

Trinity Church Narrative Questions for the OTM Community Portfolio

Question 1: *Describe a moment in your worshipping community's recent ministry which you recognized as one of success and fulfillment.*

Trinity Church has come together in a community building effort in recent months by starting Koinonia. Koinonia is the Greek word for fellowship, and it is a ministry that allows members to host small gatherings in their homes with a goal of building friendship, fellowship and a sense of community outside of worship. There is nothing formal about this time together and no agenda—just a chance to get to know one another with good food and conversation. One of the wonderful things about Koinonia is that it is bringing our community together with more hope and playfulness, and ideas are being discussed. It is a very important and positive sign as we continue to embark on our capital campaign called Trinity Serves. This is a time of transition for our parish with many opportunities lying ahead. What better time to enjoy the company of each other and come together as a community. This uplifting experience has been a significant help to us both emotionally and spiritually during our time of transition.

Question 2: *How are you preparing yourselves for the Church of the Future?*

Trinity Newport, a National Historic site, was founded in 1698, and is blessed with an extraordinary history. We hope to strengthen our long-standing guiding program to visitors with additional tours for our local school community, highlighting Trinity's active historical significance that makes the city and Trinity Newport a unique place.

Trinity Newport wants to be a people in close loving relationship with Jesus. We see the future already at hand and want our faith focused on the outsider as well as the already convinced. We hope our faith will be known not by our words, but by our deeds; that being right is less important to us than doing good. We continue in lively dialogue about what this means for Trinity and seek a rector who wants to help us on the path.

We hope for a future less about us and more about Jesus and the world he loves. We continue fundraising for Trinity Serves, our ongoing capital campaign, which is focused on revitalizing the campus with a flexible space that meets a range of needs for our community. Having an appropriate space for the Trinity music program is a core need, as well as up-to-date facilities for our ongoing community meals that are served two to three times monthly. We now have Sunday school and monthly family-oriented liturgies which we hope to augment with a youth program and nursery.

Question 3: *Please provide 4-6 words (separated by commas) describing the gifts and skills essential to the future leaders of your worshipping community?*

Engaging, inspirational, collaborative, transparent, pastoral, good-humored

Question 4: *Describe your liturgical style and practice for all types of worship provided by your community.*

At Trinity Church we practice a broad church liturgy, with traditional music an important component of the 10:00 service and all festival services. We have communion both at 8:00 and 10:00 services every week, open to everyone, wherever they are in their spiritual journey. The primary liturgy is Rite II, with Rite I used at the 8:00 service. We follow the Book of Common Prayer, the lectionary and, mostly, the 1982 Hymnal. There is a leaflet each Sunday showing the order of service and containing any special hymn or prayer for that particular Sunday so newcomers can follow the service with ease. Announcements are included.

Laypersons are involved as acolytes, Eucharistic Ministers, and Eucharistic Visitors, as well as lectors, ushers, the Altar Guild and the Choir. We welcome occasional guest preachers representing various interests and faiths.

We recently instituted a shortened and simplified child friendly service on the first Sunday of the month, which has been well received.

Question 5: *How do you practice incorporating others into ministry?*

Last fall we instituted a new approach to encourage participation to our various ministries, entitled "Minute for Ministry". Over the course of several Sundays, a representative of one of the ministries gave a short presentation describing the work of that ministry, with a request for participants. However, much of the success in attracting participants to a ministry is when we reach out to individuals and ask for their help. It is more personal and often reaps more positive outcomes. Also many new ministries are started by individuals who see a need and ask to begin one; for example, the Trinity Loving Community program, the Strawberry Festival, and The Pumpkin Patch.

In addition, we provide guided tours of our historic church to the public at large. This is done on a "walk-in" basis. The tours are of an historic and architectural nature, so our guides need not be members of the parish but should have an interest in history and architecture. This guided tour program is a wonderful way of introducing Trinity Church, not only to visitors to Newport, but also to residents of Newport, and in particular, to residents who are new to Newport. A notice is placed in our local newspaper informing the public of our tours and requesting volunteers to be trained as tour guides.

There is a section of our Sunday Service Bulletin that describes some of our volunteer activities. This bulletin is distributed by e-mail, as well as at the Sunday Church services.

Question 6: *As a worshipping community, how do you care for your spiritual, emotional and physical well-being?*

Trinity has been a worshipping parish since 1698, and today we innovate with music, prayer, study and preaching that strive to reflect who we are and how we hope to become mature followers of Jesus. Worship on Sunday is the beginning of caring for our spiritual, emotional and physical well-being. Our prayers, study of God’s Word, sermons, and music surround the Eucharist and sustain us. In addition to Sunday school, we offer men’s Bible study and adult education forums. The music ministry at Trinity is well known and continues to develop and support the spiritual and emotional needs of our parish. In addition to Sunday worship, the choir provides special support for evening and holy day services, and we host a range of musical programs throughout the year. Trinity provides a highly regarded wedding ministry. We believe we have become a “destination parish” for wedding participants from all over.

Trinity has a tradition of supporting the needs of grieving families and their community after a loss. We consoled the loss of the French Fleet's Commodore during the Revolutionary War and continue through today helping families grieving the loss of loved ones. Trinity Loving Community is a parishioner-led ministry of pastoral care.

Question 7: *How do you engage in pastoral care for those beyond your worshipping community?*

Trinity is an active, caring parish within the church and Newport community. As a member of the Christian Action Center of Newport County’s Community Meal Program, church and community participants prepare free healthy meals for 85-100 people two or three days a month in Honyman Hall. Local businesses donate cooking equipment and a large major grocery store chain gives an annual grant to purchase food for the program. This is truly a joyful ministry that fills the heart of all who participate.

Among various activities that Trinity parishioners participate in that provide fellowship, fun and community and raise funds for charitable giving are:

- Monetary support for an Episcopal Church charitable effort to help build and outfit a grade school in Central America.
- The Pumpkin Patch sells pumpkins, homemade foods and cider for 3 weeks in October. There are family activities and music. The proceeds support the services of Martin Luther King Community Center.
- In June Trinity’s Strawberry Festival serves 500+ strawberry shortcakes and lemonade to the community, raising funds for charitable giving.
- Prayer Shawl group knits shawls and other items for pastoral giving.
- The annual Trinity Silver Tea, held in Honyman Hall during Advent, is now a two-day event. This festive Christmas Tea is a favorite of the Newport community and holiday visitors.
- At Christmas parishioners give gifts for needy families to be distributed by the Martin Luther King Community Center. Small gifts and personal supplies are sent to those in the military through our “Stocking for Soldiers” outreach program.

Question 8: *Describe your worshipping community's involvement in either the wider church or geographical region.*

Trinity is active in the Diocese of RI and Diocesan Convention. The vestry and clergy attend the Consortium for Endowed Episcopal Parishes conference. Joint activities with Newport churches include a community Thanksgiving service and Christmas on the Hill, a service of lessons and carols by the Trinity choir. In December, the calendar is replete with seasonal activities for Christmas in Newport, and Trinity plays a central role in the celebrations. Additionally, Trinity provides a venue for the Royal School of Church Music's summer RI program. The choir also collaborates in joint choral concerts with other local Episcopal churches. There are musical events on the Trinity lawn in the summer, and rehearsal and performance space is made available to Newport String Orchestra in Honyman Hall.

As part of Trinity Serves, the church is working with groups to establish mission and ministries to explore how they can share the proposed new building around the church's needs. Presently talks are ongoing with: Harvest Kitchen, The Newport Community School and the Seamen's Church Institute.

Under the auspices of the Episcopal Diocesan office, Trinity Church has participated in a prison ministry at the RI Adult Correctional Institution in Cranston with weekly visits that include religious education and communion.

Question 9: *Tell about a ministry that your worshipping community has initiated in the past five years. Who can be contacted about this?*

The Trinity Loving Community Program (TLC) has been revitalized over the past three years. The mission of the program states that it is to provide social contact, emotional support and material aid to fellow parishioners. Inspired by our baptismal covenant to "seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself" members of our community harness their energy, talent and compassion to serve one another.

TLC reaches out to those on our Care List with communion, visits, cards and notes, flowers, phone calls, food offerings, rides to appointments and errands. In addition, TLC celebrates special occasions of our parishioners, such as birthdays, special anniversaries, and other events, with special cakes and snacks at an appropriate Sunday Coffee Hour.

TLC also extends its care for those who are grieving by volunteering to help prepare Honyman Hall for a collation following a funeral.

Question 10: *What is your practice of stewardship and how does it shape the life of your worshipping community?*

As is the case in many churches with population challenges, stewardship requires on-going creativity at Trinity. Our Stewardship Committee faces these challenges knowing that any successful campaign begins with laying out the case and then asking the audience to support the vision. As distinct from recent years' efforts which were largely a mail-only canvass, this year it is thought that a revitalized personal-ask campaign may result in better results in the pledge totals. We are looking to develop a year-around stewardship program that includes our more transient parishioners such as seasonal residents and Naval War College students.

It is important to recognize the contributions that our parishioners make to Trinity that go beyond financial resources. Clearly, an organization like ours relies on those who are able to give of their time and talent to fill the many volunteer roles already identified in this narrative.

Question 11: *What is your worshipping community's experience of conflict? And how have you addressed it?*

Trinity is currently involved in a capital campaign called Trinity Serves with the main goal to construct a new building on the site of a former building. This campaign is a controversial topic that has caused some disagreement within Trinity Church. There have been supporters and detractors within the congregation and sometimes within the larger Newport Community. Concerns have been raised regarding the purpose of the building, the budget, and the design. The congregation has been generous in their early giving, and we did receive some financial support from outside organizations. However, we realize that our original budget may not be attainable, and we are in the process of re-envisioning our plans for this new building. We have held forums in the past with the congregation to keep everyone informed, and this will continue. We realize that open and honest communication within the congregation, vestry and clergy is key to accomplishing our goal. Currently, we have a "blank slate" lot where the former building stood next to Honyman Hall, and the possibilities for the future are very exciting.

Question 12: *What is your experience leading/addressing change in the church? When has it gone well? When has it gone poorly? And what did you learn?*

Over the years the Episcopal Church has changed significantly in its emphasis on the Eucharist, the number of lay persons participating in Sunday services, the positions held by women, and the acceptance of divorce and same sex relationships.

Trinity has generally followed the main stream, with a few congregants objecting to the changes, but mostly following a moderately progressive direction. Our most recent rector was a woman, the first in our three hundred year history, as well as a woman assistant rector dating back nearly 30 years ago. We have gained parishioners from the Roman Catholic Church, partly because Rhode Island is a heavily Catholic state, partly because we offer a more progressive alternative to their positions.

What we have learned from these changes is that Trinity is not going to be a leader of change, but has consistently moved along progressive lines.