Trinity Episcopal Church

Melrose, Florida



Parish Profile

2026

Contents

Our Vision and Mission Statements 1

The Past to the Present
- Melrose 2
- Trinity 3

Our Congregation
- Membership 4
- Worship 5
- Christian Formation 5
- Fellowship 6
- Outreach 8
- Renewal 10
- Stewardship 10
- Strengths 10
- Challenges 11

The Future
- Goals 11
- Vision of our New Priest 11

Acknowledgement 13
- Search Committee
- Vestry
- Clergy
- Music
- Office Staff

Our Vision

To Proclaim the Gospel
in Community, Eucharist, and Servant Ministry.

Our Mission

The Mission of Trinity Church is to be a worshiping Christian Community which promotes the activities and involvement of its members in spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The Profile

This profile was developed by the Search Committee in the Summer of 2026, in support of the process to obtain a new priest for Trinity Episcopal Church. The profile describes the rich heritage of Trinity, the congregation today, and their vision for the future. There is great anticipation for the future of Trinity as it serves the spiritual needs of the Melrose community. Trinity eagerly awaits our new spiritual leader!

The Past to the Present

Melrose



The community of Melrose was platted in 1877. It is located on SR 26, 20 miles east of Gainesville and 20 miles west of Palatka. Situated in the lake region of north central Florida, Melrose is just 60 miles southwest of Jacksonville. Melrose sits on Melrose Bay at the southern edge of Lake Santa Fe, an outstanding Florida water resource which forms the headwaters of the Santa Fe River and is one of the largest lakes in Florida.



Melrose has an interesting history beginning in 1881, with steamboats traveling from Waldo's rail station via Lake Alto and Lake Santa Fe into Melrose Bay. Steamboats like the F.S. Lewis carried crates of citrus from the Melrose orchards across the lakes to Waldo. There they picked up northern visitors who wanted to spend the winter in our temperate climate. These steamboats ushered Melrose into its "golden age" which lasted until the freezes of 1894-1895, and wiped out citrus as a local crop. During those years approximately 72 homes were built and remain as historic homes lived in by residents.

The town takes great pride in its elementary school that consistently receives an A rating from the state. One of Trinity's members is credited with the creation of the popular year-round Melrose Youth Sports Association and other members of Trinity have been instrumental in the growth and expansion of the community funded Melrose Public Library as well as Historic Melrose Inc., always working to protect the community's historic neighborhood. The Melrose Business and Community Association represents local businesses.



Melrose is a center for art, both fine art and music. Melrose Center offers live music during the week, bringing in talented musicians from the region. The town is alive with music and art on the First Friday of each month as the town celebrates Art Walk, a walking tour of galleries and music venues.



The nearest city to Melrose is Gainesville, home of Santa Fe College and the University of Florida. Many residents come here for beautiful Lake Santa Fe and other smaller lakes and for the peace of living in a one traffic light town. The natives stay because of the beauty of the surroundings and because it's a great place to call home.

Trinity



Trinity Episcopal Church was initiated in a special service in 1881. In 1885 plans were made for a chapel and in 1886 a “Carpenter Gothic” style building was built. In 1887 transepts were added to the north end of the church providing space for an organ along with a sanctuary and sacristy. In 1915 stained glass windows were added, and in 1987 a Moeller Pipe Organ was purchased from Trinity Episcopal Church in Apalachicola, FL and installed.







Additional property was purchased in 1938-39 and the scouts of Troop 109 constructed a Scout Hut. In 1948, a chapel building was purchased from Camp Blanding, a military installation, and moved to the church property. The chapel building served as the parish hall until it burned to the ground in 1985.

With the support of church members and many outside friends, a new parish hall with classrooms and an office wing was built in 1986. In 1996 the Gano-Norton building was built which houses the church offices, a conference room and the ECW run Thrift Shop.



Parish Hall



Gano-Norton Building





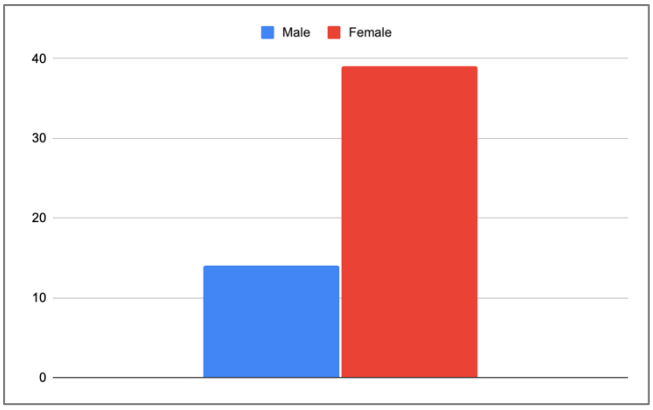
The Trinity Episcopal Memory Garden was established in 1977 to offer a resting place of beauty and tranquility. A plaque honoring the deceased is displayed by the garden.

Our Congregation

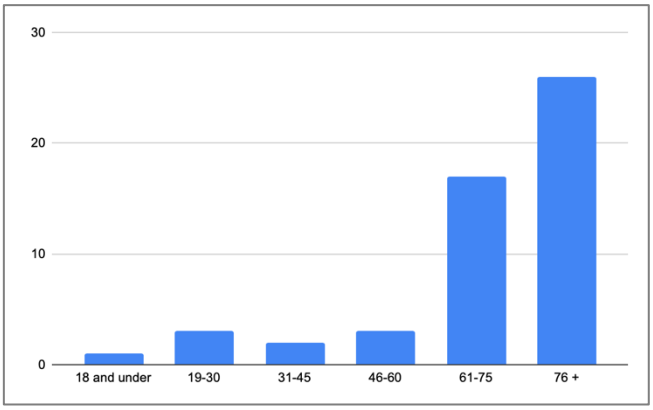
Membership

During the Spring of 2026, a church survey of members yielded over 50 responses. The following data is from this survey.

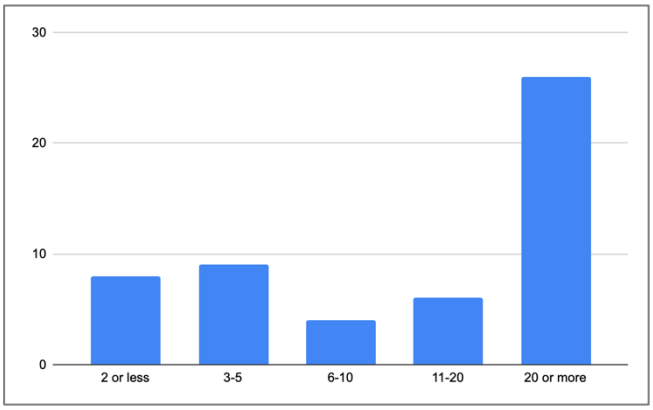
Gender



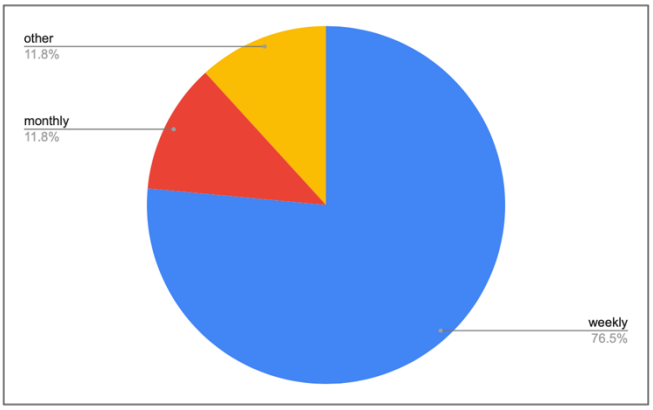
Age



Years Attended Trinity



Attendance



Worship



Regular worship services include:

Sunday - 10:00 a.m.
Eucharist Rite II

Wednesday - 5:00 p.m.
Holy Eucharist and Healing Service





Our services are enhanced by dedicated church members. The altar guild, composed of a group of devoted women, ensures that the sanctuary is lovingly prepared for each service. We also have a group of members who serve as acolytes, readers, ushers and greeters.





Church services regularly take place in the historic sanctuary. To accommodate increased attendance for Christmas and Easter, services are held in the parish hall.

Christian Formation

Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study

A study group focuses on reading and discussing the books of the Bible. A lively discussion is held in the Wicker Room of the Parish Hall and is led by the priest. A group often gathers at a local restaurant, Betty's Pizza, for lunch prior to the Bible Study.

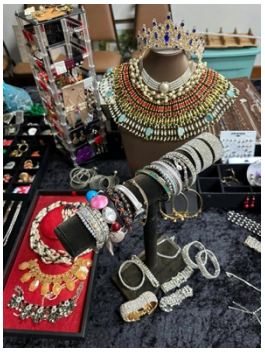
Fellowship

Fellowship at Trinity is one of our strongest assets. More members participate in our fellowship activities than in any other aspect of our church. This fellowship is a solid foundation for the "family feel" at Trinity. The following is a list of fellowship events we hold. *Funds raised at our special events are contributed to Trinity's General Fund as well as used for various Outreach Projects.*

- **Sister Circle** – Women's fellowship ministry featuring knitting, crocheting, embroidery and other crafts meets weekly in the Wicker Room of the Parish Hall. Prayer shawls created by this group are available for anyone needing comfort.

- **Bazaar** – Every November, the ECW holds the Fall Bazaar with the offering of crafts and bake sale items. We also feature rooms of Christmas items, jewelry and designer handbags, as well as vintage items, art and furniture.






- **Furniture Sale** – Donations of contemporary, vintage, and antique furniture are sold at an event held annually. A team of volunteers work together throughout the year, collecting, cleaning, and polishing various items.

- **Good Old Summertime Dinner and Basket Auction** – People throughout the Melrose community attend our annual chicken dinner and gift basket auction. The baskets, created by members of the church and community, carry a common theme within each basket.





Fellowship, continued

- **Merry Melrose Parade** – In December, we join the Melrose Community in the Merry Melrose festivities. Our Thrift Store collects stuffed animals donated throughout the year and our Santa's "Elves" hand them out along the parade route.





- **Nativity Walk** – During and after the parade, the parish hall is open with a display of Nativity scenes, with activities for children, in addition to hot chocolate and cookies.





- **Potluck Sunday** – On the first Sunday of every month, we have a potluck luncheon. This has proven to be a wonderful opportunity for all parishioners to spend time together.

- **Lenten Luncheon** - Churches in the surrounding community take turns gathering for fellowship over a meal. Last year, 100 people came to Trinity to share a meal, meet new and old friends and hear a talk by a visiting Pastor.



- **Lenten Soup Suppers –** On Wednesdays during Lent, St. Mark's in Starke, Immanuel Anglican Church in Keystone Heights and Trinity gather for a soup supper, a program and Eucharist, rotating host locations.




Outreach

Acting on Faith - Trinity is actively involved in outreach to the Melrose community. We have provided funds for those in need. In this respect, we have provided money for gas, electricity and other living expenses to families requesting assistance. Church funds are contributed to the Melrose Library, Camp Weed, the United Thank Offering, the Cuban Relief Fund, Priest's Discretionary Fund, the Norton Outreach Fund, and the Episcopal Relief Fund.

Trinity also supports the following organizations:

- Lake Area Ministries
- Pack a Sack (MES)
- AA
- Rodeheaver Boys Ranch
- Melrose Youth Sports Association
- Trinity Church, Bermejas, Cuba
- Our Little Roses Orphanage, Honduras
- Thanksgiving in the Park
- Good Samaritan Bags for Homeless
- Front Door Ministry Bags

Trinity Thrift Shop - Trinity Thrift Shop is an ongoing project run by the ECW and volunteers who sort and sell items of clothing and miscellaneous household goods. The proceeds from the bi-weekly sales go to outreach in the community. In the event of a special need or emergency, the Thrift Shop is made available to families to fill their basic needs.





Pack-a-Sack – Members of the church assemble snack bags for approx. 30 students who are at risk of hunger over the weekend. In addition to food items, these sacks contain a book donated by the Friends of the Library.



Good Samaritan Bags for Homeless - Members of the church assemble "Good Samaritan Bags" to give to the homeless. The bags are placed in this basket which is always available in the church, ready for pick up on the way out the door.

Thanksgiving in the Park – An annual celebration of community spirit as Trinity hosts Thanksgiving in the Park on Thanksgiving Day in the Heritage Park, directly across the street from the church. Over 300 meals are served. Members of the community also join in to help in many ways.











Angel Tree – Coordinated with the Guidance Counselor at Melrose Elementary, Trinity receives a list of children in need for our Angel Tree. Members of the church select requests from the tree and make purchases. Those presents are then delivered to the school by volunteers.

Blessing of the Animals – Trinity hosts an annual ceremony where pets receive a prayer of health, protection and thanksgiving. It is traditionally held nearest to the feast day of Saint Francis in October and located in the park across the street from the church.





Renewal

Cursillo - Members of Trinity participate in Cursillo. This group hosts meetings for Ultreya and members attend area meetings monthly.

Camp Weed Summer Camp - Youth from Trinity are offered the chance to attend Camp Weed. Through many decades, Trinity has actively encouraged students to attend. The Trinity ECW and the Yerkes Fund have provided funds toward their summer camp registration fees. In the past, members of Trinity have also served the Diocese as summer camp counselors, head counselors, assistant camp directors, and volunteers.



Stewardship

We are blessed here at Trinity to have a congregation which responds to the time, treasure, and talent needs of the church in a very generous way. Our stewardship drive is based on our response to God's many blessings in each of our lives. We also have many people who give the precious gift of time and talent to our Thrift Shop, to leadership, to care for our grounds and buildings, to our community spiritual life, to working the kitchen, the office and the church, and to the needs and concerns of others in our church and the world beyond.

Strengths and Challenges

Our Strengths

- **Worship** - Our services, Wednesday evening and Sunday morning, have a loyal following and steady attendance. Special services draw a large crowd and are held in the Parish Hall.
- **Fellowship** - This is a great strength of our church. It is important to our members to spend time together. We chat with each other after services at our coffee hour and monthly potluck lunches. We plan celebrations which are enhanced by homemade food provided by members. We love to play, work, and pray together. We truly are a family.
- **Parishioner care** - If parishioners have a need or face a challenge in life, their fellow parishioners are the first to step forward to help them, with prayer, food, transportation, or many other needs.
- **History & tradition** - Our church building dates to the early days of Melrose and is considered a gem by the local historical society. While our Sunday service worship style is traditional, our Wednesday evening service offers a more contemporary style with acoustic guitar.
- **Facilities** - We have a well-maintained historic church building. Our parish hall is often used as a meeting place for local organizations and entertainment functions.

Our Challenges

- **Attracting new members** of all ages is important for the growth of Trinity.

- **Financial sustainability** by meeting the budget, increasing stewardship, and ensuring adequate financial support are continual concerns.

The Future

Goals

- **To increase participation** of Trinity's membership in worship and ministry, deepening spiritual growth and commitment to Christ.

- **To increase our church membership** by reaching out to newcomers and visitors, providing fellowship, spiritual support, and Christian commitment.

- **To insure that physical and financial resources** are available to meet present and future needs of the church and that they are managed faithfully and responsibly.

- **To strengthen our Christian Formation** program to meet the needs of all ages.

Vision of Our New Priest

Trinity Episcopal Church seeks to call as priest someone who is filled with the presence of God and is skillful in sharing that faith with others.

We realize that all candidates will have their own unique combination of qualifications and talents. As a congregation, we have identified the following areas as important to the growth and well-being of our parish:

- **Worship** - We seek a preacher who has a strong personal faith and uses that faith to carry the word of God in sermons which relate to everyday life and will guide the congregation through difficult times with compassion and wisdom.

- **Spiritual Guidance/Education** - We seek a teacher who can lead us in the formation of a deeper spiritual life.

- **Communication** - We seek a skilled leader who is approachable, sincere, a good listener and has a good sense of humor.

- **Pastoral Care and Accessibility** - We seek a pastor who honors the need to nurture and minister to the personal concerns of parishioners in a caring and loving way. We desire someone who is welcoming, friendly, and compassionate.

- **Outreach** - We seek an ecumenical leader who is active in the broader community and will help our outreach mission. We view this role as enabling our congregation to respond to the needs of our parishioners, our community, and the world beyond.

- **Growth** - We seek a community builder who will help us grow our church.

In summary, we seek to grow in spiritual life, in church participation, and in church membership. We seek a priest who will lead us in these efforts, laugh with us in our successes, love us when we fail, and lift us up rejoicing in the power of God.

Acknowledgments

Search Committee
- Laurie Alsobrook, Co-Chair
- Cynthia Booth, Co-Chair
- Glenda Geraci
- Dana Hoffman
- Liz Middleton
- Angela Roberson
- Virginia Smith
- Laurie Thrift
- Ken Wacha

The Vestry
- Debbie Brown, Sr. Warden
- Elaine Ashley, Jr. Warden
- Donna Eichelsderfer, Jr. Warden
- Figg Poncher, Treasurer
- Linda Wilcox, Secretary
- The Reverend Diane Reeves, Interim Rector
- Jeanne Homany
- Jan MacKenzie
- Lynn Sunderland
- Kathi Warren

Church Staff
- The Reverend Diane Reeves, Interim Rector

Music
- Figg Poncher, Organist

Office Staff
- Linda Wilcox, Parish Administrator
- Figg Poncher, Financial Administrator

Trinity Episcopal Church
- Physical Address: 204 State Road 26, Melrose, FL 32666
- Mailing Address: P.O. Box 361, Melrose, FL 32666
- Office Phone: 352-475-2177
- Email Address: trinitymelrose@windstream.net
- Website: https://www.trinitymelrosefl.org
- Social Media: https://www.facebook.com/TrinityEpiscopalChurchMelroseFlorida/