



September 2025 Volume 28, No. 9

**Trinity Lutheran Church**  
A welcoming faith community  
living together in God's love to  
share the joy of Jesus Christ.

# TIDINGS

## **Oktoberfest 2025 Save the Date!**

The 301 Faith Partners at Trinity Lutheran Church are excited to host the 3rd Annual Oktoberfest Fundraiser for Habitat for Humanity! This event is on **Saturday, September 27 from 6:30-8:30 pm** in the Fellowship Hall. There will be beer, brats, sides, Oktoberfest music, and a drawing from each table for winning a free beer stein! And together, we team up and raise money towards one of our social justice areas- Habitat for Humanity. We will hear about the latest progress of home building for families that are approved to own their own home here in Fort Collins! Hear from the newly chosen families of their joy who actually help to build their homes. Sign Up Genius link coming soon. This year we are asking everyone to RSVP so we can adequately prepare food. Click [HERE](#) to RSVP.

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## **Organ Concert!!**

Experience the power and beauty of our magnificent organ as it comes to life in the hands of our gifted 301 Faith Partner musicians, featuring renowned organist Dr. Joel Bacon on **Sunday, September 14 at 3 pm**. This is a free concert. Help us spread the word and invite everyone you know! We have also posted it to Facebook, can you go share the post?? That will help spread the word. Let the soaring melodies and rich harmonies inspire your spirit.

## Adult Forum

**September 7:** Steve Backsen and Stephen Zink will discuss Trinity's 2025 Stewardship Campaign

**September 14:** Tasha Barron will discuss her powerful mission trip experience of connecting deeply with the people and culture of Belize, while also growing in her relationship with Christ

**September 21:** We will hear reports from the 2025 Rocky Mountain Synod assembly and 2025 ELCA Triennial national assembly

**September 28:** Emily Moore, a Trinity member and art historian at CSU, will lead a discussion on shifting representations of Jesus in art history.

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## Stewardship Campaign is Coming!

Our annual Stewardship Campaign kicks off during worship the weekend of **September 6 & 7!**

Join us in the following weeks for updates on our progress:

- ★ Progress Report – September 13 & 14
- ★ Updated Report – September 20 & 21

Let's grow in generosity together!

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## Rally Day

Rally Day Kick Off is **Sunday, September 7!** Come celebrate the start of a new year! Things to look forward to: **Education** start back up at 9 am, **Worship** 10:30 am, **Equal Exchange cupboard** will be open (as usual).

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## Donation Corner

**Prayer Cards Small Group** needs:

- #5 - 1/2 invitation envelopes
- All color card-stock paper
- Any other scrap-booking paper or supplies, even stamps!

**Quilting Small Group** needs:

- We will still (and always!) collect donated fabric, Fabric, FABRIC.

**Thrivent Action Teams:** Are you an eligible Thrivent member and have choice dollars available to direct? There are a number of groups that count on the Thrivent Action Teams.

## TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH



[www.trinitylutheranfc.org](http://www.trinitylutheranfc.org)

**Phone:** (970) 482-1226  
**After Hours Emergency:**  
(970)-400-7252

**OFFICE HOURS**  
MON-THURS 9AM-3PM

**WORSHIP TIMES**  
SAT: 5 PM | SUN: 10:30 AM

**Senior Pastor:** Rick Reiten  
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**Office Admin:** Deana Andrist  
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**Financial Manager:** Brenda Moore  
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**Director of Communications & Volunteer Coordinator**  
Amanda Backsen  
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**Church Musician:** Carrie Hansen  
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**Director of Choir:** Tessa Espinosa  
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**Director of Handbell:**  
[bells@trinitylutheranfc.org](mailto:bells@trinitylutheranfc.org)

**Saturday Worship Leader**  
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**A/V Technician:** Claire Pickerel  
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**Sunday School:** Jennifer Reeve  
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**Nursery Coordinator**  
Tiffany Klijewski  
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**TLC Preschool Director**  
Brenda Harju  
[brenda@trinitylutheranfc.org](mailto:brenda@trinitylutheranfc.org)



## **Update from the Call Committee**

The Call Committee would like to thank the congregation for their continued prayers and support, kind words of encouragement, and for your patience throughout the search process. We would like to share some information with you about the Call process as well as some accomplishments we have made at this time.

The Call Committee members have been meeting on a weekly basis since our installation on July 6th. Next week we have scheduled our 6th meeting together, and are happy to report there has been excellent attendance by Call members to all of the meetings. As a result, we have been able to get to know each other, share many deep and meaningful conversations, and have grown together spiritually.

As expected, we have all been working hard on many important tasks which must be completed during the Call process. We have determined our parameters for working as a group as well as choosing specific roles and leadership within the group. To expedite the process, we corresponded via text and email about our individual assignments, and also utilize a group shared Google folder.

Our immediate task has been to develop a ministry site profile, which we refer to as Trinity's MSP. This is a comprehensive document which we think of as a very lengthy resume. It covers many aspects of our church, the congregation, needs and desires for leadership, and future goals. We have been working under the guidance of Pastor Sara Wirth from the Rocky Mountain Synod. With help and support from Pastor Rick and the Executive Team and Council, we are making great strides together in developing a complete and competitive MSP.

We have been prayerful and reflective throughout this process and have made significant progress toward completing many sections of the MSP. It is our hope to finalize Trinity's MSP by early September, at which time it will be shared by the Synod to interested candidates.

We ask for your continued support and prayers as we look forward to next steps in the process.

Respectfully the Call Committee - Shelley Aust, Emma Cleveringa, Jo Anne Gearhart, Sam Mullenbach, Joey Prows, Lori Schmidt, & Ron Splittgerber

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## **Nominations are Open!**

The Nominating Committee is beginning its search for candidates for a variety of positions to be elected for terms beginning in January 2026. These positions include six Council positions (President, Treasurer, Secretary, Social Eco Justice, Faith Formation, Worship & Music); Trust; Nominating Committee; Financial Review Team; and delegates to the Synod Assembly. The committee certainly does not know the interests and skills of all members of our congregation, so if you would consider a leadership role at Trinity, please contact a member of the committee: Nadine Hunt, Don Heyse, Debbie Schwartz; Steve Dugger; and Erik Elliott. We will be glad to talk with you about where you might best serve.

## Small Groups

We enter our 3<sup>rd</sup> year of churchwide intentional small groups at Trinity, and finding ways to 'Pray, Connect, and Serve' together. If you have never joined a small group, this is the year to try. Find one interesting group and see how God working in and through this ministry. Click [HERE](#) to read the 2025-2026 Small Groups Brochure. **To register** for a Small Groups please email [Amanda](#) your choices, the last day of sign up is **Sunday, September 7 - Rally Day!**

**Sermon Discussion** Enjoy a discussion of the weekend sermon to share where we see God present in our lives. Join us most **Mondays at 12 pm.**

**Bible Study** group meets from **9:30-11 am** on Thursday mornings in Room 2 starting **Thursday, September 4.** PLEASE NOTE: There was an in correct start time listed in the Small Groups Brochure. Everyone is welcome! We will be studying parts of the Old Testament and New Testament examining the Covenant of Moses, the consequences of breaking the Mosaic Covenant, God's promise of a New Covenant, and Jesus's role in the New Covenant.

**301 Quilters** meets **Fridays from 10 am-12 pm** in Room 2. If you'd like to join us, please come!!; NO experience needed, NO need to have been coming last year, NO worries. Hope to see the old familiar as well as new faces. We're a fun and caring small group that has a purpose of aiding those in need.

**Men's Breakfast** All men are welcome to join at the Breakfast Club (Ft. Collins) for discussion and fellowship on the **1st Tuesday (September 2) at 7:30 am.**

**Trinity Readers** book for **Monday, September 8** will be *James* by Percival Everett. This historical fiction is a reimagining of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* both harrowing and ferociously funny - told from the enslaved Jim's point of view. A National Book Award winner and candidate for a Pulitzer Prize. Discussion will be at **9:30 am** in the Fireside Room. Our selection for October will be *Our Missing Hearts* by Celeste Ng. It is a dystopian novel that explores anti-Asian violence and discrimination and is a reaction to the fears and racism in America following the COVID-19 pandemic. The novel is a deeply disturbing and cautionary tale warning readers of the dangers of chauvinism. It is also about the lessons and legacies we pass on to our children, and the power of art to create change.

**301 FP Get-Togethers** take place the **2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday (September 11) at 3:30 pm** at VERBOTEN BREWING (1611 S. College Ave., Unit 1609) All gatherings are informal and no RSVP needed.

**Saints & Sinners Golf** meets at local golf courses to play nine holes and then gather for snacks and fellowship. Our next play date is **Friday, September 12.** Tee times and further details will be emailed to group members. If you would like to join for golf and fellowship email [Donna](#). Saint Paul and Mary of Magdala members are invited to join us.

**Pub Theology V.3** OPEN Group will meet on the **3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday September 18 at 5:30 pm.** In past sessions, we've explored What Christianity is Not, Holy Envy, and Bonhoeffer for Armchair Theologians. This time, we'll explore a variety of texts that might help us navigate these divisive times with grace and (hopefully) a bit of peace. We'll make use of a private meeting room at one of our local microbreweries to discuss how we live out our relationship with God and support each other along the way.

**Chapter Two Book Group** is an open small group for 301 Faith Partners and the wider community, new participants are always welcome to join the casual discussion. No long-term commitment required! If you have trouble finding any of the books and would like Trinity to order a copy for the library, please let [Maddie Fairfax](#) know at any time. **Thursday, September 18 at 6 pm: *The Huntress* by Kate Quinn.**

## Small Groups Continued...

**TGIF (One Friday a month at 6:30 pm)** - Note, Hosts can opt for a Friday of the month that works for them. Come, kick back, relax, and enjoy an evening connecting with others from the Trinity family and meet new faces! Bring yourself, an appetizer/dessert and a beverage you'd like or would like to share. If you have questions and or would like to sign up to host, please contact Liz Johnson or 402-320-3699. !! Contact Liz if you can sign up to host. **\*\*\*13rd Friday\*\*\* September 19:** Rebecca Roland

**Prayer Cards** This group meets to make homemade greeting cards **Saturday, September 27**. The group will decide how the cards will be used. No crafting skills needed, just a willing heart to serve others. Open Invitation to come when you are able BUT an RSVP to [Erik Elliott](#) is needed for supplies.

**Little Pantry** As the school year begins and fall approaches, The Little Pantry remains committed to serving our community. We continue to see high demand, with the pantry empty several days of the week. Thanks to the dedication of our volunteers and the generosity of our community, we are able to respond to this ongoing need. We are truly grateful for your continued support of The Little Pantry Ministry. Thank you for being a part of this mission.

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## 301 FP JET ECO Tip of the Month

**Skip the Straw** Yesterday I went out to lunch with friends. The server brought us a glass pitcher of water and there were glasses on the table. But she also gave us plastic straws wrapped in paper. I gave mine back and my friends followed my lead.

It's easy to think, it's three straws what difference will that make? Plastic straws are a good place to focus because they are the epitome of unnecessary one-time use plastics contributing to the islands of plastics polluting our oceans. If we start with declining straws what else do we notice that we do not need at all or can easily find a replacement for?

If you need to use a straw or simply enjoy it there are many sustainable options including metal, glass, and bamboo. But what are you drinking out of? The straw is the beginning. It's easy to think that the problem is too big. Let's focus on what we can do individually and curb single-use plastics in our day-to-day lives.

The Joint Ecological Team (JET) meets as needed to plan educational events, bike to work day, volunteer opportunities, and advocacy. If you have any suggestions for future Eco-Tips, please email them to [Amanda](#) in the office. Our next meeting is **Tuesday, September 30 at 5:30 pm**. Be sure to check out the JET table and bulletin board in the NW corner of the Fellowship Hall!

# SEPTEMBER 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
	<b>1 Labor Day</b> <b>Office Closed</b> 12 pm Sermon Discussion	<b>2</b> 7:30 am Men's Breakfast  5:30 pm Soc/Eco Justice 6:15 pm 301 FP SEJ
<b>7 Rally Day</b> 9 am Education for All 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship <i>Stewardship Kick off</i>	<b>8</b> 9:30am Trinity Readers 12 pm Sermon Discussion  6 pm Property	<b>9</b>   6:30 pm Executive
<b>14</b> 9 am Education for All 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship 3 pm Organ Concert	<b>15</b>  12 pm Sermon Discussion  5:30 pm Trust	<b>16</b>   6:30 pm Council
<b>21</b> 9 am Education for All 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship	<b>22</b>  12 pm Sermon Discussion	<b>23</b>
<b>28</b> 9 am Education for All 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship	<b>29</b>  12 pm Sermon Discussion	<b>30</b>  5:30 pm FP Eco Justice

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>3</b>  6:30 pm Choir	<b>4</b> 9:30 am Bible Study 11 am FP Clergy Mtg	<b>5</b> 10 am Quilting Grp	<b>6</b>  5 pm Worship <i>Stewardship Kick off</i> 5:45 pm Fellowship
<b>10</b>  6:30 pm Choir	<b>11</b> 9:30 am Bible Study  3:30 pm FP Get Together 4 pm Finance	<b>12</b> Saints & Sinners Golf 10 am Quilting Grp  6:30 pm TGIF	<b>13</b>  12 pm Sweet Treats  5 pm Worship 5:45 pm Fellowship
<b>17</b>  6:30 pm Choir	<b>18</b> 9:30 am Bible Study  5:30 pm Pub Theology 6 pm Chap 2 Readers 6:30 pm FP Co-Op Mtg	<b>19</b> 10 am Quilting Grp	<b>20</b>   5 pm Worship 5:45 pm Fellowship
<b>24</b>  6:30 pm Choir	<b>25</b> 9:30 am Bible Study  7 pm Immigration	<b>26</b> 10 am Quilting Grp	<b>27</b> 2 pm Prayer Cards  5 pm Worship 5:45 pm Fellowship 6:30 pm Oktoberfest

## ASSISTING IN WORSHIP

**September 6/7** Vicki Volbrecht / Don Garman  
**September 13/14** / Barbara Baggs  
**September 20/21** / Delores Wisner  
**September 27/28** / Margaret Wick

Pull Me OUT! HANG ME up!!  
 PUT ME ON YOUR FRIDGE!

## **Your Gifts In Action ~ Teaching Tree & Lutheran Family Services**

**Teaching Tree** is a Children's Learning Center established at Larimer County, in 1970, as a United Day Care Center. In 1988 a second center was opened in Loveland, Colorado. In 2010 the name was changed to Teaching Tree Early Childhood Learning Center. Today the center serves almost 300 families and it is Larimer's largest nonprofit childcare facility. Even families that pay full fee rates at Teaching Tree pay less than a for-profit center charges. Cost is set on a sliding scale.

The curriculum is based on the thought that pre-school kids should have fun. It is a fun structured day! Children at this age learn more through play. Particularly, yoga, tumbling, gardening, computer music and the Spanish language are introduced.

Recently included has been the S.T.E.M. approach. The later stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. The program spurs questioning and finding answers. Children spend time in the outdoors, seeing the changing trees, or walking along a path with rocks or leaves. They are trained to hear the sounds abounding in nature around them.

**LFSRM, Lutheran Family Service Rocky Mountain** is a faith based, non-profit services agency. There are offices in five major cities in Colorado, as well as in New Mexico, Salt Lake City UT, and Billings Montana. This agency serves about 30,000 people yearly, providing adoption support, disaster response, family support and educational services. Visit [www.lfsrm.org](http://www.lfsrm.org).

The Foster Care Program, provides skilled and caring substitute families for kids who cannot live with birth families. Some of these children have seen domestic violence and are not certain if they will be provided food or a place to sleep. LFSRM searches for persons interested in becoming a foster parent.

The agency directs help to children over the age of 8, or for two or more siblings, or to children who have behavioral problems or medical issues. LFSRM also addresses kinship adoptions particularly for grand- parents who might adopt grand- children, and relatives also, if all parties live in Colorado.

Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM), who is a child under age of 18, resettled in US without a parent or relative to care for them. Such a child is placed in a foster home in Colorado, that has been trained to the adjustment needs of a refugee youth.

**When you give to Trinity, you give to Teaching Tree & Lutheran Family Services**

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### **e-News**

Are you getting Trinity's e-News? The e-News is an electronic way TLC shares what is happening in the life of our church. Each week, an email is sent out with the weekend's happenings, upcoming events, and news to share. We also use this method to inform members of funerals and other time sensitive news. If you would like to receive Trinity's emails, please email [Amanda](mailto:Amanda).



## A Learning Series on Immigration

Refuge, Rights, and Community is a three-part education series on the impact of current policies and practices on immigrant and refugee communities in Northern Colorado. You'll get the context, information, and direction you need to take effective action while connecting with experts, advocates, and directly impacted community members. This series is a collaborative effort hosted by Church World Service Fort Collins, ISAAC of Northern Colorado, Arboretum Coffee and Alianza NORCO.

**LOCATION AND REGISTRATION:** The series will be held at Colorado State University. This is a free event but registration is required for all three events. Reserve your tickets now [HERE](#); location details will be sent in your confirmation e-mail. **LOVE OFFERING:** In conjunction with this campaign, at each live event and online with registration, we will be taking a love offering. Whether you choose to attend the event or not, your donations will go into a collective fund for emergency legal needs and supportive services for local immigrant and refugee communities.

- 1. Sunday, September 7 from 3-5 pm | Refuge:** A deep dive into the refugee journey—past, present, and personal. This session will provide historical context on global and U.S. refugee programs, explore the current realities facing refugees in Colorado, and share powerful first-hand stories that bring the experience to life.
- 2. Sunday, October 26 from 3-5 pm | Rights:** Unpack the realities of today's immigration policies and how they are affecting individuals, families, and communities. Hear from a broad panel of Colorado-based legal experts and advocates.
- 3. Sunday, November 9 from 3-5 pm | Community:** A critical conversation about the rise of white supremacist movements, their impact on refugee and immigrant safety, and how communities can resist hate. Includes film screening of the documentary, *Refuge*.



### Birthdays



Samuel Mullenbach	9/2	Dave Burgoon	9/15	Kristina Brown	9/24
Sydney Mullenbach	9/2	Ken Christensen	9/16	Sophia Sprai	9/26
Michele Christensen	9/4	Christina Sobel	9/16	Emma Sprai	9/27
Arliss Solie	9/7	Tom Solie	9/16	Soren Nicholson	9/28
Eric Biedermann	9/9	Raphael Kline	9/18	Alexander Peterson-Vecchio	9/30
Merritt Dickson	9/9	Jasper Prows	9/21	Jimmie Schwartz	9/30
Steve Backsen	9/12	Roland Kufeld	9/22		



### Anniversaries



Erin & Andrew Sprain	9/2	Liz & Paul Johnson	9/11
Renee & Terry Mize	9/2	Ezra & Ru Orchard	9/14
Kathy & Jack Lipscomb	9/4	Jeff & Maddie Fairfax	9/16
Vicky & Ron Splittgerber	9/5	Steph & Steve Dugger	9/21
Shelley & Richard Aust	9/5	Marissa & Cody Hopkins	9/29
Karel & Robert Waltermire	9/6		

# Notice to the Congregation

## TLC Preschool: A Legacy of Love & Learning

Trinity's preschool ministry was established in 2001 as a community outreach initiative, offering early childhood education in an environment of love, support, and fun. The program utilized existing classroom space within the church, and in its early years, the Trinity Lutheran Church (TLC) Preschool's curriculum, staff, and operations were fully funded by the congregation.

The goal was to provide an affordable preschool option for families within the church, nearby neighborhoods, and the broader community. Once the program was established, bylaws were created, a governing board was elected, and the preschool became its own entity—still deeply rooted in faith and service alongside the congregation. To date, 367 students have attended our preschool.

For over 20 years, the preschool ministry has been entirely self-sustaining, covering salaries and expenses while offering free and reduced tuition to families in need. However, in 2024, after experiencing a sharp drop in enrollment, it became clear that the preschool could no longer remain financially independent. A series of online errors—including Google incorrectly labeling TLC Preschool as “permanently closed,” a misdirected website link pointing to a different preschool in Loveland, and a regional decline in preschool-aged children—led to a sharp drop in enrollment. Additionally, Poudre School District is now offering comprehensive preschool options at neighborhood schools, which is likely drawing families away from private locations.

In response, the TLC Preschool Board took several steps during the summer of 2024 to increase enrollment and improve financial solvency:

- The preschool director accepted a 35% pay cut for the school year; staff hours were reduced
- \$25,000 in reserve funds were used to cover operational losses
- No funding was allocated for supplies or curriculum enrichment during the 2024–25 school year
- The Board fundraised to hire an online marketing consultant to improve visibility
- Tuition rates were increased for the 2025–26 school year

Preschool staff earned a Level 2 Colorado Shines rating in March 2025

Despite these efforts, only six students enrolled for the 2025–26 school year. TLC Preschool remains deeply committed to fostering relationships, cooperation, and kindness—values essential to children's development. Yet sustaining this mission has become unfeasible. With heavy hearts, **the Preschool Board has recommended closing TLC Preschool at the end of this school year.**

Now more than ever, children need opportunities to build relationships, cooperate, negotiate, and compromise—all while practicing respect. TLC Preschool has always emphasized these values, striving to help our students grow into kind, thoughtful individuals. We want our preschoolers to be good people.

Our preschool was built on relationships—but the cost of sustaining that foundation can no longer rest solely on our staff. While the Preschool Board is committed to restoring compensation levels in this final year, the current budget does not allow for it. To make this possible, we ask for the congregation's support through donations and active participation in fundraising efforts. Your help is essential to ensure our staff—who have faithfully served this ministry—are honored and supported as we complete this final school year.

The Trinity Lutheran Church Preschool Board extends heartfelt thanks to Preschool Director and Lead Teacher Brenda Harju for her 19 years of dedicated service and to Assistant Teacher Tiffany Klijewski for her continued commitment to building relationships, nurturing cooperation, and teaching kindness to all.

## TLC Preschool

September is arriving and so is the start of the school year for TLC Preschool! We'll have a mixed-age class on MWF and we're very excited because our enrollment has increased greatly from last year and includes several UPK students.

We hosted a Back-to-School morning on August 27th and got to meet some of our new faces. Our first day of class will be Wednesday, September 3rd. Tiffany Kliejewski is returning as our classroom assistant and we're ready to get our year started.

While our enrollment has increased, which helps our budget immensely, we'll still need a bit of support from the congregation. We'll have those beautiful, fresh Christmas wreaths available for purchase again before the holidays and please remember that you can receive credit on your income taxes if you donate to the preschool through the CCCC program.

Many thanks to those members who support us as we head into another amazing year!

God's Peace, Brenda Harju

TLC 2025 Ministry Fund Plan Actuals		
	July 2025	Year-To-Date
<b>Receipts:</b>		
Offerings	\$ 48,713	\$ 251,200
SPE and MoM Building Use Donations	4,580	32,060
Building Use	3,728	13,776
Benevity Funds Released	1,625	8,625
<b>Total Receipts:</b>	<b>58,646</b>	<b>305,661</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>		
Operating and Support	\$ 26,332	\$ 207,599
Ministries	7,446	66,349
Benevolence/Gifts (Synod, Sky Ranch, etc)	-	8,310
<b>Total Expenditures:</b>	<b>33,778</b>	<b>282,258</b>
<b>Receipts less Expenditures:</b>	<b>\$ 24,868</b>	<b>\$ 23,403</b>
<b>Total Checking/Savings as of 7/31/2025</b>		\$ 199,297.00
<b>Total Checking/Savings as of 12/31/2024</b>		\$ 204,772.61
<b>Difference</b>		\$ (5,475.61)



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