

The Trinity Connection

Trinity Episcopal Church
124 N Mulanix St, Kirksville, MO 63501
Sunday Worship at 10:00 a.m.



*Celebrating the Seasons of
Advent, Christmas
& Epiphany*



We are an inclusive community of faith,
strengthened by joyful hearts and engaged minds.

A Legacy of Love and Service

Honoring The Rev. Carrol Davenport

Sunday, December 14 will be a day of celebration at Trinity as we gather to honor the ministry of the Rev. Carrol Davenport. Carrol has been a beloved presence in our community, and while we will miss her regular role among us, we send her and her family our heartfelt prayers and blessings as they step into the next chapter of their lives.

When Trinity faced the difficult decision in 2023 to move forward without a full-time priest, Carrol stepped in with grace and generosity, offering her ministry on a very part-time basis. Throughout 2024, she faithfully preached and officiated twice each month, while also nurturing a lay preaching team that led Morning Prayer on alternate Sundays. Her leadership extended beyond the pulpit: Carrol guided Trinity into compliance with the National Church's Safe Church Policy, and she devoted herself to pastoral care for young families. Together with the Rev. Erin Pickersgill, she began reimagining faith formation for children, ensuring that they were not only learning but also joyfully participating in the Sunday Eucharist. Carrol's ministry was marked by a deep commitment to safety, inclusion, and creativity, and her work laid a strong foundation for the future of children's formation at Trinity.

In 2024, Trinity welcomed The Rev. Maria Evans to the staff, and Carrol continued to guide both Safe Church practices and children's formation with her steady hand. Under her leadership, Trinity embraced a new vision of intergenerational formation, inviting children and their parents to learn and grow together in faith. This approach has already begun to shape a vibrant future for our community, and plans are in place to carry it forward after Carrol's retirement. With Kirstie Darby working alongside Maria, the seeds Carrol planted will continue to flourish, ensuring that children and families remain at the heart of Trinity's worship and learning.

Carrol shares:

"It has been an honor and a joy to serve Trinity, and even though I am retiring, I will still be present here after recovery from my surgery."

This celebration is not only a farewell to Carrol's formal ministry but also a heartfelt thank-you for her dedication, leadership, and love for Trinity. Please join us on December 14 to honor her service and to bless her journey ahead.



At Trinity on December 14
Christmas Pageant
Celebration of Carrol's Ministry
Bishop's Committee
Community Meal at 5 p.m.

Seasons of Change

Have you ever wondered why the colors in church change, or why certain prayers and readings appear when they do? The Episcopal Church follows a liturgical calendar — a sacred rhythm that orders our seasons of worship and shapes our spiritual life throughout the year. This calendar connects us to the story of Jesus and the life of the Church, guiding us from Advent's hopeful waiting to the celebration of Easter and beyond.

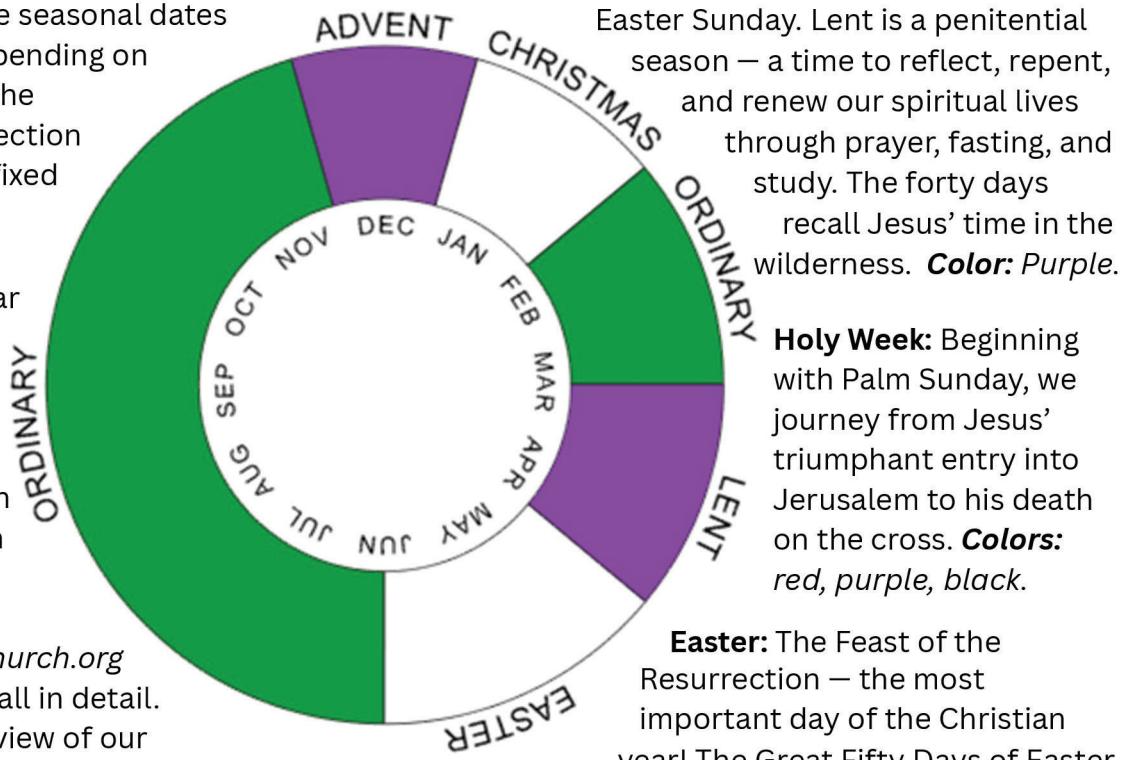
Our calendar orders the liturgical year of the Episcopal Church. The seasonal dates change each year, depending on the movable date of the Sunday of the Resurrection (Easter Day) and the fixed date of our Lord's Nativity (Christmas).

The liturgical calendar helps us understand the logic and rhythm behind what we do in worship. Our Book of Common Prayer (beginning on page 15) and the Episcopal Church website (episcopalchurch.org/calendar) explain it all in detail. Below is a brief overview of our seasons, major feast days, and their meanings:

Advent: Advent means “coming” — we await the coming of our Lord. This is the beginning of the liturgical year. The season lasts four weeks, ending with Christmas.

Color: Blue or purple.

Christmas: Celebrate the birth of Jesus! Christmas begins December 25 (not always a Sunday) and lasts twelve days, ending with Epiphany. **Color:** White.



Epiphany and the Season after Epiphany: The coming of the Magi is celebrated on the Feast of the Epiphany, always on January 6 — the “a-ha” moment when the Magi realize Jesus is the Messiah. The Baptism of our Lord follows on the first Sunday after Epiphany, and the season continues with stories of Jesus’ ministry. The length varies each year but never exceeds nine Sundays. **Color:** Green.

Lent: Begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts forty days (not counting Sundays), ending on Easter Sunday. Lent is a penitential season — a time to reflect, repent, and renew our spiritual lives through prayer, fasting, and study. The forty days recall Jesus’ time in the wilderness. **Color:** Purple.

Holy Week: Beginning with Palm Sunday, we journey from Jesus’ triumphant entry into Jerusalem to his death on the cross. **Colors:** red, purple, black.

Easter: The Feast of the Resurrection — the most important day of the Christian year! The Great Fifty Days of Easter include seven Sundays and culminate with the Feast of the Ascension. **Color:** White.

Pentecost: The day the disciples received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Often called the “birthday of the Church,” it marks the sending forth of the apostles to share God’s love with the world. **Color:** Red.

The Season after Pentecost (Ordinary Time): Begins with Trinity Sunday and continues through the remainder of the church year until Advent. During this long green season, we hear stories of Jesus’ life and teachings — lessons that inspire us to live out our faith daily. **Color:** Green.

Lighting the Way

The Advent Wreath



During the holy season of Advent, one of the most familiar and beloved symbols in our worship space is the Advent wreath. Its simple circle of evergreens and candles invites us to slow down, breathe deeply, and prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. The circle has no beginning and no end, reminding us of God's eternal love. The evergreens speak of hope and new life, even in the darkest days of winter.

The tradition of the Advent wreath began in the 19th century when a Lutheran pastor in Germany created a wreath to help children mark the days until Christmas. Since then, Christians around the world—at home and in church—have embraced this practice of lighting one candle for each Sunday of Advent.

The first candle, usually blue or purple and often called the Prophet's Candle, calls us to hold onto hope and to remember God's promises. The second candle, also blue or purple and sometimes named the Bethlehem Candle, points us toward the preparations made to receive Christ and the peace he brings. On Gaudete Sunday, the third candle, pink in color, is lit as a bright sign of joy in the midst of waiting, marking a shift toward the nearness of Christmas. The fourth candle, again blue or purple and known as the Angel's Candle, celebrates the love of God revealed to the world and the proclamation of "peace on earth."

On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, the wreath is completed as we light the white Christ Candle, rejoicing in the birth of Jesus—the Light of the World, who shines in every darkness. Whether in our homes or gathered together at Trinity, the Advent wreath invites us to pause, reflect, and draw near to Christ. May its light guide and bless us through this season of holy expectation.

A Prayer for Advent:

Loving God, as we light these candles, kindle in us your hope, peace, joy, and love. Prepare our hearts to welcome your Son, Jesus Christ, who brings light to the world. Amen.

'O come, O come Emmanuel'

Keeping the Season of Christmas

Christmas Services at Trinity
Christmas Eve, December 24, 2025
Festival Celebration of Christmas at 7 p.m.
Christmas Day, December 25, 2025
Christmas Eucharist at 10 a.m.



At Trinity, we often hear reminders that Christmas is not just a day—it is a season. In the Episcopal Church, the Christmas season begins on December 25 and continues for twelve joyful days until the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6. These days invite us not to rush past the mystery of Christ's birth, but to linger with it, allowing its light to settle into our hearts.

Christmas celebrates the wonder of the Incarnation: that God chose to come among us in Jesus, sharing our humanity so that we might share God's life. It is a season filled with images of light and hope, reminding us that God's presence shines even in the darkest places. The simple story of the manger teaches us that God meets us in humility and tenderness, often in the very places we least expect.

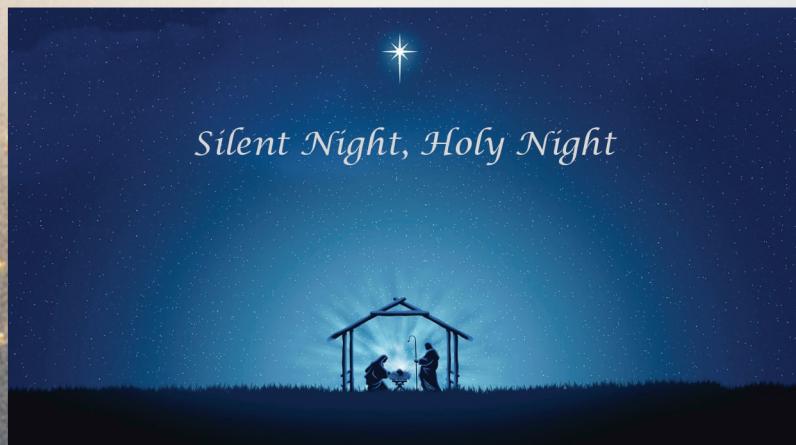
Throughout the Church, we keep these days with beauty and joy. Our worship on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day centers on the familiar readings: the angels' song of peace, the shepherds' wonder, and the powerful poetry of John's Gospel proclaiming that "the Word became flesh and lived among us." The altar is dressed in white and gold, and the music of the season finally rises—carols that have waited through Advent's quiet longing now fill the church with celebration.

Our greenery, candles, and lights remain through all twelve days as a sign that we are continuing to "keep Christmas" even as the world outside moves quickly on. Along the way, the season also includes several feast days—St. Stephen, St. John the Evangelist, the Holy Innocents, and the Holy Name of Jesus—each one inviting us to reflect on a different facet of God's love revealed in Christ.

As we move through these days together, may the story of Christ's birth remind us that God draws near, not only once in Bethlehem, but again and again in our daily lives. Christmas invites us to receive that nearness with gratitude, joy, and renewed hope for the year ahead.

A Prayer for the Christmas Season

Holy and gracious God, as we keep the days of Christmas, open our hearts to the light of your Son. Help us to receive the gift of your nearness with joy, and to carry your love into the world you came to save. May the peace of Christ be born anew in us, in our parish, and in all creation. Amen.



Following the Light: Epiphany

As the Christmas season draws to a close, the Church gives us one more moment of holy wonder: the Feast of Epiphany on January 6. While Christmas celebrates that Christ has come among us, Epiphany celebrates that His light is meant for the whole world. It's a feast that helps us lift our eyes, take a deep breath, and begin the new year by remembering the steady, loving light of God that still guides us today.

The Gospel tells us that visitors from far away—travelers we call the Magi—followed a star all the way to the child Jesus. They didn't know exactly where they were going. They didn't know what they would find. But they trusted the light in front of them, and they kept moving. Their story invites us to do the same. In a world full of distractions, Epiphany gently reminds us to pay attention to the signs of God's presence that shine in our own lives: a kind word, a moment of clarity, a small blessing we didn't expect.

Epiphany also marks the beginning of a new church season, the Season after Epiphany, filled with stories of Jesus being revealed—His baptism in the Jordan, His first miracle at Cana, His teaching, healing, and calling of the disciples. These readings help us see how Christ continues to be made known in our everyday lives, often in ways as quiet and steady as that guiding star.

Here at Trinity, Epiphany is a gentle and hope-filled turning of the page. As we step into a new year of ministry together, we remember that Christ's light still leads us—often in small and beautiful ways. And as we gather on Epiphany Sunday, may we, like the Magi, bring our gifts, open our hearts, and follow where God's light is calling.

Rosca de Reyes: A Sweet Reminder of Epiphany

Epiphany brings joyful traditions throughout the Church, from chalking the door for blessing to enjoying a King Cake. This year at coffee hour on January 11, Trinity will share a special Kings ring, the Rosca de Reyes. This crown-shaped sweet bread, decorated with colorful fruits, recalls the joy and gifts of the Magi.

Hidden inside is a small figure of the baby Jesus—a playful reminder of the Holy Family's care and a sign of blessing for the year ahead. Sharing the Rosca brings us together, helps us celebrate the guiding light of God, and invites us to look for Christ in the joyful, ordinary moments of our communal life together.



Celebrating the Season: *The Church Choir's Christmas Journey*



As winter has arrived and the first notes of Christmas begin to stir in our hearts, the music of the season becomes one of the ways we prepare for the coming of Christ. At Trinity, that preparation is beautifully led by our Parish Choir, whose voices help draw us closer to the holy quiet and joyful promise of the Nativity.

Under the faithful guidance of **Scott Alberts**, the choir serves not only as musicians but as ministers—offering their gifts to create a sacred space where the story of Christ's birth can be heard, felt, and experienced anew. Their rehearsals during Advent are filled with expectation, much like the season itself. The melodies they prepare—carols we know by heart and hymns passed down through generations—invite us into the deeper wonder of Emmanuel, God with us.

The choir's offerings at Christmas do not appear overnight. Each anthem involves careful preparation—hours spent refining harmonies, learning new arrangements, and shaping music that points our hearts toward the manger. This year's selections include beloved favorites such as *O Holy Night*, *Silent Night*, and *Joy to the World*. You will also hear more of Trinity's beautiful organ, whose voice has accompanied the Church's songs for generations.

The choir's ministry extends beyond our sanctuary as well. On **Saturday, December 6**, the choir performed as part of the **Main Street Merry Market** on the square, offering the gift of music to our wider community. Their voices become an instrument of outreach—proclaiming peace, hope, and love to all who gather.

Trinity is also blessed by our choral scholars from Truman, who add depth and richness to our musical life. Some come from Episcopal backgrounds, others from different traditions, and some simply love to sing. We invite you to thank them and greet them at coffee hour—they are a joyful part of our parish family.

The choir's music is one of the ways we enter into the mystery of Christmas. Each note reminds us of God's promise breaking into the world, the angels' song echoing across generations, and the quiet, holy love born in Bethlehem. As we journey through the season, may their voices help lead us ever closer to the heart of Christ.

And as always, our **7 p.m. Candlelight Service on Christmas Eve** stands as the shining moment of our celebrations—a time when Scripture, candlelight, and song join together to proclaim the good news once more.



Celebrating 25 Years of Ministry

Next year, Trinity will joyfully celebrate **25 years of music ministry by Scott Alberts**. Since beginning his work with us in 2000, Scott has shaped the sound, spirit, and warmth of our worship in countless ways. His leadership, musicianship, and deep faith have blessed our parish season after season.

The Alberts family also plays an integral part in Trinity's musical life. Scott's wife, **Hyunu-Joo Kim**, sings with the choir and accompanies on piano; their daughter, **Juni**, continues her musical studies as an oboe scholar; **Minu** is pursuing musical theatre at Penn State; and their youngest son, **Seann**, serves faithfully as an acolyte. We give thanks for the many ways this family enriches our community.

Over the years, Scott's **invitation** and hospitality have drawn people into the choir who may not have been drawn to the church. After being **welcomed** into the choir family, they found Trinity to be a place where they were accepted and could ask honest questions. Many of them **spiritually connected** with Trinity and became members who contributed to the life of the community in numerous ways beyond the choir.

More details about Scott's 25-year celebration will be shared in the coming year—but for now, we hold deep gratitude for his faithful service among us.

Interested in Singing With Us?

Come "try on" the choir!

- Rehearsals: Wednesdays at 5:45 p.m. in the sanctuary; Sundays at 9 a.m.
- No experience needed. All are welcome—just bring a willing heart.
- Additional men's voices are always a blessing!
- Our choir includes long-time parishioners and choral scholars from Truman who receive a small stipend for one year. Many students elect continue on as part of the choir family.

If you feel called to join this ministry—or if you're simply curious—come to a rehearsal and see where God may be leading you.

A Joyful Pause Before Lent Shrove Tuesday February 17, 2026

As Lent approaches, the Church pauses for the joyful tradition of Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday. The word "shrove" comes from an old English term meaning "to confess," reminding us that this day prepares our hearts for the reflective season ahead.

One of its longest-held customs is the pancake supper. In earlier times, households used up rich ingredients before the Lenten fast, and pancakes were the perfect way to do it. At Trinity, the supper has become a time of fellowship and hospitality—an evening to gather, laugh, and share a meal as a parish family.

Shrove Tuesday invites us to balance joy with preparation. As we enjoy the feast, we also ready ourselves for Lent's call to prayer, giving, and renewal. It is a moment to lay aside what distracts us and open our hearts to God's grace.

Join us!

Trinity will host a Pancake Supper on Shrove Tuesday, February 17, and all are welcome. Come for warm food, good company, and a gentle start to the holy season of Lent.

Join Us for Trinity's Annual Meeting

As we reflect on the blessings of 2025 and look toward the promise of a new year, we warmly invite all members of Trinity to join us for our Annual Meeting immediately following the 10:00 a.m. service on Sunday, January 26. This gathering is a cherished tradition, offering us a time to give thanks, reflect, and participate in the shared life of our parish.

The Annual Meeting is an opportunity to celebrate the many ways God has been at work in our community. Clergy, Bishop's Committee, and ministry leaders will share reports highlighting the ministries, outreach, and fellowship that have enriched our parish life over the past year. We will also review the parish's financial report and proposed budget for 2026, ensuring that we continue to steward faithfully the resources entrusted to us as well as discussion of the Transition as we search for a new rector.

A key part of the meeting is the election of Bishop's Committee members and diocesan convention delegates. These leaders serve Trinity by guiding our ministries, supporting our mission, and helping us discern God's call for our community. Your participation in these elections is a meaningful way to contribute to the life and vision of our parish.

Whether you have been a member for many years or are new to Trinity, your presence matters. The Annual Meeting is a moment to give thanks for God's blessings, to reflect on our shared journey of faith, and to look forward together with hope, love, and renewed commitment.

Please join us in the parish hall for fellowship and conversation following the service. There will be a carry-in lunch between church and the meeting. Childcare will be provided. We look forward to gathering as a community to celebrate, reflect, and plan for the year ahead.

A Prayer for Our Annual Meeting

Gracious God, we give thanks for the blessings of the past year and for the gift of this parish community. Guide our hearts and minds as we gather to reflect, celebrate, and discern your will for Trinity in the year ahead. May all our decisions honor you and strengthen the life of this church. Amen.

Bishop's Committee

2023-2025 Laura Gruber Harden, Bishop's Warden

2023-2025 Julie Seidler

2024-2026 Stephen Carr

2024-2026 Sophie Nely

2025-2027 Kirstie Darby

2025-2027 Mark Maddox, Junior Warden

A New Season of Ministry

Transition Notes Following Carrol's Retirement

As we give thanks for Carrol's faithful ministry among us, we also turn with hope toward the next season in our common life. God continues to guide Trinity with grace, and we trust that the Holy Spirit is already preparing the way before us.

Pastoral Care

During this time of transition, please reach out to Maria for any pastoral care needs. She will continue to walk compassionately with our parish, offering support, prayer, and presence.

Worship at Trinity

Our worship life remains steady and joy-filled:

- Maria will preside two Sundays each month.
- In months with five Sundays, Maria will preside three times.
- We will welcome a supply priest one Sunday each month.
- Once a month, we will have a lay-led service of Ante-Communion.

For those unfamiliar, Ante-Communion includes the Liturgy of the Word from the Holy Eucharist—readings, sermon, Creed, and prayers—without the Great Thanksgiving or Communion of the people. The service concludes with the Lord's Prayer and dismissal.

We are delighted to welcome The Rev. Jessica Wachter as our supply priest on the Second Sunday of Christmas, January 4, 2026. Many will remember Jessica from Journey Church in Fulton or from her time at Trinity as a Truman student.

Intergenerational Formation

Our intergenerational formation with children and their parents will continue after Carrol's retirement. Kirstie Darby, in collaboration with Maria, will help lead this important ministry.

Upcoming formation events for 2026:

Saturday, January 10 – Epiphany Saturday, February 21 – Lent

Formation meets from 9:30–10:00 a.m., followed by childcare from 10:00–12:00 p.m. so parents may enjoy a morning out. We give thanks for Kirstie's leadership and her care for our families.

A Closing Prayer

Gracious God, we give you thanks for the faithful ministry of Carrol and for the many ways you are leading us one step at a time. Bless our congregation as together we follow where you lead. In the name of your Holy Spirit, guide, comfort, and sustain us in this season of transition. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Breaking Bread, Building Community



As we come to the close of 2025, we pause with gratitude for the many ways God has been at work in our parish community—often in quiet, simple moments around the table. Our Community Meal Ministry has become one of those places where grace shows up in real and tangible ways. On the second and fourth Sundays of each month, about ten guests and ten Trinity parishioners gather to share food, laughter, stories, and a sense of belonging. What began as an idea has grown into a small circle of fellowship where Christ's presence can be felt in the warmth of welcome and in the joy of being together.

We are also grateful to share that we have received a grant from the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri, which will help fund this ministry for another year. Their support is a blessing and a sign of the wider Church standing with us as we offer hospitality in Christ's name.

This ministry has been deeply meaningful, but it has also taught us something important: to continue this good work faithfully, we need a larger team.

We are thankful that Cori Brown has agreed to serve as our coordinator for 2026, and that Ryan Nely will support her as part of his pre-discernment process for ordination. Now we are seeking three to five additional parishioners to join the support team and help carry this ministry forward.

Serving on the Community Meal team is a simple yet powerful way to live into our baptismal call to “seek and serve Christ in all persons.” With six people on the team, no one would need to coordinate more than two meals per year. The tasks are straightforward—choosing a menu, ordering food, providing receipts to the treasurer, keeping simple attendance records—and the work is shared. Opening and closing the church requires only light cleanup, and those who attend the meals are always eager to pitch in.

Our 2025 team did extraordinary work laying the foundation for this ministry. To sustain it in the year ahead—and to avoid placing too heavy a burden on a few—we truly need more hands and hearts. If Trinity is to continue offering this ministry of hospitality in 2026, building a fuller team is essential.

Please prayerfully consider whether God may be nudging you to take part in this ministry. If you would like to learn more, speak with any member of the Bishop's Committee or with Maria. And if you simply want to experience the spirit of the ministry, come join us at an upcoming meal and “taste and see that the Lord is good.”

A Journey into the Life of the Church



We extend our warmest congratulations to Rose Quinn, Seann Alberts, and Kirstie Darby, who were confirmed or received during the Bishop's visit in November.

At Trinity, belonging begins long before anyone fills out a form or learns the rhythms of our common life. In the Episcopal Church, “membership” is not about paperwork—it is about relationship: our relationship with God, and with one another in the Body of Christ. That belonging is rooted in three meaningful moments of faith: Baptism, Confirmation, and Reception.

Baptism: Our Beginning

Baptism is the beginning of Christian life. In water and in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we are marked as Christ’s own forever. Through baptism, a person becomes part of Christ’s Church everywhere and a baptized member of the Episcopal Church. Whether celebrated in infancy or adulthood, baptismal promises anchor us throughout life and connect us to the worship and prayer of our parish community.

Confirmation: A Mature “Yes”

Confirmation is a milestone of mature faith. It is the chance to affirm the promises of baptism publicly, as the bishop prays for the Spirit’s strength and guidance. Those confirmed become confirmed communicants of the Episcopal Church, often finding new opportunities for service and deeper roots in the Episcopal tradition.

Reception: Welcomed from Another Tradition

Christians confirmed in other traditions with bishops in historic succession—such as Roman Catholic, Orthodox, or some Lutheran bodies—are welcomed through Reception. In this joyful rite, the bishop formally receives them into the Episcopal Church, honoring their prior formation and embracing them in their new spiritual home.

However someone enters—through baptism, confirmation, or reception—membership is ultimately lived out in community. It is found in worship, in the breaking of bread, in acts of service, and in the quiet, steady work of growing closer to God. We give thanks for all who find their way into this parish family. Each person brings gifts, questions, hopes, and stories that enrich our common life. Together, we learn what it means to follow Christ, to pray for one another, and to share God’s love in this corner of the world.

For more information about baptism, confirmation, or reception, Maria is always glad to talk. This journey is one we walk together, with grace and gratitude.