



# Trinity

Episcopal Church of Excelsior







Trinity Episcopal Church, Excelsior, MN invites interested candidates to apply for a full-time Priest-in-Charge with hopeful intent to extend into a Rector position.

Our historic church can be found in the heart of Excelsior, a small suburb about 20 miles west of Minneapolis, Minnesota along the shores of Lake Minnetonka. Our congregation is healthy and vibrant. We are deeply committed to the journey of living our lives as faithful disciples of Jesus. We are a medium-sized, mainly white, affluent congregation with a politically diverse congregation, populated by people of all ages. We put much care into living as an open, welcoming community, led by our strong and engaged Vestry of ten members. Our staff includes: a Minister of Children, Youth and Families, a Director of Music, and to keep us organized and in support of effective communication, we have a parish administrator.

### **Priest leadership we seek:**

The people of Trinity Episcopal Church work in partnership to use the gifts God has given us in the many ministries of the Gospel, to further our discipleship, faithful innovation, and justice advocacy. We seek a Priest-in-Charge (PIC) who will lead and serve to strengthen, enliven, and grow our community as our pastor, priest, and teacher. After much reflection, prayer, and deep conversation, Trinity has discerned that our PIC should have the following qualities:

### **Strong and Inspiring Preaching**

As a top priority, we seek an individual with the experience and ability to illuminate the scripture in a manner that addresses the issues, concerns, hopes, and fears our members face in their lives. Theological richness in sermons and meaningful experience in worship should connect us to our Christian path in a manner that helps, challenges, and inspires us to “Be the Church” in our daily lives and relationships.

### **Pastoral Skill**

The people of Trinity are looking for someone who is caring and attentive to our individual lives and willing to be present in times of great joy or sadness. Our PIC will be observant to needs, provide spiritual guidance, or connect us to those who can help.

### **Present, Energetic, and Engaged**

As an active community with numerous ministries and small groups, we seek a PIC who will work alongside us as we create new and engaging ways to connect with one another and the community at large. Our PIC will bring fresh vitality to the ways in which we share our spiritual journey together. Beyond our walls, our PIC will be actively supportive of the many good works happening within our community.

### **Experience Navigating a Congregation of Diverse Viewpoints**

We are a politically diverse “Purple” congregation, and we value this aspect of our congregation. We seek a PIC who can lead the way in navigating us through a changing world

that challenges our hearts and minds, while maintaining a commitment to be a loving, inclusive, and welcoming community.

### **Committed to and Invested in Children and Youth**

The people of Trinity have invested deeply in our children and youth. They are present within the community, whether playing on the children's carpet during services, serving as acolytes, holding a youth-led service project, or simply playing together in the halls during coffee hour! We seek a PIC who will continue to uplift this active ministry and be a resource of inspiration and support to our Minister of Children, Youth and Families.

### **Collaborative Leadership**

As a medium-sized parish, we seek a PIC who has strong administrative abilities and is a skilled collaborator who will work with and support our small staff. Our PIC should be creative and have the ability to maximize our parish resources and engage our lay peoples to assist and lead where necessary. The PIC should be a good listener who can discern what meets the needs of the parish, staff, and vestry.

### **Invested in Outreach**

We seek a PIC who is excited about engaging with the larger community in Excelsior and beyond and will work alongside parishioners to fight for justice and equality. In addition, Trinity has an underutilized building, a resource that we hope our PIC will envision with us as to how we might use it to invite the community inside our walls. While our parishioners have vision and great ideas, we are in search of someone to guide us and support our ministries, working with us as we see them to fruition.

To learn more about Trinity, please visit our [website](#) or [Facebook](#) page to learn more. Our [annual report](#) also highlights our vibrant ministries and members.

Trinity offers a package with a competitive salary, benefits, and negotiable moving stipend. To apply for this position, please send a cover letter articulating your sense of call and fit for the position, along with your resume and Office for Transition Ministry Portfolio by Wednesday May 31, 2023, posting to:

Canon Karen Olson  
Missioner for Ministry  
Karen.o@episcopalmn.org (electronic delivery preferred)  
Episcopal Church in Minnesota  
1101 West Broadway, 2nd Floor  
Minneapolis, MN 55411  
612-870-3312



# Trinity

Episcopal Church of Excelsior

## ***TIMELINE***



Original church built in 1855



Trinity church present day

**1853.** Services held in member homes.

**1855.** Church built on the shores of St. Alban's Bay, Lake Minnetonka.

**May 11, 1858.** Minnesota becomes a state.

**1864.** The church (presently the chapel) built, at cost of \$1,500.

**May 6, 1864.** Bishop Whipple consecrates the chapel where it resides on Third Street, just off Main Street and across from old Excelsior Village Hall.

**1907.** Trinity moved to present location at 322 Second Street.

**1926.** Parish Hall added.

**1933.** Trinity chapel is designated a National Historic monument by Congressional Act (because it was made of native materials).

**1938.** Rectory built.

**1940.** Trinity becomes an independent parish and full member of the Episcopal Diocese of Minnesota.

**1949.** Addition of transepts, chancel and classrooms to the Chapel, as well as new pews and an altar.

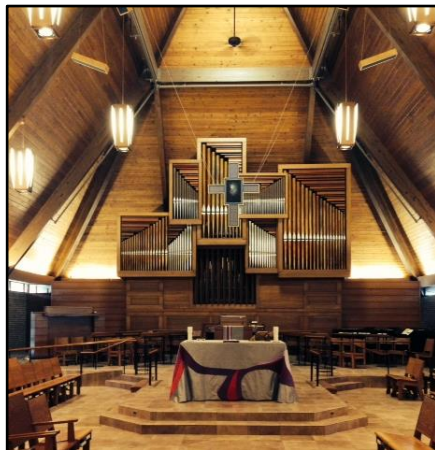
**1953.** Trinity's Centennial Celebration.

**1956.** Sunday School wing (now the offices) added.

**1970.** New and larger Sanctuary is consecrated. Trinity's historic Chapel remains the only original church building in Excelsior, and the oldest Episcopal Church in Minnesota still in use.

**1978.** 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.

**1998.** A large portion of Trinity's existing building was demolished and rebuilt. A new Parish Hall, named Chamberlain Hall after Trinity's founding priest, replaced the 1926 parish hall. A new kitchen, library, office spaces, vesting area, elevator, and atrium area were included in the remodel, as well as office spaces on the lower level of parish hall with access from Center Street, and new landscaping, walks and entrances.



Sanctuary present day



Old chapel worship space today

**2006-2007.** Narthex, then the main sanctuary areas remodeled and refurnished, including a new baptismal font and altar.

2011. New Hendrickson pipe organ arrives, finishing Trinity's sanctuary redesign.



Organ

2016. Renovation of Fireside Room, renamed the Horton French Room.

2022. Trinity replaces its storm-damaged roof and upgrades plumbing in bathrooms.

## City of Excelsior and Lake Minnetonka Area



Port of Excelsior 1 block from Trinity Church



City of Excelsior along Lake Minnetonka

## Trinity Visioning 2020

Submitted to the Annual Meeting for presentation by the Trinity Visioning Committee  
February 18, 2020

### Background/Summary

God has a Future, and that Future Includes the Church. For decades, religious institutions have experienced seismic changes in membership, participation, and theology. Unwelcome changes have affected almost all Christian denominations in the western world, including the Episcopal Church: aging membership struggling to regenerate itself, physical spaces in need of maintenance, and fewer people prioritizing a home congregation in their philanthropy. Trinity Excelsior is not immune to these shifting, changing, and uncharted realities of modern-day Christendom.

It is also true that God is as alive and well as ever, and the world needs the saving, compassionate, loving message of Jesus Christ as never before. The church as an institution may be struggling with change, but God continues to move and minister, heal and transform, create and offer salvation every minute, all around us. Over ten thousand years ago, the prophet Isaiah preached change as evidence of God's presence and renewal to the people Israel, exiled in the strange land of Babylon:

*Do not remember the former things,  
or consider the things of old.  
I am about to do a new thing;  
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness  
and rivers in the desert.  
The wild animals will honor me,  
the jackals and the ostriches;  
for I give water in the wilderness,  
rivers in the desert,  
to give drink to my chosen people,  
the people whom I formed for myself  
so that they might declare my praise.*

As people of faith have been told for thousands of years, God is doing a new thing in our midst.

When we ask questions like "What is God up to?" and "What are the new things God is doing in our church and community?" rather than "How will we finance the new water heater?" things start to change. When we move focus from "church questions" to "God questions," we move from anxiety about the institution to reorienting our community to be about God. Our work and ministry should be about discerning what God is doing, and then joining God in that work.

How do we, as Trinitarians, get on board with what God is doing?

Instead of fighting to preserve an ideal of church that is slipping away, how do we fully embrace our future as disciples of Jesus? How do we realign our beloved church with what God is doing in our neighborhood, our city, and our world? How do we, as Trinity, give our unique gifts in faithful response to God's goodness and abundant grace?

### The Process

In January 2019, Trinity faced flagging attendance and a significant budget gap. As they prepared for the Annual Meeting, the Vestry saw that our current direction is unsustainable. They asked Trinity's Rector, to



organize a team of Trinitarians charged with discerning a fresh vision for Trinity Church aligned with the values deep within our faith community.

Modeled on the Listening Links project from 2014, we began by listening to parishioners, specifically asking about their values and vision for Trinity.

In summer 2019, approximately 40 trained listeners conducted one-to-one conversations with 110 parishioners. We asked every adult member of the congregation to participate in a one-to-one conversation, and over half accepted the invitation.

The listeners summarized their conversations in a database from which parishioner and seminarian Christy Stang, Trinity's 2019 summer intern, categorized and interpreted the data. She provided the Visioning Team with graphs, numerical analysis, thematic summaries, and key messages from the interviews.

The Visioning Team spent months reading, reviewing, and discussing the results and their implications for Trinity's future.

### **The Results**

The *values* expressed in the one-to-one conversations were consistent with values expressed in the 2014 Listening Links conversations. Community, faith formation/learning and worship remained priorities. Specifically, Trinitarians value deeply: 1) the relationships they have in community with each other, 2) the faith formation experiences they have together and, 3) their time together in worship.

Vision was more difficult to discern. What we heard was not a bold vision for a new direction, but a desire for "more" of what we currently do.

We ultimately identified four vision themes from the one-to-one conversations: 1) more members, especially young members, 2) more local outreach, 3) more inclusion of children and youth in the life of the community, and 4) more development of, and support for, lay leadership.

Using the insights around values and vision, the Visioning Team crafted a report organized around three basic concepts: 1) Who We Are, 2) What We Value, and 3) Where We're Going (our vision and strategic plan).

### **Next Steps**

The Visioning Team introduced our report at the Annual Meeting (January 26, 2020), and now hand it off to the Vestry ahead of their 2020 planning retreat. Our hope is that, beginning with the February 29 retreat, the Vestry will hone, edit, improve, and begin to operationalize the plan. We also ask the Vestry to host an all-parish meeting in May 2020, inviting all Trinity members to offer their guidance and wisdom on the vision and strategic plan.

The work of the 2019 Visioning Team is intended as the culmination of several years of work and intention by the Trinity staff, Vestry, and other Trinity ministers and leaders. The congregation began imagining the future of our faith community with the first Listening Links five years ago, and since then the process has grown and been enriched at Vestry retreats and meetings, from the pulpit, in our faith formation offerings, in worship, and through the intentional strengthening of relationships with each other. It is the Visioning Team's hope that this emerging vision will assist Trinity to be ever more faithful in moving toward where we are uniquely called by God and as a full participant in the "new thing" God is doing in and around us. Just as the Trinity we know and share today is the result of work and faithfulness of disciples who came before, it is the Visioning Team's hope that the Trinity we will share tomorrow will spring forth from the contributions, creativity, ingenuity, passion, and hope that this new work offers.



Finally, we understand that innovation isn't about adding new things, but about rethinking and renewing what we already do at Trinity.

We started by identifying what Trinity already does well. These ministries are clearly articulated in the "Who We Are" and "What We Value" sections of this report. Next, we moved to how we can improve what we do (called "technical fixes"). Many of these ideas are included in the "Where We are Going" section of this report.

These first two steps are just the beginning, and we hope they lead us to a third, more challenging part: **adaptive change**. Adaptive change is a mental shift toward what we haven't yet imagined. We change the very questions we are asking ourselves from "How do we fix this problem?" to "How can we try something new?"

Moving from technical fixes to adaptive change requires a culture shift in which the church, as a community, becomes open to experimentation, and, as we say on Sunday morning, "risking something big for something good." In this way, the community of faith evolves into a learning organization. We grow together, over time, in our capacity to listen to each other and God. We are willing to try new things and to fail for the sake of learning. The spiritual vision for Trinity, in the "Where We're Going" section, includes both technical fixes (enhancing what we already do well), and components for opening our parish community to adaptive change.

## Who We Are

Trinity is a mid-sized Episcopal congregation - big enough to offer programs and opportunities for all ages, yet small enough that parishioners may have personal, supportive, and meaningful relationships with our clergy, staff, and each other.

We are located in the historic village of Excelsior and reflect the surrounding community in age, income, theology, social class, education, life circumstances, and political perspectives. We embrace our differences and consider them to be the heart of what makes our faith community strong and vibrant. Living as a follower (or disciple) of Jesus involves patience, persistence, endurance, openness, and courage – and we support our fellow travelers on this journey.

As a community of disciples, we work to discover what following Jesus and being faithful to God look like over a lifetime. We aspire to practice the kind of Christianity that is open, deep-thinking, inquisitive, worshipful, inclusive, non-judgmental, and celebratory. We locate our spiritual lives in the midst of church community, growing our faith through lifelong learning and relationships. To Trinity we bring our questions, struggles, doubts, and challenges, and we try, as a community, to welcome all who come through our doors without distinction. We worship together, every week, by celebrating the Eucharist (sometimes called "Holy Communion" or "the Last or the Lord's Supper"), praying for the needs of the world, and listening to, and meditating on, holy scripture. We mark life's passages and transitions together as we raise our children, suffer our losses and heartaches, take care of each other, celebrate, laugh, mature, deepen, and try our best to walk the Way of Love that is God in our midst.

Our worship is rooted in Anglican tradition, with a reverence for the beauty of music and liturgy that connects us to generations before. We value the richness of expression in traditional worship while making space for new ideas and contemplative practices. Thought-provoking, challenging preaching brings Scripture into our daily lives, unpacking complex theological ideas and illuminating their relevance to today's world.

We distinguish ourselves from those who interpret Christianity as close-minded, controlling, guilt-centered, patriarchal, or exclusive.

We seek a deepening relationship with God and our neighbors: seeking God's will in scripture and prayer, bringing Christ's love to the world in our daily lives, serving those among us who are in need, and seeking justice for those who live in fear and oppression.

### **What We Value**

What we value as a faith community, as followers of Jesus, as brothers and sisters in Christ:

#### **Community**

Trinitarians value Christian community, a sense of belonging and being known in a place where we may give and receive hospitality, kindness, acceptance, and friendship.

We value diversity, and united in that trust we mark together life's celebrations, challenges, and transitions as we grow into our faith.

We value being in relationship with each other across the generations, and the nurturing and support of children and youth in their faith.

#### **Worship**

Trinitarians value the sharing of weekly celebration of the Eucharist, of worshipping God in the Episcopal liturgy.

We value the traditional Book of Common Prayer, which anchors us to our spiritual forebears, to tradition, and to our rich history.

At the same time, we value worship that grows and changes with the world. We value liturgy and preaching that help us unpack and understand ancient scripture, perhaps in unexpected ways, in order to apply those lessons to our everyday lives.

We celebrate music, both familiar and new, as an integral part of the worship of God, in our choirs, in instrumental offerings, and in our joining together in song during worship.

#### **Learning**

Trinitarians value learning that engages both the head and the heart, continues through every stage of life, and connects scripture and theology with the realities of our world and lives.

We value a faith formation that is ongoing, interactive, and respectful, shared in a community that respects all perspectives, and seeks to meet each person where they are in their evolving relationship with God, and discipleship of Jesus.

We value the kind of faith formation that is both specific to stages of life (childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, middle age, and elders) and also bridges the generations in building relationships and growing in faith.

### **Where We're Going**

Mission: Trinity Episcopal Church invites all people into a caring community that seeks a deeper relationship with God in Jesus through worship, learning, and service to each other and our neighbors.

Grow Christian Community

We will broaden and strengthen our relational fabric with each other and our surrounding community as a way to embody Jesus' commandment to "love one another as I have loved you."

- Widen and deepen opportunities for parishioners to meet, connect, establish/deepen friendships and meaningful relationships.
- Revitalize pastoral care delivery.
- Intentionally develop intergenerational relationships
- Thoughtfully minister to discerned needs of the surrounding community
- Expand the generous use of our building and grounds as a resource for the Excelsior community.
- Live into our loving, inclusive Christian practice by helping all parishioners to cultivate a personal faith story, deepen their ministry of listening, and learn the "art of the invite."
- Welcome and integrate newcomers fully into the life and ministry of the parish community.
- Mark and honor life passages as gifts from God to celebrate together.
- Connect and build relationships between members and with the wider community, and explore life in God virtually/on-line.

#### Deepen Worship

We will, together, offer meaningful spiritual experiences through worship, in which we intentionally and regularly set aside time to fully open ourselves to God-given grace, renewal, and transformation.

- Establish full and integrated participation of children and youth in leading worship.
- Expand the music participation by all members across the ages.
- Create the conditions for the establishment, or deepening, of a contemplative, spiritual practice by every member of the parish.
- Enhance the physical and aesthetic beauty of worship.
- Practice and share the bounty of God's love in public.

#### Intensify Learning & Christian Practice

We will grow together as a vibrant Christian community of disciples in head and heart through lifelong study, discipleship, and faith practices.

- Invest in state-of-the-art, dynamic, growing youth ministry and children's programs.
- Welcome the holy scriptures and our spiritual lives as dynamic participants in collaborative decision-making, discernment, and seeking God's will in matters of our common life.
- Cultivate as sacred work and ministry the raising of children to be thoughtful, ethical, spiritually grounded adults.
- Strengthen our Christian identity through the rhythm of enduring, patient learning, and critical thinking.
- Learn how our God-created social, economic, theological, and political diversity brings life, unity, and healing.
- Empower individuals to develop a sense of their own Christian discipleship and way of life.
- Advocate for justice and show up for our neighbors in Excelsior and nearby communities.

#### Ideas for Implementation

Each year for the next five years the Vestry and parish leadership will identify which areas the congregation will focus on and develop, leading from a posture of spiritual discernment, learning, faithfulness, experimentation, and risk-taking.

#### Realign Infrastructure

We will evaluate and restructure parish systems to help the congregation fully live into our vision and hope for the future.



- Evaluate and reorganize Trinity's personnel, staffing, and personnel manual to reflect stated parish values and vision
- Establish mission-focused budget and program planning that integrates annual and long-term (planned giving) stewardship
- Explore a parish-wide theology of money and financial giving (the spirituality of God's economy)
- Review and update Trinity by-laws
- Strategically expand Trinity's lay leadership capacity and structure through study, evaluation, and renovation and increase "on-ramps" to belonging
- Ensure our historic building remains for generations to come by addressing the tangible, physical and material needs of the building and its resources.

#### Cultivate Christian Community

- Pastoral Care: evaluate existing delivery systems, communication, and parish expectations; train and deploy lay leadership for both acute and chronic pastoral care needs; deepen mental health initiatives and widen awareness and community-wide engagement.
- Deepen intergenerational relationships through music (children and adult choir; young people in bell choir), fellowship (fun, parish-wide activities that engage all ages), program/learning (Prayer Buddies; confirmation mentors; sponsors), and worship (sacristans; worship leadership; "special" services)
- Build relationships with neighbors, community groups, surrounding schools, and local government through presence and listening, and from those relationships spiritually discern outreach initiatives and partnerships.
- Continue and intensify usage of "Invite. Welcome. Connect" resources for a three-part process of belonging to the Trinity community.
- Cultivate a parish-wide practice of evangelism (tell your story; listen to others' story; invite into a deeper relationship with God in Jesus)
- Listen and watch for what God is already doing in the neighborhood and surrounding community and join God there.
- Through listening & relationship discern potential for use of building by members of the community
- In modeling Christian practice, equip every parishioner to cultivate a personal faith story they are willing/able to share in their personal lives; spiritual autobiographies from the pulpit, during stewardship season, and in adult education.
- Honoring life passages could be in the midst of liturgy, as a stand-alone celebration, or a particular focus of funeral ministry as an opportunity to share what Christian community, at its best, looks like. (Be known as the church that proclaims the saving power of God through celebrations of life)
- Reimagine communications and the particular resource of social media and on-line meeting capabilities as a vehicle for building relationships and connectivity around commonalities (parenting; interests), as invitation to life at Trinity, and as pathways to connect with God, study the Bible, and pray; the goal is to build relationships and spiritual practice without having to be in the building.

#### Deepen Worship

- Draw on the richness and poetry of Anglican/Episcopal liturgical tradition and canon to enrich worship experience.
- Expand music participation: enhance variety of instrumental and choral expression, integrate the choir into the life of the congregation, cultivate congregational singing.
- Enhance visual and aesthetic beauty of worship: flowers, seasonal adornments, clerical and lay leader vestments, prayerful focal points.
- For public expression, develop special, or civic/community-focused worship opportunities (Minnetonka Bike Race blessing; Animal Blessing; Ashes to Go/Ash Wednesday; Blue Christmas; Recovery/Twelve Step Mass; healing services)

### Intensify Learning and Spiritual Practice

- Embrace our diversity through spiritual inquiry, listening and trust-building, and partnering with community groups to promote thoughtful, respectful political engagement and participation in our community.
- Offer significant youth and adult faith formation experiences focused on prayer practice, theological inquiry, and travel (e.g. Centering Prayer, Enneagram, travel to St. George's Jerusalem or Camino de Santiago)
- Discipleship through cultivating Rules of Life (like the Way of Love), regular Bible study, etc.
- Cultivate the significance of leadership in the congregation as spiritual leadership; start with the Vestry in learning skills of spiritual discernment, deep listening, silence and prayer, and engaging the scriptures for guidance and call.