



# Trinity Presbyterian Church

## A VISION SYNOPSIS

### Our Core Values

1. **The Power of the Gospel.** We believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God for salvation. When lived out in its biblical fullness, this message has life-changing power for people and communities.
2. **The Priority of the Church.** We believe that the purpose of the gospel is to create a new community, the church of Jesus Christ. The church is a *sign*, an *instrument*, and a *foretaste* of the Kingdom of God.
3. **The Place Where God Has Called Us.** We believe that God has placed us here in order to live out the values of his kingdom in our communities. Location is not an accident! God calls us to serve our suburban communities and the entire New York City metropolitan area with the love of Christ, and to seek to spread the good news of his kingdom to the whole world.

### Our Motto

*Celebrating Christ  
Serving Our Communities*

### Our Purpose

The purpose of Trinity Presbyterian Church  
is to be a worshipping community  
of individuals and families  
that transforms our suburban communities,  
the New York City metropolitan area, and the world  
through proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ  
in word, deed, and lifestyle.

# Exposition of Our Core Values

## The Power of the Gospel

The gospel is the royal good news that the crucified and risen Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah of Israel, and the true King of all the nations. He offers new life—an abundant life of salvation and reconciliation with God—to all who trust him and follow him. Belief in the power of the gospel is a core value of Trinity Church in two ways:

1. Gospel confidence. We are committed to ministry with *gospel confidence* because this message is the power of God for salvation and, when understood and practiced in its biblical fullness, it can bring healing and maturity to anyone, any family, and any community. Because we remember that our own salvation is a miracle of God's grace, we *never* give up on any person, any situation, any community.
2. An outward face. We are committed to an *outward face* in all that we do as a church. Our neighbors and friends matter to God, and therefore they must matter to us! We are called by our Lord to love our neighbors as ourselves and to invite them into our lives and into the life of the church. Because all people are created in the image of God and for fellowship with God, those who do not yet believe are to be addressed with intelligence, warmth, and respect.

## The Priority of the Church

Our commitment to the priority of the church is seen in multiple ways:

1. Commitment to Christ is a commitment to the church. To be a Christian and to be a member of the church are two sides of the same coin. There is no such thing as a "Christian-at-large"; in the words of Eugene Peterson, "No Christian is an only child." The church is a *sign* of the kingdom of God—pointing people to the true King. The church is an *instrument* of the kingdom of God—the primary means God uses to advance his kingdom on earth. And the church is a *foretaste* of the kingdom of God—a glimpse of the glory of heaven itself. The church is not merely a human society; it is the people of God, the body of Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. In the words of St. Cyprian, "No one can have God as his Father who does not have the church as his mother." Our very name should remind us of this truth: God is a Triune fellowship, three Persons in one Being. Loving fellowship and community are older than the universe and the very center of reality.
2. Commitment to the church is a commitment to the historic Christian faith. We are committed to what Richard Baxter called "mere Christianity" (a term made famous by C.S. Lewis), what many have called the "Great Tradition" of Christian faith. As a church we are committed to an identity that is distinctively *catholic* (as summarized in the great ecumenical creeds), *evangelical* (committed to the authority of Scripture and the centrality of the gospel), and *Reformed* (embracing our Presbyterian heritage). We want to be a church that "majors on the majors" as we help people grow in depth.

3. Commitment to the church is a commitment to community. The purpose of the gospel is to create a new community, the renewal of fallen humanity. In this community we are called to love and enjoy both God and one another. Relationships of love, encouragement, support, and accountability should permeate the church's life. We are committed to forgiving one another, caring for one another, speaking the truth in love to one another. These goals cannot be met without the intentional gathering of people into relationships. Therefore, our network of Home Fellowship Groups is an essential part of the vision of Trinity Church.
4. Commitment to the church is a commitment to worship. Worship is the center of the Christian life, particularly as we gather each week to hear God's Word and to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion. As a church we are committed to worship that both builds up believers and challenges those who are investigating the Christian faith. We are committed to worship that is both liturgical (in keeping with the historic Christian faith) and dynamic (believing that Christ is present by his Spirit), that speaks both to the head and to the heart. First and foremost, Trinity Church is a worshipping community.
5. Commitment to the church is a commitment to discipleship. Everyone who professes faith in Christ is called to be his fully devoted disciple, seeking to follow him in every area of life. We are committed to seeing people grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. We believe that this includes *theological formation* (knowing the teachings of the Scriptures and the church and how to put them into practice), *spiritual formation* (growing deeper into union with Christ through the Word, sacraments, and prayer), and *ministerial formation* (understanding one's call to use his or her gifts for the kingdom of God).
6. Commitment to the church is a commitment to mission. The church exists for this purpose—to proclaim the gospel of Christ in the power of the Spirit so that people trust in Christ as Savior and Lord and serve him in the fellowship of the church. "To be baptized into Christ," said Lesslie Newbigin, "is to be baptized into his mission." In the words of Charles Spurgeon, "Every Christian is either a missionary or an imposter." We are a church committed to the Great Commission (see Matthew 28:18ff.) Jesus said, "As the Father has sent me, so send I you" (John 20:22). We are—every one of us—called to fulfill our Lord's commission by proclaiming Christ to our friends and neighbors, by inviting them to worship and other church events, and winsomely "gossiping the gospel." And we are all called to do our part in supporting the church's task of world evangelization.

## The Place Where God Has Called Us

We believe that the location of Trinity Church is providential and that God calls us to serve him in this place. The Westchester and Fairfield County suburbs of New York City are home to over one million people—living in small cities, larger towns, and quiet villages—and nearly 90% do not attend religious services on any regular basis.

- I. The call to the city. It is clear in the Bible that God has a special concern for cities. They are the places where most of the people live—and God loves people, made in his own image—and they are the epicenters of culture. In fact, while the biblical story

begins in a garden, it ends in a city, in the New Jerusalem. Christians are inherently urban people! At Trinity Church, we are not seeking to be a refuge from the city, nor are we seeking to be a mirror of the city. Rather, we seek to be a transforming force within this great metropolitan region. New York City cannot be transformed by the gospel without reaching our suburban communities! Therefore, we love the city and our place in this great region.

2. The call to our communities. These communities are often seen as wealthy suburbs, but that is only a small part of the truth. Many in this area are not wealthy; the need for ministries of mercy and social justice is great. Of course, many have abundant financial resources, and we are thankful that this has enabled us to be a resource church for the work of the kingdom. But from the spiritual perspective, these communities are quite poor; there is a poverty of the gospel! We seek to be a church that ministers to the diversity of people in our communities, and our dream is to multiply the number of gospel-centered Christians and churches in this place.

## Exposition of Our Motto

### Celebrating Christ

“Celebrate” is a word rich with theological significance. In the biblical understanding of life and worship we are called to remember who God is, what he has done, and to celebrate together in his presence. The first question and answer of the 17<sup>th</sup> century *Shorter Catechism* capture this well: “What is the chief end of man?” “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.” Throughout history God has called his people to review what he has done—his covenant promises and their fulfillment—and then to renew that covenant with our faithful worship and obedience.

A church committed to the power of the gospel will be a church that celebrates Jesus Christ. In worship we celebrate him as the way, the truth, and the life, and this worship spills out into every area of life. Through the Spirit, Christ is at work in and through his people. All our prayers and praises, our worship and our witness, our mission and our ministry spring from hearts that are celebrating the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

### Serving Our Communities

Jesus shows us what it means to serve, for he came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as the ransom for many (Mark 10:45). He demonstrated his royal authority by washing the feet of his followers—a task normally reserved for the lowest slave. The church is to follow her Master’s lead by becoming the people of the towel, the people of the cross.

William Temple, former Archbishop of Canterbury, famously remarked that the church is the only organization that exists for the benefit of its non-members. We are not here merely to serve ourselves or to dispense goods and services to religious consumers. No! We are to be the people of God sent on a mission. We want to see Christ change the lives of individuals, families, and communities as we proclaim the gospel in word, deed, and lifestyle. We are to

serve our communities, longing for them to be better places because we are here; we long to see the renewal of our communities in every way—socially, spiritually, and culturally. We exist to bring our suburban communities into an encounter with the kingdom of God.

## Exposition of Purpose Statement

Most of this has been covered above, so just a few points:

- Our basic identity is that we are a *worshipping community*. All that we seek to accomplish flows from this core identity, and this drives us to the center of our purpose—to see the world filled with worshippers of the Triune God.
- Trinity Church seeks to minister to *individuals* and *families*. These communities are often seen as “family friendly,” but in fact there are unique pressures on the family in this area. We seek to build healthier marriages, disciple our children in the faith, and minister to those who are single and to single-parent families.
- Our goal is to see *transformation*—not only of our *suburban communities*, but of the *New York City metropolitan region* and the entire *world*. Of course, we cannot do this in our own strength but only in prayerful reliance upon the Spirit. Neither can we do this alone; we work with many churches and Christian ministries here and around the world. We rejoice at being a *resource church* for the mission of the kingdom, and we are thrilled to be a part of this great urban area.
- This transformation comes as the Spirit works through our *proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ*. We proclaim in three ways: (1) in *word*, through preaching, teaching, and ordinary conversations, (2) in *deed*, through ministries to the needy, seeking to bring mercy and justice; and (3) in *lifestyle*, seeking to incarnate the values of the kingdom at home, at work, and in every area of life. All three are vitally important.

## Our Logo

We have chosen for the “face” of Trinity Church an ancient symbol of the Trinity called the *triquetra*. This symbol not only speaks to us about who God is, it also tells us who we are.

The three points (in red) remind us that God exists in three Persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Yet, these three are ultimately one God; notice that the symbol is one.

The circle (in green) reminds us that this Triune God is eternal. In the words of the ancient hymn, the *Gloria Patri*, “Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit! As it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.”



The Scriptures present to us a God of Three Persons who are always interrelated, always giving themselves to one another in love. The early Fathers of the church gave this truth the name *perichoresis*, literally a “round dance” of love and glory.

This reminds us that in the Christian understanding God is not some mysterious “unmoved mover” as he is in ancient philosophy, not the detached impersonal God of much of Western culture. Rather, God is profoundly interpersonal. As St. John the Theologian put it, “God is love.” The love that is at the center of the universe is the same love that led God the Son to become a man for us and for our salvation, that led him to give his life on the cross.

Since God is profoundly personal, he has created us in his image as interpersonal beings. We only truly discover ourselves in relationships. This is especially true in our relationship with God, for, as St. Augustine prayed, “You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until we rest in you.” But it is also true that true humanity is lived out in relationships with others. Christ’s death and resurrection bring healing not only to our relationship with God, but to our relationships with one another and the whole world. This means that a new community—the church—is at the center of God’s plan of salvation, and that the church is to be a sign, a foretaste, and an instrument of Christ’s saving rule.

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