



Trinity Spirit



VOLUME 22, ISSUE 7

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

JULY 2026

BEHIND THE STORIES | *Creation*

Some Christians believe that the Bible must be read literally, *that if the Bible is the Word of God*, it is incumbent on us to believe everything it says in as literal a way as possible. **This is not how I read the Bible, nor is it the way the ELCA reads the Bible.** In fact, I believe that the Bible was never meant to be read so literally, and that it can actually be harmful for Christians and our mission to read the Bible in this way.

At Rainforest Falls, *this summer's Vacation Bible School*, the theme for Day 1 was: **God is our Creator.** The lesson I taught that day runs through the days of creation from Genesis chapter 1. However, the lesson does not focus on God creating the world in one week (*and frankly, if it did, I would not be able to teach that in good conscience*).

The creation story in Genesis 1 was never meant to serve as a modern scientific explanation of how the universe was created. We have better ways than the Bible to understand the questions of how and when creation happened. We have geology and astronomy and other sciences that God gave us the ability to figure out to answer those questions.

The purpose of the Biblical stories is different. The Bible is telling us about our relationship with the one who created. Genesis 1 tells us that God created us intentionally, judged us to be good, and judged all of creation to be very good. If the story is reduced to a proof how long it took God to create, then it may be interesting, but it really doesn't do us any good. It is just a fact. However, understanding why God created human beings and our relationship with God, has the power to change our lives.

**We are designed for relationship.
We are made for community—because
we are made in the image of God.**

During Rainforest Falls, part of the summary for Day 1 reads: *Kids often hear they need to make something of themselves – be smarter, cooler, more successful. But Scripture flips that script. Before kids ever tried to prove their worth, God already designed them with purpose and love. That truth changes everything! Kids don't need to chase approval or compete for value; they already matter because the Creator of the universe formed them intentionally, in his own image.*

That's a pretty good lesson for us adults as well. We matter, because God created us, because God says we matter. That can change the way we view ourselves and the way we view other people. **That's the power of the creation story.**

In Christ's Peace,

Pastor Robb
Pastor Robb Kosky



So much happens—**BEHIND THE SCENES!**

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY and VBS are not the only programs where things that happen behind the scenes greatly impact the ministry. Nor are the people working behind the scenes the only folks who don't expect any fanfare for their dedication, the gifts they share, or the hours of labor they so freely give (even if it is a labor of love). *But, sometimes we just have to lift them up and give them a little bit of praise anyway.*

Alyssa Brockman has served as Trinity's Children's Ministry Coordinator for five years now. And, though she has been involved longer, **Susie Kelnhofer** has served as Trinity's Little Lambs (pre-school) Coordinator for a year and a half. Together and individually, they are enormous blessings to our congregation. Alyssa brings infectious energy, enthusiastic and focused leadership, creativity, love, and passion—which is only enhanced by Susie's passion to serve, her love for kids, the joy she brings to them, and a creative talent that literally oozes out of her soul. *The anticipation, planning, hunt for bargains and supplies that could be upcycled—creating many of the pieces that would set the 'rainforest' scene at Trinity literally started a year ago when the 2026 Rainforest Falls VBS theme was first announced. Thank you, Susie and Alyssa!*

Now, Alyssa and Susie themselves would be the first to lift up that, *even with all that they bring, nothing would happen without the village!* There were a great number of people who stepped up, helping set up and clean up, donating food and supplies, volunteering to teach, to make awesome snacks (*that matched the theme of the day*), take pictures, lead music and dance, role playing, running the sound and video systems, *and more!* No matter the task, each and every one of those people helped to make **Rainforest Falls VBS week** at Trinity an incredibly fun, faith-filled, and relationship developing experience for all the kids who were there. *They all deserve our thanks and praise!*

To all those who step up, lend a hand, volunteer, and labor endlessly BEHIND THE SCENES—THANK YOU! You make a difference—thanks be to God!



Breaking the Chains Church—*FIRST OF ITS KIND!*

FROM NATE SHUBAT | *I'm going to share some new news about Breaking the Chains Church (BTCC) and end with a couple of interesting facts I came across on the journey.*

In 2016, what was to become Breaking the Chains Church (BTCC) was first formed. It came to be considered a *Synod Authorized Worshiping Community* – a SAWC; not a fully independent congregation or church. A SAWC is an officially recognized new or alternative church ministry within the ELCA. These communities are designed to reach people who might not connect with traditional churches.

Over the 10 years since then, BTCC has grown and we realized we were doing everything an independent church does: finances, regularly scheduled worship services, baptisms, ecumenical relationships with other churches and organizations. So, over two years ago BTCC members decided it was time to become recognized by the ELCA as a fully independent congregation, an independent church the same as Trinity or any “brick-and-mortar” ELCA church.

We ensured we met the financial requirements, legal requirements, the ELCA requirements necessary to make it happen. We got the support of the bishop, the Synod and church-wide offices, and BTCC members.

On May 14th, 2026 the Greater Milwaukee Synod Council voted to accept BTCC as a new independent ELCA congregation! At this year's Synod Assembly, BTCC was officially introduced as an independent congregation.



Nate Shubat was among those representing Breaking the Chains Church as they were introduced as an independent ELCA congregation at the 2026 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly

Now, for those couple of interesting facts I promised.

First, creating a new church has become a rare occurrence in the ELCA. At times it took questioning, investigation, and discussion in the synod and at the church-wide level to figure out what the process was. *Unfortunately, it is more common to close a church or combine churches than it is to create a new church.*

Second, we looked across the entire ELCA for a church for the incarcerated so we could use them as an example. None could be found. There were ministries and outreach programs, but no independent church.

Looks like BTCC is the first ELCA church of its kind. Isn't that something!?



NOTE: Along with our wishes for God's continued blessings on their ministry, we've asked Nate to think about what Trinity could do to express our **WELCOME** from one ELCA congregation to the newest—**Breaking the Chains ELCA Church! ... stay turned!**

MET UPDATE

MINISTRY EXPLORATION TEAM

The MET has been and will continue to meet twice a month to do a full review of Trinity and what we will need moving forward with our ministry.

So far, we have met with Pr. Kristin Nielsen from the Milwaukee ELCA Synod office and have learned more about the MSP (Ministry Site Profile) that we will ultimately need to fill out to help us as we search for a new call pastor.

All interested pastors will have access to our MSP so they can consider whether Trinity may be a good fit for them before actually applying for the position. We want this profile to reflect our whole congregation! To that end, we will be asking everyone to complete short surveys, and join in on small group talks and forums. ***It is important that everyone is involved in this process so we are aware and can convey desires of our entire congregation.***

We are currently focusing on reviewing Trinity's history, our outreach ministry, and taking a deeper look into the survey that was conducted last at Trinity last year. Right now our topics are wide, but will be narrowed to a more specific focus soon. ***We hope to have a good foundation for our profile before the end of the year, but if more time is needed we will not be rushing it.***

FIRST MET SURVEY COMING JULY 8

There will be a short 4 question congregation-wide survey available to answer both online and in person beginning July 8th. This survey will conclude July 19th and results will be shared with the congregation within two weeks of completion.

Installation of Trinity's MET members took place on Sunday, June 28th, they are: Jim Barker, Isabelle Beckmann, Tom Bergerud, Alyssa Brockman, Diane Ferstadt, Katie Flunker, Jacqueline Granger, Rick Gilbertson, Pat Hanvey, Amanda Hull, Shannon Stadelmayer and Pastor Robb. ***Please keep this team in your prayers through this process.***



**COMPLETING 8th - 12th GRADES
SAVANNAH, GA | JULY 18-25**

Our group will join **YouthWorks** alongside existing local ministries and organizations to meet ongoing needs. Projects could include assisting with home repair projects, serving at the food bank, partnering with clothing distribution ministries, connecting with homeless organizations or supporting a local therapeutic horse center. In the evenings we'll be able to experience more of the community by visiting the Savannah River front, Tybee Island and First African Baptist Church, where we'll learn about their involvement in the Underground Railroad.

Please keep our Sr High Youth and chaperons in your prayers as they head to Savannah this month.



ALL ABOUT YOUth

YOUTH SCHEDULES, EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES



PINE LAKE

SWAYS CAMPING MINISTRIES

JULY 26- JULY 31

It is destination PINE LAKE CAMP for Alyssa Brockman and 20 of Trinity's kids! Each of our campers received a discounted camp cost because of our Pizza & Movie Night Fundraiser.

The CAMP BUS leaves Trinity Sunday, July 26th at 12:45pm! Feel free to join us to help send off our campers for a fantastic week of faith, fun and friendship!

Please keep all our Trinity Campers in your prayers for a wonderful week at camp!!

Joel Beier
Morgan Beier
Claire Brehmer
Claudia Brehmer
Augustus Brockman
Elouise Brockman
Elias del Campo O'Connell

Lucca del Campo O'Connell
Amaya del Campo O'Connell
Brad Hanson
Jayden Hanvey
Mia Hanvey
Manny Jones
Ariella Kemmett

Harper Kenworthy
Kelly Omernick
Arvy Roberts
Connor Robinson
Jordan Robinson
John Wilson
Alyssa Brockman



Our Trinity Campers will be leading a Camp Style Worship on Sunday, August 2nd at the 9am service! Plan to join us for a worship filled with energy and praise as they share some of their camp week with you.



Nothing Fishy about it!

4TH-6TH GRADE F.I.S.H. YOUTH MINISTRY

WHAT'S F.I.S.H.?

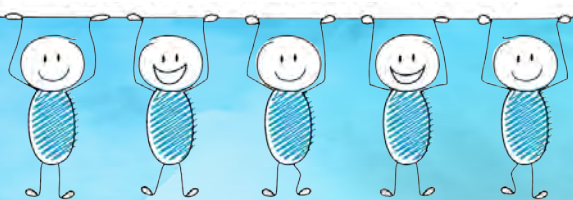
F.I.S.H. is a youth ministry specifically for 4th-6th Graders. The acronym stands for FOLLOWING IMMANUEL SERVING HAPPILY

WHY F.I.S.H.?

F.I.S.H. events are designed to grow both faith and friendships among Trinity's 4th-6th graders—many of whom attend different schools. **In grades 4 - 6, children's friendships become more and more vital to their opinions, their behavior, and their self-image.**

4th-6th Grade Youth Ministry provides a vehicle for deepening and expanding the connections this age group begins to make with each other on Sunday mornings. In this way, we seek to help them develop friendships with those who will be their fellow travelers in their faith journeys through their confirmation, Senior High and into their adult years.

F.I.S.H. NEEDS YOU!



Do you have a passion for organizing short fun events? Our 4th-6th grade **F.I.S.H.** program meets once a month (SEPTEMBER - MAY) on a Sunday after worship and we are in need of an adult leader. **Alyssa is happy to walk you through events and help with the preplanning.** Less than 2 hours a month could have a lasting impact on YOU and our kiddos here at Trinity!

Please reach out to Alyssa if this is something you'd like more info about.

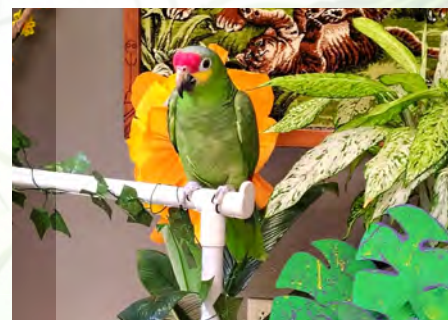


Rainforest Falls VBS week was packed full of faith, fun and adventure as we Explored the Nature of God! Once again we joined forces with Our Saviors and met some new faces from our community as well.

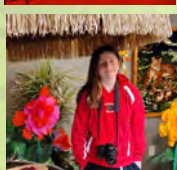
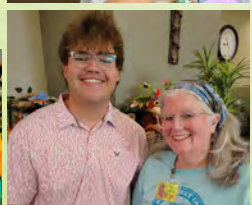
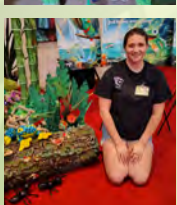
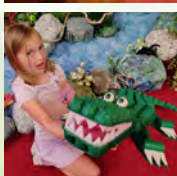


DAY 1

We met our first "Rainforest Buddy," **Tango**—a BEAUTIFUL Quetzal bird with a colorful, long feathers. Tango reminds us of God's lavish, abundant, and wildly clever creativity. **God is our Creator. WOW, God!**



Our week also began with a visit from a very special (live) parrot, named **Pollicie!** (pronounced **Paullie**) **Parrots** are known for repeating words over and over. And in a way, we're called to do something similar with God's love. When we hear about God's goodness, God's kindness, we don't just keep it to ourselves—we **repeat it through our actions!** We also kicked off our **Sssssnack Drive Challenge**—a week-long collection of individually wrapped snacks that will be donated to Casa Guadalupe in West Bend to support their summer youth programs. See page 7 for the results of the drive!





DAY 2

On Tuesday we met our second "Rainforest Buddy," **Seymour!** Glass frogs like Seymour have a see-through, translucent tummy! He reminds us that God knows what is inside us too, because **God knows everything.**
WOW, God!



DAY 3

Our third "Rainforest Buddy" is an Ocelot named **Dottie**. Dottie likes to curl up in safe, cozy spaces on the rainforest floor. When we need comfort and rest, Dottie reminds us that **God is our safe place.**
WOW, God!





DAY 4

Tia, the anteater was our fourth "Rainforest Buddy." When she is not busy gobbling up ants, Tia loves caring for her precious pups! Tia's warm, loving care reminds us that **God is love. WOW, God!**

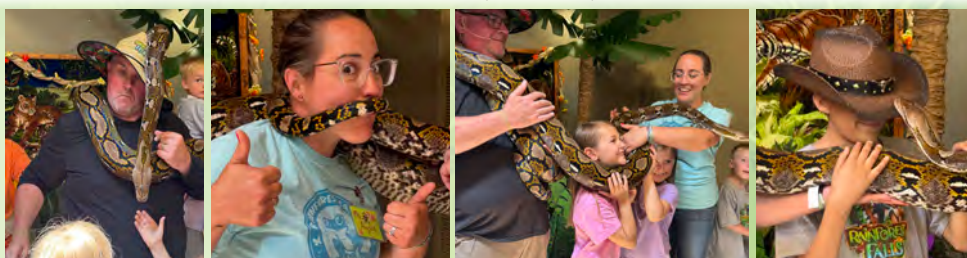
DAY 5

Our fifth "Rainforest Buddy" is a howler monkey named **Howie**. His howl can be heard up to 3 miles away. Even though his howl seems to go on forever, Howie reminds us that only **God is forever. WOW, God!**

Sssssnack Drive Challenge RESULTS

Pastor Jim from Our Saviors did collect the MOST snacks, *but*, because the grand total of the week-long collection came to **2,454 individually wrapped snacks** all for Casa Guadalupe Multicultural Center's summer youth programs—Pastor Jim decided to **SHARE** the honors of being the winner with Alyssa (even though she thought they should stick to the original plan)! PJ and Alyssa held 'Cheeseball'—the 16-foot Python—together! After-all, sharing with others is how we spread God's love. **WELL DONE, Our Saviors & Trinity!**

Cheeseball was a hit with all the kids—they lined up to meet her after the VBS Closing—and Isaiah's "hat" was a hit for Cheeseball! Turns out she really was a very sweet creation! **WOW, God!**





Trinity's **FAMILY PROMISE**
MEAL WEEK
will be
JULY 27-AUG 2

Watch for more details and a SignUP Genius invitation as we get closer to our week.

FOOD PANTRY
ITEM OF THE MONTH



PEANUT BUTTER
AND/OR

PEANUT BUTTER
ALTERNATIVES



MONDAY | JULY 27
6:30 PM

A **SAFE PLACE** *to share* offers us time to share our concerns about the world. *It is not a place for answers, but a place to share and encourage one another as we try to live our Christian commitment in a world that often seems to be very un-Christian.* It is a **SAFE PLACE** because we gather not to condemn or berate, or even to convince—but to listen with respect, share in vulnerability, and support one another.

ALL ARE WELCOME — join us!

CHRISTMAS
in **JULY**



HOLIDAY HOPE FLEECE
NO-SEW BLANKET
PROJECT

Trinity's no-sew fleece blanket project for the WBHS Holiday Hope Project is back! The students who receive the Christmas Holiday Hope gift bags really do glow when they wrap themselves in their new blankets

We provide the fleece and written instructions; you provide the love and labor! A great outreach project —and all of July to complete!

ELF ALERT! | Thanks to the Trinity Comforters who have matched and cut the fleece blankets to size, ready for you to tie! Sign up for fleece kits on SignUP Genius and we will reserve kits for you to pick up at your convenience beginning July 1. This is a great family project, so feel free to sign up to make more than one kit.

ELF ALERT! | Sign up **NOW** to reserve fleece kits in the Heritage Room or via SignUP Genius ... **kits available while supplies last!**

We ask that you return the completed blankets by Sunday August 2—thank you!

REMEMBER
KAORI

Kaori Rosalina Ramos Benito lives in Huascar-B (Peru) with her family and she is Trinity's Compassion International Sponsored child. Your monetary support makes a difference for Kaori and her family.



Scan the QR code to donate now.

Thank you
for your support.



Trinity
Comforters

THE TRINITY COMFORTERS

gather on Thursday afternoons at 1 PM to create blankets of comfort that are distributed in and outside our community. Each blanket is made by layering three sheets.

DONATIONS of Flat cotton sheets -any size- are appreciated!

You do not need to sew in order to help make the blankets! We are a fun group, sharing stories, prayers, and humor all while creating a blanket that will make a difference in someone's life.

Come, check us out and share some comfort and joy!

Citizen Advocates
est. 1978

BINGO

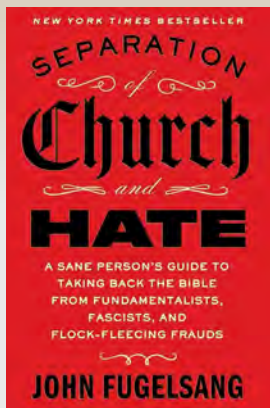
JULY 13

FREE & FUN BINGO with PRIZES!

MONDAY AFTERNOON
JULY 13th, 2026
3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

TRINITY LUTHERAN
Corner of 7th & Elm St
USE ALLEY ENTRANCE

This event is open to the public—all ages and abilities are encouraged to attend!



BOOK STUDY & DISCUSSION

Start reading now, and **SAVE THURSDAY, AUGUST 6th** for review and discussion

Separation of Church and Hate by comedian and broadcaster John Fugelsang is an acclaimed, humorous, and deeply researched book that critiques how the far-right has weaponized Christianity. It arms readers with scriptural context to reclaim their faith from Christian nationalism and meanness.

A Sane Person's Guide to Taking Back the Bible from Fundamentalists, Fascists, and Flock-Fleeing Frauds

Patio THURSDAYS

COMMUNITY BUILDING NIGHT

BEGINNING JULY 9 | 6:30 PM

WEATHER DEPENDENT

COUPLES. SINGLES. FAMILIES.

Our 7th Avenue patio area offers a place for us to gather outdoors over the summer months for casual conversation -and- take in the sounds from Music on Main at the same time. This is not a hosted event, there is no agenda.

Play area for kids—parents are responsible for supervision.

BYO BEVERAGES, SNACKS, CHAIRS

QUESTIONS:

swalker@trinitywestbend.com

Sensational Summer Salads

COMMUNITY BUILDING NIGHT

TUESDAY, JULY 14 | 6 PM

Do you like fresh summer salads?

Join us in the Heritage Room on Tuesday, July 14th at 6pm—**bring your favorite fresh made summer salad, (along with your recipe) to share with fellow summer salad foodies! :)**

Casual evening of salad tasting, recipe sharing, conversation, and community.

Sign up in the Heritage Room or on SignUP Genius.



QUESTIONS:

swalker@trinitywestbend.com

WISHING YOU Birthday BLESSINGS

ON THE DAY YOU WERE BORN, GOD DANCED, ANGELS SANG AND THE STARS ALIGNED. WE HOPE THAT YOUR BIRTHDAY WILL BE A HAPPY CELEBRATION FILLED WITH BLESSINGS.

Caitlin Kemmett	7 01
Emerson Ketter	7 01
Deborah Brooks	7 02
Lee Taylor	7 03
Dorothy Barnes	7 06
Edward Bauer	7 06
Alexander Davis	7 06
Dakota Gunnare	7 06
Sandy Poenitsch	7 06
Lincoln Butzler	7 07
Arik Loomans	7 07
Michael Loomans	7 07
CarlEda Skinkis	7 08
Cyndee Bruder	7 10
Amaya Del Campo	7 10
Darwin Dorn	7 10
A.J. Brandt	7 11
Sandy Moore	7 11
Cynthia Vore	7 12
Eduardo Del Campo	7 13
Brenda Deuberry	7 15
Michael York Jr	7 15
Theo Gutschenritter	7 17
Elle Doerr	7 18
Emma Parchim	7 18
Ardi Bergerud	7 20
Carter Sobush	7 20
Shaun Brown	7 21
Finn Pawlowski	7 21
Sandy Roberts	7 22
Mary Schweiger	7 22
Sheilam Foyse	7 24
Sherry Oleniczak	7 26
Kayli Mildbrandt	7 27
Diane Wagner	7 27
Evelyn Carlson	7 29
Nathan O'Shea	7 29
Wendy Reitz	7 29
Lisa Streekstra	7 29
Jerome Zaborowski	7 30
Carey Jacobsen	7 31



DINNER OUT NIGHTS RETURNING

THANKS TO CARRIE PIERCE!

Join a small group of adults for an evening out at a local restaurant. Enjoy good food, friendly conversation, and the chance to connect with others in a relaxed social setting. Whether you're looking to meet new people or simply enjoy a meal with friends, this outing offers a fun and welcoming opportunity to dine together and explore local dining options. Participants pay for their own food and beverages.

WATCH FOR MORE INFO COMING SOON

Contact Carrie Pierce, or Sue in the Office

COMING SOON!

the boys are back in town!

härmonē

SINGS A6AIN | 2026 BENEFIT CONCERT

save the date | 9.27.26

JULY 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2 COMFORTERS 1 PM	3 OFFICE CLOSED	4 Independence Day 1776-2026
	MUSIC THERAPY 1:30 PM	7 PM NA		7 PM NA		
5 9:00 CTP Worship 10:00 Coffee Hour 11:00 Liturgical Worship	6 MET 6:30 PM	7	8 MET SURVEY BEGINS	9 COMFORTERS 1 PM BATIO THURSDAYS	10 OFFICE CLOSED	11
	MUSIC THERAPY 1:30 PM	7 PM NA		7 PM NA		
12 9:00 CTP Worship 10:00 Coffee Hour 11:00 Liturgical Worship	13 BINGO 3:30 PM	14 Summer Salads 6PM	15	16 COMFORTERS 1 PM BATIO THURSDAYS COUNCIL 7 PM	17 OFFICE CLOSED	18 SENIOR HIGH SUMMER YOUTHWORKS SR HIGH SUMMER TRIP
	MUSIC THERAPY 1:30 PM	7 PM NA		7 PM NA		
19 MET SURVEY CONCLUDES	20 MET 6:30 PM	21	22	23 COMFORTERS 1 PM BATIO THURSDAYS	24 OFFICE CLOSED	25
9:00 CTP Worship 10:00 Coffee Hour 11:00 Liturgical Worship						
SR HIGH SUMMER TRIP	SR HIGH SUMMER TRIP	SR HIGH SUMMER TRIP	SR HIGH SUMMER TRIP	SR HIGH SUMMER TRIP	SR HIGH SUMMER TRIP	SR HIGH SUMMER TRIP
26 9:00 CTP Worship 10:00 Coffee Hour 11:00 Liturgical Worship	27 Family Promise A SAFE PLACE 6:30 PM	28 Family Promise TRINITY WEEK	29 Family Promise TRINITY WEEK	30 COMFORTERS 1 PM BATIO THURSDAYS	31 Family Promise TRINITY WEEK	
	MUSIC THERAPY 1:30 PM	7 PM NA				

Trinity | Contact Information

Trinity Lutheran Church | ELCA | Reconciling in Christ | 140 N. 7TH AVE | WEST BEND, WI 53095
262-334-2125 | trinity@trinitywestbend.com | trinitywestbend.com



Interim Pastor Robb Kosky | pastorrkosky@gmail.com

SUMMER OFFICE HOURS | MON - THURS.....8:00 AM - 3:30 PM
FRIDAYS OFFICE CLOSED

Sue Walker.....Parish Coordinator
swalker@trinitywestbend.com | 262-334-2125

Alyssa Brockman.....Children's Ministry Coordinator
trinitywestbendcm@gmail.com | 262-343-5557

Heather Peters.....Music Ministry Coordinator
peters.heatherj@gmail.com | 262-305-7338

Sandy Poenitsch.....Communication Coordinator
spoenitsch@trinitywestbend.com | 262-388-1616

Karen Sparks.....Financial Clerk
ksparks@trinitywestbend.com

Phil Wagner.....Facilities Manager
farmerwagner673@gmail.com | 262-355-5332

Congregation Council Members

Cheryl Scaffidi, PRESIDENT.....WORSHIP & MUSIC
Amy Kreutzer, VP.....FAITH DEVELOPMENT
Greg McMahon, TREASURER.....FINANCE
Dustin Flunker, SECRETARY.....MINISTRY SUPPORT
Mike Kappler.....PROPERTY, TECHNOLOGY
James Winkler.....STEWARDSHIP
Danielle Passwater.....FINANCE
Melissa Parchim.....COMMUNITY BUILDING
Nick Laatsch.....PROPERTY
Linda George.....COMMUNITY BUILDING
Tom Bulin.....PROPERTY
Lexi George | YOUTH REP.....OUTREACH