

# The Quest

## Trinity Church

Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts

September 2025

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### About Trinity Church

Trinity Church is an ecumenical Open and Affirming (ONA) congregation. We are affiliated with the American Baptist Church, the Episcopal Church, the United Church of Christ and the United Methodist Church.

Sunday service hours:  
10 a.m. (Nursery care is available.)

Office hours:  
Monday - Wednesday - 9 a.m.-12 p.m.  
Thursday – 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.  
(413) 625-2341

Pastor - Benjiman Durfee  
Leadership Team Co-chairs:  
Beth Martin & Wayne Perrea  
Music Director - Keith Rollinson  
Church Secretary - Brook Batteau  
Nursery Attendant - Lisa Porter  
Facilities Staff- Pat Valeski

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### *From Pastor Benjiman Durfee*

Dear Trinity,

I hope that you all had a wonderful summer. I am grateful to report that I had many opportunities over the past few months to rest and reflect, visit friends and family, go on adventures, and store up some vitamin D and warmth for the winter! It is especially exciting that our beloved Bridge of Flowers reopened in August and now we have the joy of watching it grow each time we walk through town!

Some years, the end of summer feels bittersweet, but this year, I'm excited for all that is in store for us in the coming seasons. But before we go into all the details, I'd like to take a personal privilege to celebrate with you two new adventures that I'm beginning this month. First, I'm excited to announce that I've been chosen to participate in a year-long cohort called EcoPreacher. This cohort, offered by the BTS Center, Creation Justice Ministries, and Lexington Theological Seminary, offers monthly sessions to help preachers understand climate change and other environmental justice issues more deeply as spiritual crises that require creative, faith-rooted action. I am excited to begin this unique journey with my colleagues to deepen my understanding of our climate-changing world and resource myself and our congregation to faithfully respond.

I'm also excited to announce that I will begin working on my Master of Divinity part-time, online through Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, located in Evanston, IL. While I have been taking classes all along through the United Methodist Church's Course of Study, it has been a

goal of mine to pursue a Master of Divinity and deepen my theological education. I am very grateful to the Starkey Scholarship Committee who invited me to apply for and awarded me a scholarship for this first year of study. I'm grateful for all the support I've received from all of you and look forward to taking you all along on my seminary journey these next few years.

In the rest of this issue of the Quest, you'll find many exciting opportunities to connect with our ministry here at Trinity Church. I am especially looking forward to celebrating the annual world-wide ecumenical Season of Creation September 7<sup>th</sup> through October 5<sup>th</sup>. It is a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through celebration, conversion, and commitment together. **We'll begin the season with an outdoor worship service under the tent on September 7<sup>th</sup> at 10am.** Let's joyfully join in prayer and action for our common home!

Faithfully yours,

*Pastor Ben*

### JULY COMMUNITY CLOTHES CLOSET DATES



**Wednesdays, September 10th and 24th, 11:00-3:30**

**Saturdays, September 13th and 27th, 10:00-12:00**

### CROP HUNGER WALK

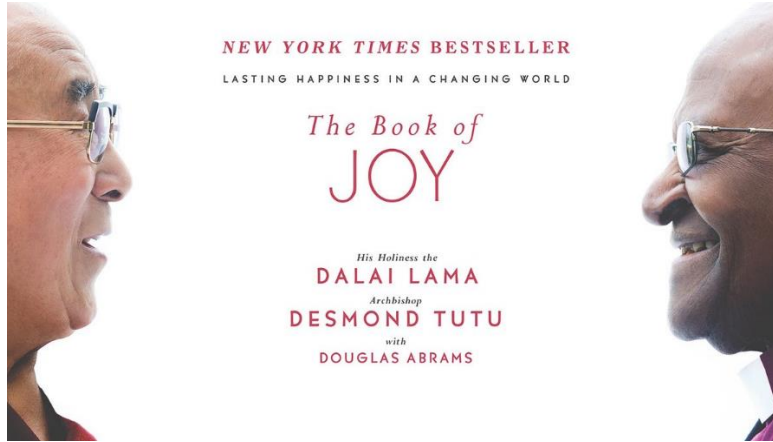
This Year's Franklin County Crop Hunger Walk is being held at the Trinitarian Congregational Church in Northfield MA on October 5. Registration is at 1 pm, walk is at 2 pm. Walking distances are optional, from 1 k to 5 k.

Money raised goes to World Food Organizations and money also goes to these local agencies: The Western Mass Food Bank, The Survival Center (Turners Falls), Franklin County Community Meals Program, West County Community Meals Program, and Hill town Churches Food Pantry. This Fundraiser has been an event close to our Trinity Church Family for Decades! Folks can either get envelopes to walk and raise money for the event or donate to someone who is walking in the event or donate to the Trinitarian Church's online site,

<https://events.crophungerwalk.org/crophungerwalks/team/northfield-trinitarian-congregational-church-2>. Please consider joining in any way that you can! For more information please call the church at (413) 625 2341 or Beth Martin at (413) 772-9937.



## BOOK OF JOY



### Join Us for a Joyful Journey Through "The Book of Joy"

*Wednesdays at 1pm | Starting September 3rd | 12-Week Series*

You are invited to a special book discussion group centered around *The Book of Joy* by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. In this uplifting and deeply inspiring book, two of the world's most beloved spiritual leaders share their personal stories and timeless wisdom about how to live with joy, even in the face of suffering.

Our group will meet **weekly on Wednesdays at 1:00 PM**, beginning **September 3rd**, and continue for **12 weeks**. Each session will offer space for thoughtful conversation, reflection, and fellowship as we explore what it means to cultivate lasting joy in our lives.

Whether you've read the book before or are picking it up for the first time, all are welcome!

**To sign up, email Pastor Ben at: [pastordurfee@gmail.com](mailto:pastordurfee@gmail.com)**

Let's walk this joyful path together.

## FROM THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

How can this be true....that summer is almost over and fall is just around the corner! We are feeling very grateful to have slipped a most Wonderful Trinity Church/Community Potluck picnic into our busy schedules this past Sunday! Many hands and many hearts joined together to share delicious food and camaraderie under the Trinity Tent. Great appreciation to all who helped set up the tent, and thanks to all who came and enjoyed this special event and extra thanks to our grill master Julie Bailey and our Unbelievable Entertainment: Dusti and Karyn Dufresne, with side songs by Nancy Parland and Wayne Perrea!

We are moving forward and looking for ways to expand upon our existing missions. Plans are in place to create a monthly food drive at Trinity Church. We will be placing our Trinity Shopping Cart in the Church for people to place food donations there throughout the month. Pastor Ben will then do a "blessing of the food cart" at the end of the month. Thank you to Gayle Davidson who assisted us by finding out what items are most needed in our

community! The Leadership Team is also now planning on organizing the Friday Night Community Meal once a month instead of every other month. Our next time to organize the meal is September 19th. Look for a sign-up sheet at church and thank you in advance for helping in any way you may be able to in these endeavors!

Nancy Parland has continued working on our options for other ways to donate to Trinity other than by check or cash. She has contacted a valuable company, Vanco, who seem to be the best option. More information on how to utilize this format will follow.

Thanks to Pastor Ben's research we will be having a 100% Mass Save paid re-insulation of the bell tower and our church offices! Wonderful news for heating and cooling savings in the future!

Finally, at the end of our last LT meeting we had a very special zoom meeting with David Abbott, Director of Stewardship and Leadership Development for the United Methodist Foundation. He was absolutely amazing and we have him scheduled to visit with all of us to enjoy on February 22, 2026!

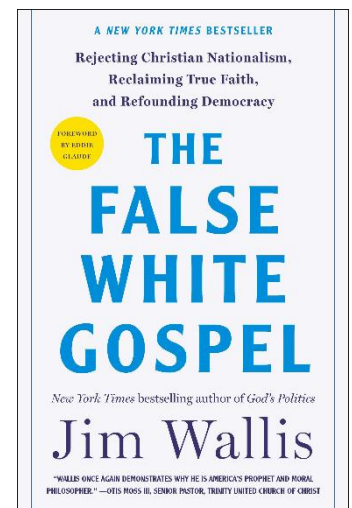
With Many Blessings From the leadership Team

*Sarah Neelon, Nancy Parland, Wayne Parrea, and Beth Martin*

### WHAT'S PASTOR BEN READING?

Each month in the Quest, I intend to include this new column: "What's Pastor Ben Reading?" My hope is that it can become an invitation into a conversation. Perhaps what I'm reading will peak your interest to either read it yourself, or start a conversation with me about what I'm reading. Sometimes, like this month, it will just be something that I've picked up myself; other months, I intend to share books or articles that I'm reading in seminary. While I can't always promise a quick turnaround time, I'm always grateful when you send me links to articles, videos, or books that you've found useful, too!

This month, in preparation for the upcoming talk with Jim Wallis (see article below), I'm reading his book from April 2024 titled *The False White Gospel: Rejecting Christian Nationalism, Reclaiming Truth Faith, and Refounding Democracy*. The book opens with a bit of history and defining of White Christian Nationalism and then the rest of the book focuses on specific passages from the Bible about neighbors, loyalty, discipleship, community, and peacemaking. Last fall, I read John Meacham's *The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels*, which talks about America's history through the lens of race. I found that Wallis' book seamlessly built upon Meacham's work and is a prophetic call to action for the Church. I highly encourage you to sign up for Wallis' talk on September 18th and if you get a chance, read this book in advance!



## CONFRONTING WHITE CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM WITH JIM WALLIS

Thursday, September 18, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. EST ZOOM

The **Committee on Christian Unity and Interreligious Relationships (CUIR)** invites you to a vital and timely conversation on the rise of **White Christian Nationalism**—an urgent issue facing both the Church and our democracy today.

We are honored to welcome **Jim Wallis** as our featured speaker. A leading voice in public theology and social justice, Wallis serves as the inaugural **Archbishop Desmond Tutu Chair in Faith and Justice** at Georgetown University's McCourt School of Public Policy, where he also directs the new **Center on Faith and Justice**.

Wallis is the founder of Sojourners, a bestselling author, and a nationally recognized advocate for faith in action. His latest book, *The False White Gospel: Rejecting Christian Nationalism, Reclaiming True Faith, and Refounding Democracy* (April 2024), has sparked widespread discussion on the role of faith in confronting extremism and rebuilding a more just society. His past leadership includes service on President Obama's first **White House Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships**, and recognition by Washingtonian magazine as one of **D.C.'s 500 most influential policy shapers** in both 2022 and 2023.

Join us as we reflect on how Christian communities can respond faithfully, courageously, and prophetically to the growing threat of Christian nationalism.

[Click here to register](#) or email Pastor Ben for more info, [pastordurfee@gmail.com](mailto:pastordurfee@gmail.com)

## A LONG TALK ABOUT TRUTH

**A Long Talk About the Uncomfortable Truth**, in conjunction with the New England Conference, is offering **four transformative Anti-Racism Activation Experiences** to equip congregations to move from resolution to action.

These sessions are designed to:

- ✓ Equip you with the tools and language to disrupt racism in real time
- ✓ Build courage to speak up with clarity and conviction
- ✓ Help your community transform discomfort into solidarity
- ✓ Live out your baptismal vows to resist evil and injustice wherever they appear

Together, we will put faith into action and build congregations where racism is no longer tolerated, but actively dismantled.

There are two more sessions coming up in September with additional dates begin scheduled in October and November:

7-9 pm Sept. 10 & 17, 2025

7-9 pm Sept. 23 & 30, 2025

[Register here](#) or email Pastor Ben for more info, [pastordurfee@gmail.com](mailto:pastordurfee@gmail.com)

## CALENDAR FOR SEPTEMBER 2025

Monday	1	9:30 Playgroup	
Tuesday	2		
Wednesday	3	9:30 Playgroup; 1 pm, <u>Book of Joy</u> ; Climate Chorus (7-8:30 pm)	
Thursday	4	9:30 am Recovery Support; 11 am Contemplative Prayer Group; 6 pm Creation Care Circle; 7 pm AA	
Friday	5	10:30 am Kids Movement; 5:30 pm Community Meal; 6:30 pm Recover Project	
Saturday	6		
<b>Sunday</b>	7	10 am service	
Monday	8	9:30 Playgroup	
Tuesday	9		
Wednesday	10	9:30 Playgroup; Climate Chorus (7-8:30 pm); 11 - 3:30 Clothes Closet; 1 pm, <u>Book of Joy</u> ; 7-9 pm A Long Talk	
Thursday	11	9:30 am Recovery Support; 11 am Contemplative Prayer Group; 7 pm AA	
Friday	12	10:30 am Kids Movement; Farmers Market; 5:30 pm Community Meal., 6:30 pm Recover Project	
Saturday	13	10 am -12 pm Clothes Closet	
<b>Sunday</b>	14	10 am. Service	
Monday	15	9:30 Playgroup	
Tuesday	16		
Wednesday	17	9:30 Playgroup; 1 pm, <u>Book of Joy</u> ; 3:30-7 <u>Resource Fair</u> ; 7-9 pm A Long Talk	
Thursday	18	9:30 am Recovery Support; 6:30 <u>White Nationalism Conversation</u> ; 7 pm AA	
Friday	19	10:30 am Kids Movement; Farmers Market; 5:30 pm Community Meal; 6:30 pm Recover Project	
Saturday	20		
<b>Sunday</b>	21	10 am service (Sun Day Sunday) ; 11 am Feasibility Team Update	
Monday	22	9:30 Playgroup	
Tuesday	23	7-9 pm A Long Talk	
Wednesday	24	9:30 Playgroup; 11 - 3:30 Clothes Closet; 1 pm, <u>Book of Joy</u>	
Thursday	25	9:30 am Recovery Support, 11 am Contemplative Prayer Group; 7 pm AA	
Friday	26	10:30 am Kids Movement; Farmers Market; 2-5 pm Plant Swap; 5:30 pm Community Meal; 6:30 pm Recover Project	
Saturday	27	10 am -12 pm Clothes Closet	Monday, Sept. 29, 9:30: Playgroup
<b>Sunday</b>	28	10 am service	Tuesday, Sept 30, 7-9: pm <u>A long Walk</u>



## PLANT SWAP

### SAVE THE DATE: PLANT SWAP September 26th 2-5pm

Trinity Church's Creation Care Circle will host a plant swap on Friday, Sept. 26 from 2-5 p.m. at the Baptist Lot on the corner of Main and Water streets, at the Shelburne Falls Farmers' Market. The rain date is Oct. 3. Bring a plant or two to trade and come enjoy the fun. Divided perennials and houseplants are all welcome!

## WEST COUNTY'S COMMUNITY RESOURCE FAIR

Trinity will once again participate in the Annual Community Resource Fair on Wednesday, September 17th from 3:30-7 pm at Mohawk Trail Regional High School. Join us for a day of connection and family fun! Bring the whole family for this free event filled with: food catered by Stone Soup Cafe, Activities for Children, Fule Assistance Info, SNAP/HIP Info, Book Giveaway, Face Painting, Gently Used Clothing, Services for Seniors, and a Walk-In Vaccine Clinic sponsored by Big Y. If you are interested in volunteering at Trinity's table, please email Pastor Ben: [pastordurfee@gmail.com](mailto:pastordurfee@gmail.com).

## TRINITY FEASIBILITY TEAM



Please join us at coffee hour on Sunday, Sept. 21 and Sunday, Sept. 28 to hear about the work the Trinity Church Feasibility Team has been doing. We're looking forward to sharing our thoughts and hearing yours as we look to the future of our beloved church and how we can best serve.

## TRINITY CREATION CARE CIRCLE

First, we want to thank Lois Bascom for her visionary and energetic leadership that has allowed this new team to swiftly find its footing this year. Lois will be stepping down from the team this month to shift her ministry focus in other directions. Please join us in thanking her for her joyful ministry!

Our next meeting will be Thursday, September 4th at 6pm. We are actively seeking new members. If you are interested in joining our team, you are most welcome to attend! We are excited to be hosting a plant swap later this month at the Farmer's Market as well as journeying through the Ecumenical Season of Creation starting September 7th.

On September 21st, as part of the Season of Creation, Trinity will participate in Sun Day Sunday, a day of action celebrating the power of clean energy. Here at Trinity, we've installed solar panels on our roof and are in the process of installing free EV Charging Stations in our parking lot. Our feasibility team has also been exploring the possibility of switching to heat pumps for a more responsible way of heating and cooling our church. Learn more about Sun Day Sunday at: <http://sunday.earth> and join us on the 21st to learn how your faith and voice can contribute to a brighter future for all of God's creation!

# *The Quest*

## LECTIONARY FOR SEPTEMBER 2025

September 7	Jeremiah 18:1-11; Psalm 139:1-5, 12-17; Philemon 1-21; Luke 14:25-33
September 14	Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28; Psalm 14; 1 Timothy 1:12-17; Luke 15:1-10
September 21	Jeremiah 8:18-9:1; Psalm 79:1-9; 1 Timothy 2:1-7; Luke 16:1-13
September 28	Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15; Psalm 91:1-6, 14-16; 1 Timothy 6:6-19; Luke 16:19-31

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