



# TRINITY TIMES

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## ***Bread for the Journey: A Journey of Transitions***

Shortly after coming on board in February of this year as Bishop Provisional of Eastern and Western Michigan, Rt. Rev. Prince Singh preached a sermon unofficially entitled “Transitions ‘R Us” that reminded us of the need for the church and the people of faith to adapt to change and move forward in faith.

The pandemics of disease and division have caused many people, groups, and institutions to reassess priorities and make changes for the future, resulting in the need for adaptation on the part of the individuals as well as the culture and society of which they are a part.

The scriptures tell of people in relationship with God and one another challenged by the transitions needed to transform them into the people of God. From the story of the fall in the Garden of Eden on,

people had to adapt to new ways of life:

Abraham and Sarah moved to a new land.

The Hebrew people left captivity in Egypt, wandered in the wilderness, and moved into the promised land.

The disciples left their homes and jobs to follow Jesus.

The early church leaders moved about to spread the good news of God’s love in Christ and found themselves adapting to new places, environments and peoples.

One common denominator of the accounts of transition in scripture and in our time is the ability

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*Father Bill McClure*

### Trinity in transition, too:

## **Father Bill and Deb McClure leaving July 31**

It was sad and sudden news in the Trinity Episcopal Church family when the Very Rev. Bill McClure (“Father Bill”) at the end of May announced his retirement effective July 31.

Trinity loses not only its priest of more than seven years but also its pianist and director of music Deb McClure, who will re-

turn with her husband to the couple’s home in Cheboygan once they complete the move from the rectory in mid-August.

Father Bill and Deb will be feted at a 2-4 p.m. farewell reception at the church July 23.

We dedicate this edition of Trinity Times to them and their service, and use this space to outline next steps for our parish.

## McClures leave Trinity with a solid foundation

“There is a lot here to celebrate,” retiring Father Bill McClure says, glancing around Trinity Episcopal parish hall. “There is a steadfastness here, a way of prayer and study, of outreach and community service that endures. The foundational mission and ministry is strong.”

At a time when pandemic-fueled social and political upheaval across the nation is upending rules and undermining Christianity’s “love-thy-neighbor” values, that’s saying a lot. But even Trinity has cracks in the plaster, among them a continuing annual deficit that this year could reach \$50,000.

At least in part to temper that deficit, the Very Rev. William J. McClure and wife Deborah Lawrence McClure have elected to retire effective July 31, saving Trinity five months of both a full-time rector’s salary and Deb’s music director’s wage. That sacrifice won’t cover the whole deficit – and the parish will face new expenses for substitute priests and musicians – but will impact in a larger sense the parish family: we lose Trinity’s well-regarded rector, its lovely sacred music program, and an ordained minister’s spiritual leadership.

In their seven-and-a-half years with the parish, Father Bill and Deb have been principled, devout, ardent servants of God. Always within reach, they’ve worked hard to preserve and build on Trinity’s many ministries which, through the grace of God, endure despite the pandemic and the fact that each year, as in most

rural parishes, there are fewer hands to help and the remaining hands are ever older.

Father Bill, along with Deacon Dr. Dan Maxwell, has been a support for those ministries, doing whatever possible to keep them going while churches all around shrink and lose clergy. Trinity maintains:

- Christian worship conducted three times a week, at noon Wednesday and 8 and 10 a.m. Sundays;
- Weekly Prayer Group and Bible Study;
- The Sunday Supper program that feeds as many as 120 hungry people every Sunday night;
- The children’s Worship Center Sunday program;
- The community food pantry, fed by donations from parishioners, the Post Office, and Ella White School.
- Episcopal Women’s Christmas outreach to our neighbors at the Women’s Shelter;
- Innovative adaptations to worship occasioned by the pandemic, including a broadcasting program airing Trinity church services on its webpage;
- Participation in several community drives for the needy, including Thanksgiving baskets and the recent garage sale for Ukrainian refugees that netted \$20,000;
- Scholarships for Camp Chickagami;
- And special programs including the Victorian Tea and Chocolate Extravaganza, both on hiatus during the pandemic but perhaps returning. (A newly-created youth program, “Messy Church,” was just gaining steam when the pandemic hit.)

Add to that Deb’s outstanding work with the

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*The Very Rev. William and Deborah McClure*

# Time of Transitions

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easy to get discouraged, anxious, and afraid in times of change, but faith in the new possibilities that God will bring before us can give us hope, guidance and strength to persevere.



We can be mindful of the good and wondrous works God has done in the past, especially in Christ Jesus, in order to have a heightened perception of the new pathways God opens up to us.

The church has endured many hardships over time as people

have kept the faith and passed along the mantles of leadership and responsibilities, not just that of designated leaders, but also of the call for us all to be disciples making disciples. In one Eucharistic prayer, we pray for God to “send us out to do the work you have given us to do,” and that is a commission and mission without end.

If we keep our eye on the prize that is the fullness of life lived in rightness with God and the way of God’s love in Christ, we can, even in times that are uncertain and unprecedented, move forward in faith to embrace the new thing that God is doing in our life, our communities, our church, and in our world; as we “go in peace to love and serve the Lord.” Thanks be to God. --FATHER BILL

## McClures leave Trinity

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music program, expanding it to include local musicians, notably professional flutist Mary Ann Hubbard; a choir now back to the 10:30 Sunday service after a pandemic pause; and concerts brought to Trinity in cooperation with other churches. Deb also has worked on grants to help underwrite the cost of Sunday Supper and performs a thousand unheralded non-musical chores like helping with after-church coffee hours.

Deb’s collaborative efforts introduce a measure of musical diversity, most recently with the performance of Cantor Nina Fine in cooperation with our Jewish neighbors at Temple Beth-El; annually with the performance of the Flint Gospel Choir; and occasionally with guest artists and parishioners such as Carole Cadarette and Ted Rockwell, who bring their unique musical gifts to Trinity, the “Village Church with a Voice.”

Trinity Church, in short, has a lot going on, even in these difficult times, offered with love for our neighbors and led through the spiritual leadership of

Father Bill, who says “There’s a lot here to celebrate.”

As Trinity Church loses the guidance of its rector, the community loses, too; the McClures practice their own “love-thy-neighbor” outreach. Father Bill has been part of the Peace Coalition, the Martin Luther King Jr. Committee, Habitat for Humanity, a Lenten series ecumenical collaboration, and Besser Chorus. Deb has joined several community drives for the needy and works for Thunder Bay Arts Council.

In retirement, the McClures will return to their Cheboygan home, where Father Bill could help fill the great need for part-time clergy or perhaps answer God in another way. Deb will continue to employ her musical gifts.

We reluctantly bid this faithful, gifted couple farewell, thanking Father Bill and Deb for their sacrifice in shoring up Trinity’s foundational mission of worship and service; it can’t have been easy, but you have served us well. We wish you Godspeed.

***Trinity will host a church-and-community  
“thank you” reception  
honoring Father Bill and Deb  
Saturday, July 23, 2-4 p.m., Fellowship Hall***

# What's next for Trinity Church?

As Father Bill McClure retires, it will be up to Trinity's people, as he so often admonished, to "keep the faith."

That means extra work on many shoulders and through the Eastern Michigan Episcopal Diocese, a prescribed set of steps moving forward.

According to Trinity Senior Warden Ellen Eagan, working with Canon of the Ordinary (bishop's assistant) Tracy Little, the church may not search for a priestly successor to Father Bill until he has completed his tenure and the church has done a "self study," which will likely occur in September.

Between July 31, Father Bill's final Sunday in the pulpit, and the end of the self-study in September, Deacon Dan Maxwell and Administrative Assistant Peggy Tomaszewski will do most of the administrative duties and preparation for Sunday worship.

Peggy, experienced at running church offices when churches are between clergy, will be the administrative center. "This office will be the hub," Peggy says. "Anyone with questions about almost anything related to Trinity will call here. I've done this before at Trinity after Father Bruce Michaud retired and also at Grace Lutheran, so I know how it goes."

Peggy will contact a small pool of "supply priests" week-to-week to fill the pulpit and offer Eucharist. On Sundays when no supply priest is available, Deacon Maxwell will conduct morning prayer and in the absence of the deacon, one of three parish "worship leaders" will be trained to lead the congregation in morning prayer.

**Fortunately, former Trinity Rector Father Bruce Michaud has agreed to conduct the Wednesday noon service and offer the Eucharist weekly through December.**

In terms of music, pianists are even harder to find



Dan Maxwell  
Deacon



Peggy Tomaszewski  
Admin. Asst.



Ellen Eagan  
Senior Warden

than clergy, and though Sonya Titus is in discussion to secure a musician, nothing is set at this writing. Parishioner Ted Rockwell, who is not a pianist, is available to play the organ.

Given the current state of finances, Trinity may not be able

to afford a full-time rector or a music director.

"Coming out of the pandemic, there is no going back," Ellen says. "This is our new normal. (In the self study) we need a new vision of how we can continue to be the church in a rapidly-changing world, with plenty of opportunity among those in the pews to take on more ownership.

"It boils down to this: We have to decide who we are as a church."

## *In memory...*



Since the April 2022 newsletter, we have learned of the passing of three current or former members of our parish. We offer our loving support and condolences to families of:

**Gary Hartman**, 85, an active member of Trinity who passed in Alpena June 23, 2022. Survivors include sons Kevin and Karl; daughter Kathy; their children and grandchildren; Gary's brother Dale; and sister Sally.

**Deborah Lincoln O'Dell**, age 90, a longstanding member of Trinity who died in Spokane, WA on May 11, 2022. She is survived by daughters Winifred, Catherine, and Molly; six grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

**Grace Fletcher Gordon**, 94, a former Trinity member who died in Bloomfield Hills, MI on Feb. 23, 2022. Survivors include her husband Clayton; children Peter and Susan; six grandchildren; three great-grandchildren; and sister Mariette.