

# Tidings



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

## Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church South

### The “elegant” 1893 building

by Claire Kelly (Originally published in Tidings in 2004)

**N**o one knows when or how the name Trinity was given to the Methodist Church in Tallahassee, but in 1892 one thing was certain. The last decade of the 19th century had begun and Trinity Methodist Church – Trinity Methodist Episcopal Church South, as it was known until the denomination was officially unified in 1939 – was outgrowing its building: its 307 members needed more room. A building committee which included George I. Davis, W.L. Moor, B.A. Meginniss (later replaced by W.M. McIntosoh, Jr.), and the pastor W.M. Poage, wasted no time. A year later this article appeared in the *Weekly Floridian*:

*The Methodists of Tallahassee are going to have an elegant new church, to occupy the same site as the old one; and work has begun on it. The Presbyterians have kindly offered the Methodists the use of their church while the work of construction is going. Presbyterian services will be held on the first and third Sundays in each month and Methodist services will be held at the Presbyterian church on the second and fourth Sundays in each month. Methodist Sunday school will be held in the Academy building at 9:30 every Sunday.*

Gilmore and Davis were the contractors. The ladies of the church held fund raisers, among the most successful of which were the lunches served in January 1893 for the inaugural festivities for the new governor, Henry Mitchell. The planning, fund raising, and hard work were rewarded when the congregation moved into the new sanctuary in 1893.

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A semi-Gothic structure of pressed Macon brick, the new building was ornamented by stained glass windows and included a 45-foot tower topped by a soaring steeple. A handsome gilded arrow weathervane added the finishing touch.

Entering the church door facing Duval Street, worshippers walked through an attractively finished vestibule with a tile floor in a mosaic pattern. The woodwork was of polished native Florida curled pine. Stained glass transoms surmounted paneled swinging doors, which led into the interior proper. Adorning the walls of the sanctuary, large memorial stained glass windows honored various former members of the church, as well as Miss Sue Blake, "our missionary to China." The name Trinity was used in the glass window above the entrance, the first reference we have to the church being named Trinity.

Inside the auditorium was entirely free of pillars or visible supports of any kind. Worshippers had a clear view of the transept under a beautiful elliptical arch at the north end of the sanctuary. With little effort, the minister could be heard throughout the entire auditorium.

The 188 organ was moved to the new church and completely overhauled by Professor H.W. Chang, who pronounced it "sweeter and better than ever."

The congregation moved into the new church owing \$1,500 to the pastor and \$1,000 to the Board of Church Extension. Both amounts were quickly repaid, and the church moved on to new activities to proclaim the glory of God.



Trinity UMC in 1893

# Trinity Welcomes Rev. Tony Fotsch

by Rev. Wayne Curry, Minister of Pastoral Care

To continue our Bicentennial Celebration we welcome the Rev. Tony Fotsch to our pulpit on Sunday, April 14th, at the 9:45AM and 11AM services. (There will be no 8:30AM service that day.)

Way back in 2008 when I was assigned as Senior Pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church, I was fortunate to also have Rev. Tony Fotsch assigned as our Associate Pastor. And what a wonderful blessing he was to our church for seven years.

Tony's warm and vibrant personality, his deep faith, and his educational background brought so many different gifts to us. He built up our young adult ministry, started a marriage enrichment group, encouraged numerous small groups, and guided us through our Visioning process. Tony also worked closely with our Board of Trustees, helping to make many renovations in our buildings over those years.

I guess you could say that Tony kick-started his ministry, his marriage, and his family at Trinity. This was his first full-time appointment in the Florida Annual Conference; he and his beautiful wife, Debbie, were married just a few months when they arrived; and while here they had two boys, Christian and Joe. Beth and I became close friends with Tony and Debbie, sharing many happy times in our ministry together over the years. One fond memory is rolling up the carpet in our living room and Tony and Debbie teaching Beth and me a Salsa dance...at least they tried!

It is a joy to welcome Tony, Debbie, Christian and Joe back to Trinity on this special occasion of our Bicentennial!

## Greetings from Tony

by Rev. Tony Fotsch

Blessings in the name of our Lord from Rev. Tony Fotsch and family! I served as Associate Pastor at Trinity from 2008-2015. There were so many wonderful memories of our time there. It was such a blessing to serve & lead the many fruitful ministries that exemplify Trinity's long history as a beacon of God's love in Tallahassee and beyond. And, it was exciting during that season to expand ministries; such as our Young Adults & families, the SUN service, and new ventures in Spiritual Outreach into our community. We also accomplished a lot of renovations and improvements to our beautiful, expansive and historical buildings and property. It was a special and rather fun part of my role to offer some of my knowledge and experience as a former Engineer to all these projects. My season of ministry at Trinity culminated in the Harvest Visioning campaign. It was (continued on next page)



Rev. Tony Fotsch





*The Fotsch Family*

particularly inspiring to witness a Church with such a long history of great ministry, to experience excitement and engagement for new vision and potential for the Lord into the future!

What we remember most about Trinity are the great friendships, love and support that were poured out for us and our family. Trinity has such a deep respect, appreciation and love for her Pastors. It really is one of its many strengths as such a healthy church. You all welcomed me and Debbie as newlyweds. You showered our two boys, Christian and Joe, with love at their birth and faithful ministry into their Preschool years. We are eternally grateful for the mentoring and deep friendship of Rev. Wayne Curry and his wife, Beth, to encourage us as a young family, and to prepare me as a Pastor. And even over the years and miles as an itinerant Pastor, there are so many Trinity friends that remain dear in our hearts and prayers.

# Unexpected Changes *by Steve Jacobs, Trinity UMC Member*

**L**ife is full of changes. As I've grown older, I've come to accept many of them. Even living with ALS is better than the alternative at this point.

For me, many of those changes since the ALS diagnosis have been experiences of loss. I first lost the ability to lift my carryon bag into the overhead compartment in an airplane. I've since become a lefty as my right arm and hand no longer work. Thankfully, I had already retired as a dentist with the Jackson County Health Department. My right leg is no longer reliable for walking or standing, so to save energy and reduce fall risks, I use a wheelchair almost exclusively.

As with most neurological diseases, these changes make me appear different. Yet, I am still the beloved child God created. I am thankful for a church family that recognized a need and responded—with more accessible entrances and designated pews in the sanctuary that aren't only in the rear of the church where it's difficult to see and hear. I'm grateful that an entire Lay Academy was dedicated to learning how to be a more welcoming church and for the information and insights shared by Dr. J.R. Harding, Disability Advocate, FSU Instructional Specialist.

For those who are fully able, sitting where you wish in the sanctuary with family or friends is not an issue. Thanks to the recent updates, I can now do that and not be an obstruction. I still will not be able to visit in the homes of many friends,

as most residences are not built to be accessible. I understand that until you need accommodations you probably have no thought about them. As our congregation ages, we need to consider the requirements of others even more. Including someone with special needs in the planning would be particularly helpful.



Due to my disease, I will never again sing in the choir, walk to the altar, speak from the pulpit or play handbells. Thanks to the marvelous technology we took advantage of during the pandemic, worship services on YouTube and meetings or classes via ZOOM, I can still participate or even teach (until I lose the ability to speak). And I can always sing and pray, even if only silently.

Thanks be to God that I developed ALS at 68 when I had already lived a full life and checked many things off the bucket list. Many are not so fortunate. Thank you, church family for recognizing the changing needs of many of us. Your acceptance and support mean so much and make me feel less of a burden and more welcome in the faith community I love.



# BFC Ministry – Join Us For Some Spring Fun!

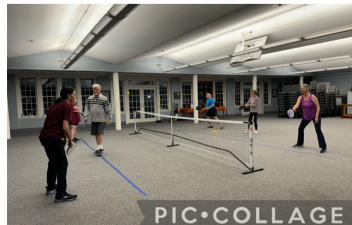
by Beth Curry, BFC Instructor

BFC Ministry has had a busy spring and it's not too late for you to join the fun! Two groups have finished our new BFO (Becoming Fit Outdoors) Pickleball Training and BFC Exercise Variety Mix class celebrated its 15th Anniversary!

Join us on Thursday nights as our newly trained BFO Pickleball players continue to work on their skills. If you are a new player looking to get some practice – this is the group for you. There is also a great daytime full body work out exercise class which

includes conditioning skills that can be used on the court. Come try the BFC Variety Mix class at 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday and Thursday.

Advanced registration is required for both BFO and BFC. For full details and schedule for all the BFC Ministry programs please visit the Trinity website: <https://www.tumct.org/serve/bfc-becoming-fit-at-church/> or email [BFCSeries@yahoo.com](mailto:BFCSeries@yahoo.com) for more information.



**BFO Pickleball practices their new skills on the Trinity Pickleball Court!**

**BFC Variety Mix celebrates 15 years of Fun, Friends, Fellowship, Fitness - and FOOD!**

## Trinity Reflections

*Compiled by the Bicentennial Publicity Committee*

“Trinity for me is community – a caring and loving community that shares joys and sorrows, an engaged community seeking to learn and grow in faith, and a committed community serving many through acts of mercy and justice.”

—Gloria Colvin

“In the beauty of our Trinity sanctuary, we find comfort, guidance, and inspiration. It is a joy to reflect on many years of family memories made in our church since our matriarch first became a member in 1910.”

—Bill and Paula Smith

# Trinity United Methodist Preschool Celebrates 50 Years of Educational Excellence

by Jennie Kroeger, TUMP parent, Preschool Advisory Board Member, and former church nursery employe

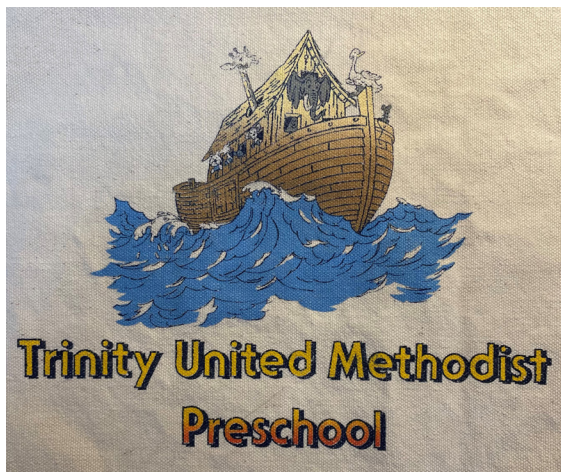
Trinity United Methodist Preschool (TUMP) is gearing up to commemorate a remarkable milestone as it celebrates 50 years of providing exceptional early childhood education to the Tallahassee community. Established in August 1973, the preschool has been a model of learning, growth, and nurturing for generations of young learners.

What began as a modest program operating three days a week for three hours a day has evolved into a comprehensive five-day-a-week, 10-hour-a-day program, catering to the needs of families seeking high-quality childcare and education. The school serves children aged three months to five years and participates in the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program. Since the inception of the VPK program in Florida in 2005, TUMP has been a proud provider, ensuring that children receive a strong foundation for academic success.

TUMP's commitment to excellence is evident in its recognition as a Gold Seal school and accreditation by The Christian Preschool Association, reflecting its adherence to rigorous standards of educational quality and faith-based values.

"Marking its 50th anniversary, Trinity United Methodist Preschool stands as a beacon of educational excellence in downtown Tallahassee," said Rev. Dr. Matthew M. Williams, the senior pastor at Trinity United Methodist Church. "Through five decades of dedicated service, this esteemed institution has consistently shaped young minds and enriched the local community. The legacy of unparalleled impact and unwavering commitment of our teachers and staff foster a brighter future for our present generation and those to come."

Over the past 50 years, TUMP has welcomed over 1,000 children into its classrooms, fostering a love for learning and a sense of community among students and families alike. At the heart of the preschool's



success are its dedicated staff, with each lead teacher holding a minimum of a bachelor's degree and committed to ongoing professional development through 24 training hours annually.

The visionaries behind

TUMP, co-founders Mary Blackburn and Claire Nash, laid the groundwork for its success, leaving a lasting legacy that continues to shape the lives of children and families in the community. Despite the passing of these beloved leaders, their contributions endure, and their spirit of dedication lives on in the heart of the preschool.

With only three directors in its 50-year history, TUMP has maintained

a sense of continuity and stability in its leadership. From Mary Blackburn's tenure from 1973 to 1996, through Nancy Duncan's leadership from 1996 to 2004, to the current director, Stacey Duggar, who assumed the role in 2004, the preschool has remained steadfast in its mission to provide a nurturing environment where children can thrive.

"I never imagined that when I first started working here in August of 1997 as a two-year-old teacher that I would stay for the next 25+ years," said Duggar. "It has been a joy and a privilege to develop relationships with families, staff, and of course the children!"

Duggar not only leads the school but also actively contributes to the broader early childhood education community. Serving on the Board of Directors for both the Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend, Inc. and the Christian Preschool Association, she exemplifies the preschool's commitment to leadership and advocacy in the field of early childhood education.

To celebrate its 50th anniversary, TUMP invites all alumni, families, staff, and community members interested in learning more about the school to join in the festivities on **April 27, 2024, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.** Attendees will have the opportunity to tour the facilities, reconnect with old friends, and learn more about the preschool's rich history and bright future.

The highlight of the celebration will be the unveiling and dedication of the new Legacy Walk, a testament to the preschool's enduring impact on the lives of children and families. Festivities will also include family-friendly activities such as a bounce house, face painting, and a display of class photos from each year, providing a nostalgic journey through five decades of educational excellence and community engagement.

**TRINITY UMC**  
**PRESCHOOL**  
Tallahassee, FL



Est. 1973

**Celebrating 50 Years**



# Ministry Updates

by Candace Duclos, Director of Christian Education

## Adult Ministry Update

Our Winter Painting Party was a great success! We had fun painting, fellowshiping and eating after a time of devotion and prayer. Hope you can join us next for our next creative event!

On March 4th, a delicious brunch and fellowship was enjoyed by all! We had a lovely time of connection and inspiration provided by Rev. Wayne Curry. The preschool class provided entertainment through songs and smiles! Please be on the lookout for our next gathering so that you can come and join us!



Painting Party: Above & Right



Adult Brunch on March 4, 2024



## Children's Ministry Update

Spring is in full bloom here at Trinity Kids! Our annual family Easter brunch and egg hunt was a happy success! Laughter, food and friendship was shared with one another!

In Sunday school, we continue to learn about Jesus with our Cokesbury curriculum, Celebrate Wonder! Each Sunday we delve into the Book of Acts to learn how the early church continued Jesus' ministry. We are making connections with God's word and applying it to our daily lives.

NETKids are preparing for the annual Teacher Appreciation Dinner and Spring Musical performance scheduled for Sunday, April 28th during the 11:00am service. Finally, the all of the kids have been working on the decorations for this year's VBS- SCUBA! We are very busy loving Jesus and serving one another in the Children's Ministry!



# Living Still

*By Sofia Fernandez, Director of Contemporary Worship*

**Living Still: Night of Worship** celebrating Trinity UMC's Bicentennial year! Whoever you are, whoever you love, wherever you are on your faith journey, join us for a night of music & communion on April 12th at 6pm in the Sanctuary. Led by our Contemporary Music Ministry in spirit and song, we will reflect on our past and pray for our future.

Trinity United Methodist Church  
**BICENTENNIAL**  
Faith of our Founders...living still

LIVING STILL

NIGHT OF  
WORSHIP

APRIL 12TH - 6:00PM  
IN THE SANCTUARY  
TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

120 W PARK AVE  
TALLAHASSEE, FL



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P.O. Box 1086  
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(850) 222-1120 [www.tumct.org](http://www.tumct.org)

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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*

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## MINISTRY STAFF

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Laurie Atteberry, *Business Administrator*  
Ben Armstead, *Sexton*  
Dori Barton, *Financial Assistant*  
Viktor Billa, *Organist*  
Yuliia Billa, *Director of Music*  
Zachary Cramer, *Technical Director*  
Candace Duclos, *Director of Christian Education*  
Sarah Duclos, *Sexton*  
Stacey Duggar, *Preschool Director*

Betsy Gingery, *Culinary Coordinator*  
Sofia Fernandez, *Director of Contemporary Worship*  
Irene Gonzalez, *Director of Youth Ministries*  
Melanie Gonzalez, *Church Operations Administrator*  
Patti Groh, *Sexton*  
Brett Ingram, *Facility Director*  
Charlotte Mathews, *Sexton*  
Alexis McEntire, *Children's Ministries Assistant*  
Katelin McLeod, *Sexton*

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## TIDINGS TEAM

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[Melanie Gonzalez](#), *Editor*

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