Trinity Episcopal Church
Pocatello, ID
Est. 1889

“An old church with modern ideas.”

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Who We Seek

We seek a humble, confident shepherd who is spiritually grounded and embodies authentic love and inclusivity for our greater community; we seek a teacher and a gatherer, who will empower and challenge lay leaders – a partner who shares in discovering God’s vision for this community.
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Introduction

Welcome to Trinity Episcopal Church, an inclusive church community located in historic downtown Pocatello, Idaho. The first thing you will notice is the beautiful building with its stained glass windows, abundant in both Victorian style and religious symbolism. Once inside, you’ll be greeted by members of this eclectic congregation, join the incredible choir in song, pass the peace with people from every row, and be swept up in the rich history of this fellowship where all are welcome and everyone has a voice.

The story of Trinity is the story of change. Set against the backdrop of Transcontinental Railroad history, Trinity has weathered social, political, and economic change for the last 130 years. We are proud of that history, much of it recently compiled as part of the transition process, and even prouder of Trinity’s current community outreach and social-justice ministries.

Our Vestry gathered a small group of parishioners, the Transition Team, to shepherd Trinity through an internal transition process to reorient our parish, understand the difference between transition and change, identify who we are as a church community, and prepare ourselves for the balance of letting go and holding tight.

Our Transition Team held a Legacy Brunch to collect the memories of those members who have attended church at Trinity for more than 20 years. Then they began a long process of Story Gathering, which involved face-to-face interviews with all parishioners. Information gathered from these interviews was sorted and the patterns and trends began to emerge, giving the team a clearer picture of the values, priorities, and concerns of this congregation. Meanwhile, the team was sifting through articles, journals, and church newsletters to compile a comprehensive church history. With the guidance of our transition minister, Canon Lucinda Ashby, we held a series of parish meetings, including facilitated small group discussions and the lifting all voices.

A group of three writers, members of the Transition Team, was formed to create this Parish Profile, which we sincerely hope tells the authentic story of Trinity….where we have been, what we have, and what we need.
Our Story

Below are insights gleaned about our parish through the 2018 Story Gathering process.

We Find God In Each Other: Trinity members highly value the supportive relationships formed within our church community.

We Express God’s Love Through Inclusivity: We are outspoken on LGBTQIA+ inclusivity, emerging from our belief in the expansive fullness of God’s love.

We Feel God’s Presence in Words and Music: We express particular pride in the spiritual richness provided by our preachers and musicians.

We Are Episcopalians: We claim our Episcopal identity and tradition.

We Want to Grow: We are looking for leadership to help us to move forward and to challenge us to grow spiritually. We also want to grow our numbers.

We Are Willing to Work: We take satisfaction in contributing to the needs of our community and parish through service. When a seven-year-old heard about our desire for clergy leadership, he responded, “But I thought everybody was the leader at our church.”
Our History
1889-2019

In the first comprehensive history of Trinity Episcopal Church, Mona Lillibridge wrote, “In presenting this historical sketch it is with a keen sense of its many defects.” Many committed people and ministries are not given the credit they deserve. To flesh out Mona’s original document, we used Annual Reports and surviving editions of The Call in addition to information from the History Taking, the Legacy Event, and the Story Gathering process.

1889-1903: Pioneer Roots

Trinity Episcopal Church’s early history begins with the growth of the railroad. In 1889, the Rev. Bert Foster conducted the first Episcopal service in an assembly hall built for Pocatello railroad employees called “Town Hall.” At that time, a vast sea of sagebrush and prickly pears surrounded the town. The Rev. Foster conducted services in Blackfoot, Idaho Falls, Camas, Montpelier, and Pocatello.

When the original wood church was built in 1889, all city buildings not associated with the railroad were illegally erected on Fort Hall Reservation land. In 1890, the congregation purchased the lots on which the church had illegally stood.

The congregation then bought two lots and moved the original building to the current location. Shortly thereafter, the church was without a rector. The Rev. John Dawson of Blackfoot and his wife drove with horse and buggy twenty-five miles over the rutty road to Pocatello to persuade the discouraged congregation to carry on.

The Rev. Patrick Murphy arrived in 1896, beginning one of the most progressive periods of our history. Among other accomplishments, the Rev. Murphy organized a choir of 40 singers. The parish grew rapidly and Trinity began construction of our current stone building, completed in 1898.

Pocatello was a frontier town. People would often shoot their guns in the streets. One Sunday morning, a stray bullet crashed through a church window. No one was hurt.
1900-1940s: The War Years

The Rev. Arthur Saunders came in 1911 and one misfortune after another descended on the parish. First the church was robbed. Then the Rev. Saunders nearly lost his life when two small boys shot the altar window with a pistol. Mona Lillibridge bravely put a stop to target practice.

A spirit of unrest settled over the parish during World War I. The Rev. J.W. Dickerson was a forceful and eloquent speaker and expanded the congregation. He resigned in 1918 and the parish was without a rector until the Rev. C.H.L. Chandler arrived in 1921. He was an effective and innovative organizer.

The Rev. I. Q. Wood, a WWI veteran, arrived in the 1930s and took a great interest in the work of veterans’ organizations. The Rev. Mortimore Chester arrived in 1937 and worked to build our modern parish hall. Many who had strayed returned during this active period, until the onset of World War II.

1940s and 1950s: Revitalization

The Rev. Andrew Asboe wrote the following about his first days in Pocatello in 1943: “A kind of war-weariness had settled on the whole city. The few members in evidence at this juncture were depressed, discouraged, uncertain as to the future, and a little wary of the new Priest-in-charge.” After moving into the rectory, the Asboes hosted an Open House and the parish reciprocated with a reception.

Welcoming Reception for the Asboes

Hearing a commotion of giggles from the kitchen, Father Asboe investigated and found that the women (pillars of the church) had surreptitiously “spiked” the punch. The reception was a great success.

The Rev. Asboe’s community involvement breathed life back into the parish. Navy boys from the V-12 program at Idaho State University and airmen from the Pocatello Air Base attended Trinity.

In 1956, St. Andrew’s, a chapel on the campus of Idaho State University, began serving students and faculty as a parochial mission of Trinity.

1960s: St. Andrew’s

**1970s: Social Change**

During the 1970s, the Rev. John Tulk served as a stable force during a time of cultural change. The Rev. Tulk supported women in the congregation, saying, “We must develop parish activities for working women who have little free time. We must look for new ways.”

**1980s: Crossroads**

In 1980, the Rev. Tulk took a sabbatical and did not return to Trinity. The 1980s were characterized by frequently shifting clergy leadership. Despite the challenges, members continued to do good work, establishing “My Brother’s Table.” Members who began attending in the 1980s appreciated the reliability of prayer book liturgy. The Rev. David Clemons began to serve Trinity in 1988.

**1990s: Social Awareness**

With declining membership, Trinity was moved to Mission status and the Rev. Clemons departed. In 1993, parishioner Kathleen Kangas wrote the new [Trinity Mission Statement](#), affirming that we are all part of God’s Unfinished Tapestry. This metaphor continues to be a powerful vision statement for our parish.

The Revs. Alex and Nancy Nagy arrived in 1996. Bold and charismatic leaders trained in liberation theology, they shared their social consciousness through church, community, and organization activities. Within his first month at Trinity, The Rev. Alex Nagy called upon members to wear Rainbow Ribbons in support of gay and lesbian parishioners.

In 1997, the Rev. Nancy Nagy started “Our Gathering Place” for Pocatello High School students to socialize after school. In 1998, the Rev. Diane Paulson began our Women’s Prison Ministry. At the Bishop’s request, in 1999 Trinity formed the first Integrity Group for LGBTQIA+ individuals in the diocese of Idaho.

**2000s: A Change of Scene**

In 2001, the Revs. Nagys left Trinity and the Rev. Anne Beatty became rector in 2002. The Rev. Beatty was a quiet and introverted academic, with intellectual and mystical sermons. Her scholarly approach to spirituality was a marked departure from the Revs. Nagys’ style. Trinity completed the restoration of our stained glass windows in 2004. Due to parish financial constraints and challenges with her health, the Rev. Beatty left in 2010.
2010s: Moving Forward

From 2010 to the present, community priests, the Revs. Don and Diane Paulson, have selflessly served Trinity without compensation, along with lay leaders. Our leaders and members worked tirelessly on building improvements, including installing a new kitchen in the parish hall, repairing the steps of the parish hall, and repairing the mortar on the historic building.

After an Appreciative Inquiry Process was completed, we adopted our Provocative Propositions in 2012. We began a number of new and renewed ministries, including the Worship Committee, the Marketing Committee, the LGBTQIA+ Committee, and the First Friday Art Walk.

In 2014, we celebrated our 125th Anniversary with a special service. The Right Rev. Brian Thom presided and the choir was supplemented by the ISU Chamber Choir. In attendance were mayors of Pocatello and Chubbuck. Attendees of “My Brother’s Table” joined Trinity members for a feast following the service.

We began exploring the Trial Rite for Same Sex Blessings, and in 2016, the first same sex wedding was performed in our parish. Trinity co-sponsored a Mama Dragons presentation about LDS parents of LGBTQIA+ children. It was a highly visible event for 2017 in the community.

Our History Taking revealed a pattern of unresolved parish conflicts. These revelations were unsettling, but they enabled us to address our challenges, discover opportunities, and work toward health. Despite years of social upheaval in the community and financial challenge in the parish, Trinity parishioners continue to pursue our ministries with stubborn faithfulness.

“I hope that we continue to be open to living God’s love in the fullest way.”
–Judy Brutz, current member
Our Ministries

Trinity members are eager to help our community. Ministries attend to our church family, Pocatello, the surrounding region, as well as national issues. In some cases we advocate for serious social issues, while in other cases, we simply provide food for coffee hour. All of these services are essential.

Administration & Governance

Vestry
Trinity is governed by elected Vestry members, serving roles including Sr. Warden, Jr. Warden, and Clerk. Additionally, Vestry members are appointed as liaisons to all parish committees and groups, and report back to the Vestry as necessary. The Vestry has taken steps to increase parishioner involvement by holding parish events. Seeking to become more visible among the church community, members take turns serving as “Vestry on Duty” for every service.

“We recognize we’re all flawed. Despite fear, we walk in and feel hopeful. God loves us.”
– Jennifer Sterbentz, current member

Administration
Our paid staff includes a Parish Administrator, who is available during regular office hours. Our administrator assembles our monthly parish newsletter, The Call, creates a weekly bulletin, and serves as bookkeeper for the parish. The administrator also orchestrates participation in worship services, setting deadlines for members of the Worship Committee, and patiently sending out reminders when those deadlines are missed. This person also regularly attends to all parish communications.

Marketing Committee
To get Trinity’s name out there, the Marketing Committee uses newspaper announcements and radio spots, as well as events and involvement in community activities. We are currently using Facebook and Instagram as a way to reach potential congregants and publish regular invitations to services and other events. Social media is also a place to celebrate our inclusive and welcoming values. We also share content related to spiritual development, such as prayers and Bible verses, and history tidbits from our parish. Our goal is that social media will allow us to reach those Pocatellans who claim Trinity as their church, even if they don’t attend regularly.

Listening Sessions
As our Transition progressed, tensions ran high and conflict was revealed. The Vestry directly addressed this challenge by establishing listening sessions in order to more deeply understand the needs of the parish.

From these listening sessions, the Vestry heard what the congregants valued, and committed themselves to maintaining a closer relationship with parishioners.

We are learning to confront conflict in direct, healthy ways, and the parish is a more hopeful place.

“Listening Sessions” box

“We recognize we’re all flawed. Despite fear, we walk in and feel hopeful. God loves us.”
– Jennifer Sterbentz, current member

“Administration” box

“We are learning to confront conflict in direct, healthy ways, and the parish is a more hopeful place.”

“Marketing Committee” box
Worship Committee
The Worship Committee organizes the service schedule and the logistics of each service. Representatives from each part of the worship service serve on this committee, including clergy, lay preachers, trained worship leaders, altar guild members, ushers, lectors, and music directors.

Preachers
Preachers at Trinity include clergy members and trained lay preachers. As needed, lay preachers attend an annual Preaching Practicum organized by the Diocese in order to grow and earn re-licensing.

Worship Leaders
Worship Leaders are trained by members of the Diocese to provide Morning Prayer service to their parish. At Trinity, leaders work with the music director to arrange the service they are responsible for. Anyone who feels called to serve may take the training.

Eucharistic Ministers and Visitors
Eucharistic Ministers work with the presider to provide bread and wine during Sunday Eucharist. Eucharistic Visitors help to connect homebound or sick parishioners to their church family.

Altar Guild
The Altar Guild attends to the details of the service, caring for all church linens, paraments, vessels, and the altar itself.

Choirs
Our adult and youth choirs are small, but mighty, and “Those who sing pray twice.” Both the adult choir director and the director of the youth choir have written original music for Trinity, adding to the richness of the worship experience. Both choirs have also performed in community events.

Other Liturgical Ministries
Worship is also supported by a number of other roles such as ushers, bread bakers, lectors, and acolytes.
Education

Parishioners show a deep value for education in their lives and professions. This has not always translated into participation in educational opportunities at Trinity. Listed below are some areas where we have a track record of success.

Child Care and Christian Formation
Trinity offers child care before and during services, consciously providing religious instruction for a handful of children. Older children learn about worship and grow in their faith by participating as acolytes, lectors, and choir members. All our Child Care workers and Eucharistic Visitors have gone through Safeguarding Training to ensure those most vulnerable in our parish are given the best possible care and education while in our hands.

Education for Ministry (EfM)
After studying and discussing scripture, church history, Anglicanism, and ethics weekly over the course of four years, participants graduate with a certificate. In 2018, seven Trinity members graduated from EfM.

Bible Study
In the past, Bible Study has occurred every Sunday before church. There is a fresh opportunity for this study to reemerge during weekdays as well as Sundays.

Evangelism

First Friday Art Walk
Trinity embraces its Old Town location by participating in the vibrant community event, First Friday Art Walk, held every month. Shops, restaurants, and galleries in Old Town open their doors to host local artists and musicians, providing light refreshments and conversation. Trinity, on occasion, has hosted artists from our own congregation as well as visitors. Additionally, we’ve hosted live rehearsals of plays, musicals, and concerts. The historic church building itself also draws visitors, giving the host an opportunity to discuss our stained-glass windows, as well as answer questions about our congregation and the Episcopal Church.
Outreach and Social Justice

**Prison Ministry**
The Rev. Diane Paulson and trained volunteers provide a Eucharist Service or Bible Study each Sunday at the Pocatello Women’s Correctional Center. The Rev. Paulson has expanded her work at the prison to include a Story Link, a reading program. Inmates are recorded reading children’s books out loud, which are then sent to their children and grandchildren.

**My Brother’s Table (MBT)**
*My Brother’s Table* is Trinity’s longest-running ministry. Since 1982, MBT has served a hot meal in the parish hall and take-home food bags to anyone in need every Sunday. MBT provides the only free meal on Sunday afternoons in Pocatello. Numbers served range between 40-100 weekly. MBT has expanded to involve other churches, schools, businesses, and charitable organizations. 15 Trinity members currently volunteer for MBT.

“Trinity is the most genuinely welcoming community and the best display of unconditional love I’ve seen.”

– Debbie Newhouse, current member

**Our Gathering Place (OGP)**
The second-longest running ministry held at Trinity, *Our Gathering Place*, opens Trinity’s parish hall for 70+ teens to eat and socialize in safety and supervision every school day. OGP is partially funded by grants from United Way. Trinity supports OGP through funds for a director and assistant director.

**LGBTQIA+ Committee**
For over 20 years, Trinity has considered itself an open and affirming congregation. The LGBTQIA+ committee proclaims Trinity’s commitment to inclusivity, builds bridges with local groups, and provides a safe and loving message to the community of Pocatello. The committee arranged a lecture series on the topic of sexuality and religion. This committee creates a yearly booth at Pocatello Pride. We offer our parish hall, fee-free, to Gay-Straight-Alliances from the local high schools for pizza parties and social time.

**Portneuf Valley Interfaith Fellowship**
Trinity collaborates with other churches to promote interfaith relationships in the community.
Parish Life

Coffee Hour
The aroma of freshly brewed coffee isn’t the only thing to greet you at Trinity’s post-service coffee hours. Visitors are eagerly welcomed by members of the parish and are encouraged to come to the parish hall for refreshments, friendship, and fun. Coffee hour hosts prepare special recipes and offer other personal touches. During the Story Gathering, a couple of members admitted that the fellowship of coffee hour was as spiritually important to them as the formal worship services. Being together, around the communion cup and the coffee cup, nurtures us.

Episcopal Church Women (ECW)
Although the Diocese no longer has an Episcopal Church Women charter, ECW continues to share their gifts at Trinity.

The ECW is a pillar of our parish life, holding dinners, receptions, craft bazaars, rummage sales and other events to raise money for various ministries at Trinity, such as providing robes for our youth choir and college scholarships to young Trinity members. If you need to convince anyone to wear an Easter bonnet to church, ECW is who you call.

Christmas Puddings
In 1900, the women’s group began making traditional English Plum Puddings as a fundraiser from a secret recipe.

The original recipe was in pounds and pinches. Sally and Marie Webb deciphered and converted the recipe. Sis Kortum was fondly known as “The Egg Lady” for all the eggs she cracked over the years.

We recently let go of this fundraiser but the recipe is still secret and is in safe hands.

“We laugh quickly, but we get reverent quickly. Our seriousness is from reverence; our joy is from laughter.”
–Jason Bartosic, current member
Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care Team

Pastoral care is one of the most important ministries we can provide. Representatives of this team serve as Eucharistic Visitors to attend to hospitalized or homebound parishioners, ensuring they are treated with the utmost care and respect.

Prayer Chain

The prayer chain is another way to feed the spirit of those who participate. Each day, members pray together or separately for those on the prayer list, as well as for any other needs or concerns.

Shawl Ministry

The prayer shawl is of great comfort and joy to those who receive one. Since 2007, the shawl ministry has met monthly to knit or crochet. When the shawls are blessed by the presider, those who created it lay their hands on those who receive it. It is a beautiful and tender opportunity to bring the love of God and church family to those who need it.

Parish Demographics

Trinity’s current average Sunday attendance is 51 parishioners. Nine parishioners head south for the winter yearly. Most parishioners live between five and ten miles from the church. 40 members are actively involved in ministries.

Although we have very few young children attending with regularity, we are excited about the number of active teenagers (6) and young adults (28). Many of these young members are involved in the choirs and/or church outreach programs such as MBT and the LGBTQIA+ Committee.

”Unexpectedly receiving a prayer blanket after the difficult birth of my first child reminded me I was loved and supported by God and my faith community.”

-Elise Barker, current member
Our Community

**Shoshone and Bannock** tribes inhabited southeastern Idaho for hundreds of years before Lewis and Clark came across this area in 1805. The city was named after Chief Pocatello, a Shoshone chief who granted the railroad a right-of-way through the Fort Hall Reservation.

Trinity Episcopal Church is located in historic downtown Pocatello, founded in 1889 by gold miners and pioneers traveling the Oregon Trail and passing through the Portneuf Gap, south of town. Stagecoach and freight lines came next, followed by the railroad. These turned Pocatello into a junction for both trade and transportation, bringing some racial and ethnic diversity. Known as the Gateway to the Northwest when it was founded, Pocatello is still affectionately referred to as the “Gate City.”

Conveniently located on I-15, Pocatello is 165 miles north of Salt Lake City, UT and 140 miles southwest of Jackson Hole, WY, the gateway to both Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. The Pocatello Regional Airport, ten miles west of the city, offers multiple flights each day to and from Salt Lake City.

Founded in 1901 as the Academy of Idaho, the main campus of Idaho State University is Pocatello’s largest employer. ISU employs approximately 3,811 people and it happens to be the higher education choice for over 12,000 students from 58 countries. The university supports over 200 academic programs and is the state’s leading institution for health professions. Many Trinity parishioners are ISU employees, students, or alumni, and some once attended St. Andrews, our parochial mission that was located on the ISU campus before the two church communities were combined.
The City of Pocatello supports a population of approximately 55,000 people with a high school graduation rate of 93% and an average household income of $41,000. There are an estimated 20,425 households, and the average value of a single-family home is $135,500. Some residents believe Pocatello is poised for an economic and population boom with the coming of the Northgate Interchange.

Trinity is located in the “Old Town” Pocatello neighborhood, with Pocatello High School, the city’s oldest high school, constructed in 1892, directly across the street. The Old Town area includes parks, shops, small businesses, locally owned restaurants, service agencies, and several churches. Old Town hosts an Art Walk first Friday year-round, Revive @ 5 on Wednesday nights in the summer, and a Saturday Farmer’s Market from spring through fall. Old Town is located near the Portneuf River. Unfortunately, the river runs through a concrete channel in this part of town, but the City of Pocatello, urged by various community groups, has voted to support the Portneuf River Vision Study. This study is integrating policies and innovative ideas into a single plan for river restoration and community development.

Rated #3 of the 10 best U.S mountain biking towns with the lowest cost of living by Singletracks, Pocatello boasts miles of un-crowded single-track trails for biking, hiking, snowshoeing and skiing. Combine that with nearby Pebble Creek Ski Area and American Falls Reservoir, and an abundance of public lands for world-class hunting or fishing, and you’ve got year-round outdoor recreation for all!

Pocatellans also enjoy a range of performing arts. Options include listening to the Idaho State Civic Symphony perform in the lovely Stephens Performing Arts Center, enjoying dinner and a play at The Warehouse, or catching some live music in the loft at Portneuf Valley Brewing.
Our Finances

In 2019, Trinity’s Vestry hired an external auditor to review our finances, which empowered us to improve our budget practices and ultimately provide more security for the ministries we hold dear. As a result of the audit, we now have processes in place that make routine financial work easy and organized.

Current Budget (2019)

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Pledge Drive

The Pledge Drive to gather funds for the Trinity budget begins in early fall. The Vestry members in charge of the Pledge Drive write a letter to the parish and follow up through announcements and phone calls. This is an area that could use some strengthening and guidance. Just as with any family, talking about money can lead to strong emotional responses.

Giving Patterns

In 2019, we had 44 pledges for a total of $69,759. We have about 55 giving units, representing both those who pledge and those who give on a regular basis but did not pledge. Given the financial modifications we have implemented this year, the Mission Insights giving trends report may look different in the future.
Our Buildings and Grounds

The pink glass in the main altar window contains actual gold, so its price rises and falls with the gold market.

Trinity Pocatello consists of an historic church and a parish hall sitting on a corner lot in Old Town Pocatello. Erected in 1898, Trinity Episcopal Church is built of sandstone and Red Idaho Rock quarried from the Ft. Hall Indian Reservation. It is classified as American High Victorian Gothic in design. In 1978, Trinity was listed under the National Register of Historic Places.

Tradition holds that the stained glass windows were imported from Ireland. Sunday school children raised the money for these windows. The windows’ Victorian design is steeped in historical and symbolic meaning. Our building and windows create an atmosphere inspiring contemplation and spiritual awareness.

The church is flanked by two courtyards. One courtyard is used for limited parking, while the other – shaded under many trees and next to a basketball court – has hosted outdoor events and services. The Jr. Warden may appoint a Sexton, ask for volunteers, and/or take on the projects around the grounds. We hire helpers throughout all seasons to water and mow the lawn, tend to the flowers and shrubbery, and shovel the snow and salt the sidewalks for safety.

The church and parish hall are both wheelchair accessible. The church seats 152. The parish hall has a capacity of 285. Current member, Tim Cole, remembers helping expand the basement of the parish hall, saying, “If it weren’t for the teenagers, it wouldn’t have happened.”

Trinity members are attentive stewards of our buildings and windows. Legacy gifts from former parishioners help to preserve the buildings.

“Trinity’s Aeolian-Skinner pipe organ in the sanctuary uniquely enriches musical rehearsals and worship at Trinity.”

-Geoffrey Friedley, current member

Trinity’s Aeolian-Skinner pipe organ in the sanctuary uniquely enriches musical rehearsals and worship at Trinity.”