for the adults at the Madison Youth Ranch who will be taking the resident’s youth on local field trips.
- Glean the final crops at Lott’s Community Garden to benefit Second Harvest Food Bank and our hungry neighbors in the Big Bend area.

Looking forward:

- In September we will be welcoming a speaker from Tallahassee Bail Fund, a non-profit organization that the committee is supporting this year with financial seed money. This is funding part-time staff to enable them to stay in better contact with the individuals they have out on bail. We are excited about this group’s mission to bail people out in time to avoid the interruption of jobs and families that frequently occurs when people of limited financial resources are jailed for an extended time on minor, non-violent charges prior to trial.
- November and December will bring a return of the Angel Tree with a few new twists so watch for that.
- After a successful Meals on Wheels experience in May, we have signed up for Trinity’s old slot on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. We will again need cold food packers and drivers to deliver meals. Please mark your calendar for January 15.
- The committee continues to meet monthly and explore more ways we can work in the local mission field. We are exploring options to serve the homeless community, either through an existing shelter and their programs; or perhaps starting a new ministry here at Trinity. We are in the early days of exploring what that might look like and welcome all ideas.
- Please get in touch if you have suggestions about any local mission project or are interested in joining the committee. We need more ideas and people to help carry them out.

# Children's Ministry News

by Candace Duclos, Director of Children's Ministries

**W**ow! Summer always feels like it will last a long time, but it seems to fly by! We experienced an amazing time at Stellar VBS! The good news of how to shine Jesus' light was shared with over 60 children. This amazing event could not have happened without the support of an incredible group of youth and adult volunteers! Thank you so much to everyone!!

Our Sunday school has also been the place to be! Each week the children have enjoyed centers that help us explore and learn share God's love. We are currently looking for Sunday school adult teachers. If you are interested in serving once a month in preschool, Kindergarten, 1st-2nd or 3rd-5th grade classes, please contact Candace Duclos. Sunday school relies on the support of volunteers. Please consider joining with us as we serve the Lord in the Children's Ministry! There is never a dull moment and you get to experience the joy of being with God's youngest followers!



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## Memorials

*Given to Trinity UMC from May 11–July 10, 2023*

### Honorariums:

In honor of **Paige Shiver** from Gail Melton.

### Memorials:

In memory of **Lois Ann Bower** from Randle and Starr Clay, Frank and Lula Childers, Robert and Diane Higginbotham, and Linda Stamatoff.

In memory of **Mary Margaret Rogers** from Benson and Betty Ann Skelton, Grace Kane, Jay and Anne Hutcheson, Susan McAlister, Foy Winsor, John and Susan Thomas, Lawton and Beth Langford, John Earle Perkins, III, Nancy Wilkerson Jones Gryderm Lyn Jones Fair, and Gene Jones.

In memory of **Richard “Dick“ Peters** from Foy Winsor, Blair Lee Huss, Joe and Marti Hughes, III, Chuck and Judy Ehrhardt, Mr. and Mrs. John Davis, Sr., William Moor, Jr., Thomas Barron, Jean Miller, William and Maureen Fagan, Nancy Grimsley, Sam Rogers, Sr., Kim Williams, Mr. and Mrs. William Smith, Jr., Flecia Braswell, John and Betty Crowe, Patricia Yancey Martin, Walli Beall, Gayle Nelson, Ben and Tricia Willis, Mr. and Mrs. John Drew, Elizabeth Leggett, Phyllis English, Gary Landrum, Frederick and Mary Carroll, III, Mr. and Mrs. F. Palmer Williams, and Paige Gilchrist, on behalf of Capital City Strategic Wealth.

In memory of **Dottie Roberts** from William Hall, III, Dot Binger, Dr. and Mrs. David Hortin, and Mr. H. Douglas Bruce.

In memory of **Meredith Higgins** from Mr. and Mrs. Tom Hayward.

In memory of **Jack Stroman** from Mr. and Mrs. Tom Hayward.

In memory of **Eleanor Smith** from Sam Rogers, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Williams Smith, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Murray Wadsworth, Mr. and Mrs. F. Palmer Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Duncan Moore, Mr. Julian Smith, Jr., Charles and Cookie Darnell, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Robert Burleson, Dalton Allen, Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Betts, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. A. Langford, Gayle Webb, and Beth Curry, on behalf of Becoming Fit at Church.

# Youth Ministry Update

by Irene Gonzalez, Director  
of Youth Ministries

**Possibly sent by carrier pigeon from the Underground**

If you're reading this, I have survived my first trip to camp (as an adult) and my first youth week. I've also been getting to know the students in our youth group over the last few weeks, and if you don't know how amazing they are, you're missing out. They are smart, caring, creative, enthusiastic, and I am so excited to see what God is going to do in and through our group during the fall semester! We are going to be finishing the summer by going on our mission trip August 1st through the 5th. If you have a moment to pray over our group and the people we are meeting this week, we would really appreciate it. We will resume our weekly meetings the first week of school, starting with UMYF on Sunday night, August 13th! Youth Bible Study and



Praise band will start that Wednesday, August 16th, and we're already gearing up for our annual Fall Retreat in September. Maybe I'll have figured out how to play 9 Square by then...

If you are a middle or high school student, we would love to have you at any of our weekly meetings and there's still time to sign up for Fall Retreat!

Sunday School: Sunday morning 9:45-10:45 am

UMYF (Youth Group): Sunday night 6-8 pm

Youth Bible Study: Wednesday 6:30-7:30 pm

Youth Praise Band: Wednesday 7:30-8:30 pm

## Trinity Goes to Guatemala

by Jayne Mittan, Chair of World Missions Committee



Our Guatemala mission team is gearing up for our trip to Panajachel, Guatemala October 7-14th. To raise money for our medical clinics and housing construction, we will be holding our annual Rummage Sale on August 19th from 8:00am-2:00pm, with donation drop-offs on Friday, August 18th from 1:00-6:30pm, all in Moor Hall. We will also be hosting a special dinner of a typical Guatemalan meal with musical entertainment by our own Sofia Fernandez! This event will be in September in Moor Hall. Stay tuned for more details!

## Mid-Year Financial Check-in

by Laurie J. Atteberry,  
Business Administrator

It is hard to believe that we are in the second half of 2023. The finance office is always so busy coding, reporting and auditing that we hardly know where the first half of the year has gone. Therefore, we would like to take a breath and share a little about the financial life of Trinity.

During the first six and a half months of the year, we have received approximately \$1,030,832 in gifts and other income for church operations and expenditures have totaled \$985,817 to date. While these figures fluctuate from day to day, our goal in the financial office is to honor your investment with integrity and ensure that Trinity continues to thrive and operate in the black.

We currently have 383 families/individuals that share their generous gifts with us for the basic operations of the church and our ministry programs. We have also received many additional gifts that have gone beyond the operational uses to areas such as HEO; Guatemala; our sister church in Fomento, Cuba; VBS; BFC; as well as investments in Trinity's future.

Jack Falcon, our new Financial Assistant, and I welcome you to come by with any questions.



# BFC Ministry Meets All Summer Long

by Beth Curry, BFC Team Leader

**D**id you know since June 2023 over 45 people have attended weekly BFC Exercise classes or BFO (Becoming Fit Outdoors) on a regular basis? Some enjoy the BFC daytime exercise program on Tuesdays and Thursdays while others prefer to join BFO (INDOORS while hot) on Thursday evenings. There is truly something for everyone! Come give it a try! And, the good news is - when summer ends both programs continue all year long!

Check out the website for the latest details <https://www.tumct.org/serve/bfc-becoming-fit-at-church/>. Or stop by our booth at the Ministry Fair on Sunday, August 6th. Email Beth Curry at [BFCSeries@yahoo.com](mailto:BFCSeries@yahoo.com) for required advance registration information.

## Summer Schedule

- Staying Strong – Tues 9:45 am/Thurs 1:30 pm – Basic, easy exercise while seated or standing
- Variety Mix – Tues/Thurs 11:00 am – Fast paced full body workout for intermediate to advanced
- Flexibility for a Better YOU – Thurs 12:15 pm – Foam rolling and flexibility on the floor
- BFO – Becoming Fit Outdoors – Thurs 6:30 pm – Usually an outdoor walk but INDOOR walk and exercise during hot summer days. (in person ONLY)

All classes are available in person or via ZOOM (except for BFO).



# Abound in Hope

*A Report from the 2023 Florida UMC Annual Conference*

by Marti Chumbler, Lay Leader

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*  
Romans 15: 13 NRSV

**T**he 2023 Florida United Methodist Annual Conference fully embraced and reflected the chosen theme “Abound in Hope.” Over the course of two and a half days, conference attendees experienced moments of solemnity but also of hilarity, reports of expected budget reductions but also a commitment to continued support of local churches and a ministry of service, sadness at the disaffiliation of churches and clergy but also a shared sense of renewal and revival among those of us remaining United Methodists. There were both shouts of joy and tears of healing.

Of particular significance for Trinity, two of our own were commissioned as provisional elders--Bryant Manning, who served as our interim associate here at Trinity over the past year, and Anna Brook Opalinski, our new associate. In total, 20 individuals received commissions as provisional elders and four as provisional deacons. Eleven were licensed as local pastors. Three were ordained as deacons and nine as elders. Following the moving licensing, commissioning, and ordination service, which included a stirring message from Bishop Tom Berlin, the crowd celebrated the new clergy with the hugs, cheers, and some joyful tears. Despite Bishop Berlin's suggestion, and to the disappointment of some of us in the crowd, the Conference's treasurer did not present his financial and budget report via interpretive dance (although there was some suggestion that next year's report



***Pictured from left: Rev. Bryant Manning, Stewart and Linda Fleming, Rev. Dr. Matthew M. Williams, Rev. Dr. Wayne Wiatt, Marti Chumbler, Dr. Nick Quinton, Rev. E. Wayne Curry. Not pictured: Steve and Diane Jacobs.***



***Trinity UMC's newly appointed Associate Pastor, Rev. Anna Brook Opalinski and Senior Pastor, Rev. Dr. Matthew M. Williams***

could include choreography). Nonetheless, Mr. Smelser's report was informative and, while recognizing the challenges associated with disaffiliations, reflected the same sense of renewal as was present throughout all of the reports. The budget approved for the coming year reflects a recognition that disaffiliations will have a financial impact. However, remaining churches will not be asked to increase their apportionments and the Conference will continue its focus on service and mission.

Four resolutions were included in the Conference workbook, three of which will be forwarded for consideration at the 2024 United Methodist General Conference. However, only one required a vote of conference attendees. Titled "In Support of Creating a U.S. Regional Conference," the resolution calls for a reorganization, with the five U.S. jurisdictions combined into a U.S. regional conference and the existing central conferences outside the U.S. reorganized as regional conferences representing United Methodists in Africa, the Philippines, and Europe. This proposed reorganization is intended to recognize differences in cultural and political contexts and allow each region to tailor its ministry and mission while maintaining connectional ties with the worldwide United Methodist Church.

Two other resolutions that will be forwarded for consideration during the 2024 General Conference: 1) a resolution asking disaffiliating clergy and laity to abstain from voting on measures relating to the future of the United Methodist Church and 2) a resolution to remove discriminatory policies and language from the Book of Discipline. A final resolution calls upon the Florida Conference to fully affirm and protect LGBTQA+ persons and asks that the bishop not take disciplinary action against clergy based upon their sexual orientation or as a result of officiating at weddings of LGBTQA+ persons while changes to the Book of Discipline are being considered.

The Conference recognized Rev. Dr. Wayne Wiatt and 37 other retiring clergy for their many years of service. Local churches with milestone anniversaries were celebrated, with banners from the 200-year old churches festooning the meeting hall. Helen Fletcher and Janie Kalaf, wives of former Trinity pastors, were among those honored during a service of remembrance for clergy and clergy spouses who died during the past year.

The Conference heard many other reports, including reports on campus ministries, Warren Willis Camp, the status of Fresh Expressions, justice ministries, and the efforts of the Anti-Racism Task Force.

Enthusiastic singing, stirring messages from Bishop Berlin and other pastors, prayers, Bible study, even the blasting of tee shirts into the crowd and the Conference's lay leader Alice Williams dancing up the aisles--all furthered the theme "Abound in Hope." To quote Bishop Berlin, we left the Conference not just with hearts warmed, but with hearts afire.



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## WORSHIP SERVICES

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Early Service: 8:30 a.m. in the sanctuary  
Contemporary Service: 9:45 a.m. in Moor Hall  
Liturgical Service: 11 a.m. in the sanctuary

Contemporary Service and 11 a.m. Liturgical Service are live streamed  
Please visit [www.tumct.org](http://www.tumct.org) for viewing links

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## PASTORAL STAFF

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Rev. Dr. Matthew M. Williams, *Senior Pastor*  
Rev. Anna Brook Opalinski, *Associate Pastor*  
Rev. Wayne Curry, *Minister of Pastoral Care*  
Dr. Nick Quinton, *Director of Discipleship and Adult Ministries*

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## MINISTRY STAFF

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Dawn Adams, *Congregational Administrator*  
Laurie Atteberry, *Business Administrator*  
Ben Armstead, *Sexton*  
Viktor Billa, *Organist*  
Yuliia Billa, *Director of Music*  
Zachary Cramer, *Technical Director*  
Candace Duclos, *Director of Children's Ministries*  
Stacey Duggar, *Preschool Director*  
Jack Falcon, *Financial Assistant*  
Sofia Fernandez, *Director of Contemporary Worship*

Irene Gonzalez, *Director of Youth Ministries*  
Melanie Gonzalez, *Office Administrator*  
Patti Groh, *Sexton*  
Brett Ingram, *Facility Director*  
Amy Leach, *Programs Assistant*  
Charlotte Mathews, *Sexton*  
Alexis McEntire, *Assistant to the Director of Children's Ministries*  
Katelin McLeod, *Sexton*

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## TIDINGS TEAM

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[Melanie Gonzalez](#), *Editor*

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