

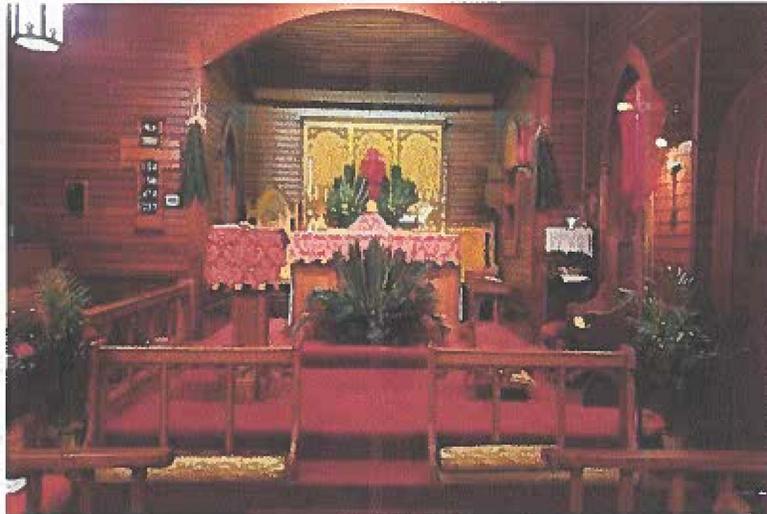
# Trinity Episcopal Church, Morgan City: A Family

2024 Church Profile created by members of Trinity Episcopal Church

Trinity Episcopal Church in Morgan City, Louisiana, is an historic church located in the downtown area two blocks from the Atchafalaya river. The church is on the historical walking tour of our city. Parishioners meet weekly to celebrate the Eucharist and give thanks for the blessing of life, health, happiness, and good company. After Eucharist, members gather in the Parish Hall for a social hour where life stories are shared with the church family. On the first Sunday of each month, a potluck brunch is held in the Parish Hall after the service where attendees sit and visit over a plate of homemade casseroles and desserts. The monthly potlucks help nurture the heart which makes Trinity Episcopal Church in Morgan City, LA, so special, a family. Trinity is family, doing the work of Christ in a small community in St. Mary Parish, LA.

## What We Do

### Worship



The Eucharist is a central part of life at Trinity. Holy Eucharist or Morning Prayer is offered at 9:30 AM each Sunday, depending on the availability of a supply priest. Further, a service is offered on Holy Days such as Christmas Eve, Easter Sunday, and Ash Wednesday.

Traditional music is central to worship with a small choir, organist, and instrumentalist playing and singing. Songs are primarily classical pieces or from *The Hymnal 1982*. The choir has also sung music from popular Christian artists.

Additionally, a supply priest serves the needs of the parish and community by celebrating

when needed for a funeral Eucharist, weddings, baptisms, and anointing of the sick. Confirmations and receptions into the church are traditionally offered when the bishop comes to celebrate these momentous occasions. The priest provides weekly blessings at Sunday Eucharist for birthdays and wedding anniversaries and offers unction for those wishing to be anointed. Home visits offer comfort, support, and Eucharist where needed. Further, lay ministers take Eucharist to homebound parishioners.

Formation for adults, children, and teens has also been part of our parish. Adult Bible Study has been held on Sundays before Eucharist or on a weeknight with the priest or a theologically trained parishioner providing education and insight. At one time a Sunday School was also offered so parents could attend Eucharist while their children received age-appropriate instruction about the weekly readings and message. This is not currently offered because there are few children who attend church service. Summer Vacation Bible School has been provided by Pharr Chapel Methodist church with adult and teenage members of Trinity assisting, and it has been well attended by children from Trinity and other churches in the Morgan City area. Trinity has offered teen activities and sponsored students at Camp Hardtner (some who have gone on to become camp counselors). Finally, several parishioners have made their Cursillo and subsequently become active in the Cursillo movement and served on staff for retreats.



### Mission and Community

Trinity is a parish of mission, serving others in St. Mary Parish, Louisiana, and the world at large. Mission is accomplished in a multitude of ways.

### Trinity Outreach

One of the highlights of Trinity Episcopal Church is providing needed outreach in our community.

## Shrimp and Petroleum Festival



Trinity is located in the historical part of town where the Morgan City Shrimp and Petroleum Festival is held annually on Labor Day weekend. While the festival is enjoyed by young and old, it is a very hot time of year. After a day of carnival rides, music, dancing, eating, and artisan crafts shopping, many people gather in the park one block from the church for an evening of music. The park is lined with food trucks selling a variety of delicious food. A court and ball is held Saturday night with the crowning of a festival queen. Sunday morning there is a Roman Catholic mass in the park with a procession to the Atchafalaya river where a priest blesses the boats as all pray for a good shrimping season. A boat parade is held on the river with the queen and king of the festival toasting each other. Then the queen and her court parade through town on Sunday afternoon, riding by both the park and Trinity. On Sunday night fireworks light up the sky two blocks from the park. Trinity has hosted visiting queens at a luncheon in the Parish Hall and offered chairs and cold water to festival guests.

## Bayou BBQ Bash



Trinity participates in the Annual BBQ Bash by hosting the judging portion of the competition in the parish hall. The competition is an officially sanctioned function with all the submitted brisket and chicken donated to Trinity for charitable distribution to those in need in our community. Church members process, vacuum pack, and freshly freeze around 100 lbs. of BBQ each event. This food is provided to those in need upon request.

## Food Donations During the 2020 Pandemic Lockdown

Many of the residents in our community depend on the school lunch programs to help feed their children. As the initial weeks rolled into months without businesses, government offices, and schools, some in our community suffered. Everyone wanted to do something. The young people of Trinity reached out to local schools and arranged for a donation day before the government or anyone else had a chance to respond. The outpouring of donations and stewardship from Trinity was very inspiring and greatly appreciated by those in need of a helping hand.



**Ecumenical Spirit**

For several years Trinity has participated in Pharr Chapel Methodist offering a Good Friday fish fry in Lawrence Park. The entirely free menu consists of fried catfish, coleslaw, white beans and rice, with French bread and dessert (usually a tasty sheet cake). In years past, we have had live Christian music in the park's pavilion and the "Stations of the Cross" are walked around the circumference of the park at noon. Each year, 600 to 700 meals are distributed within the span of three hours during this event. It has become a local tradition for many of the residents of our community.



**Care for Local Law Enforcement, First Responders**

Each week Trinity prays for the first responders, law enforcement officers, and members of the military. We also provide Christmas Eve treats to those working that evening.

Parishioners bake cookies and make candy to take to those serving others at the local hospital, police stations, and firehouses.

Additionally, Trinity has provided meals to thank our local law enforcement officers and first responders for the work they do for us. A lunch was held at the parish hall, served by some of our parishioners, to thank our Law Enforcement Officers and Fire Fighters for all they do for us.

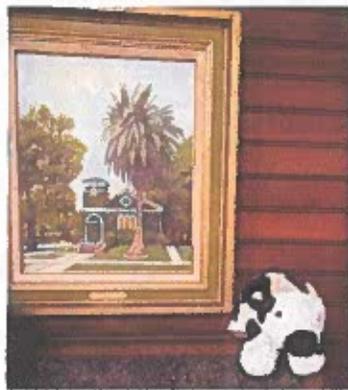


Care for Others in our Community

Each Christmas Trinity gives gift cards to elderly community members at the St. Mary Parish Council on Aging, and Trinity gives beans and rice and other needed items to St. Mary Outreach for those in need. Backpacks and school supplies are collected for children for distribution at local schools for children unable to pay for their own.

Episcopal Church Women hold both Christmas greens and bake sales, using this money to help the less fortunate in our community. ECW members present gift cards to St. Mary Outreach at Christmas for teens and elderly in need, enabling them to purchase gifts for themselves. Episcopal Church Women oversee the Church Periodical Club which helps seminarians purchase textbooks. The money is also used to purchase spiritual reading material in countries suffering from poverty. Trinity also has Spring and Fall Ingathering for United Thank Offering. Members also serve wherever needed, when called, at the parish, diocesan, and national level.

Trinity has also always been concerned about those in our world at large, not just those in our local area. Each Sunday prayers are offered for our prayer partners in Uganda, Japan, and Honduras. In the past we have sent parishioners to do mission work in Honduras, helping local villagers work on various building projects and teaching local children about Christ's message through stories and crafts. Shoes, clothes, toys, and personal hygiene items are given to those in need on the mission trips. Mission teams have also collected funds to help Hondurans help themselves with their various needs.



Recently, Trinity started donating to The Heifer Fund International each month. A cow sits on the wash stand in the narthex to collect donations. This worthy charity takes donated money and purchases chickens, heifers, or goats for those in undeveloped parts of the world. The respective eggs, cheese, or milk produced provide food and additional income for the families who care for these animals.

Trinity also assembles baskets for new mothers who need financial assistance. The baskets contain baby needs such as lotion, wash cloths, and a \$50 gift card for the family to buy diapers. The baskets are delivered to a local obstetrician who knows which mothers are in need of help. When all the baskets have been dispersed, the doctor calls Trinity for more baskets.

Another new outreach endeavor was inspired by the incredibly hot weather endured during the summer of 2023. Trinity purchased bikes for people who have to walk to work and outfitted the bikes with a helmet and lights for night riding. Grocery stores and fast food restaurants were contacted for names of people who could use help with transportation.

## Who We Are

Our Parish Demographics

Trinity is a small but busy parish in rural South Louisiana. Members share Christ's message of love through their time, talents, and treasure, not just in the church's parish life but in our personal lives as well. Members are from all backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses. Our members are doctors, teachers, law enforcement officers, first responders, business owners, oil and maritime industry workers, and students. Some work in service industries and some are stay at home moms. In 2020, there were 62 active members in our parish (56 adults and 6 youth). Since Covid, some members have not returned to church, so church attendance is usually between 30-35 people. While we may seem little, we are indeed a powerful force in our community. *We believe that with growth, there is so much more we can do. As we enter our fourth year without a priest (August 2023), our attendance is down to approximately 20-25 each Sunday.*

### Our Parish Life

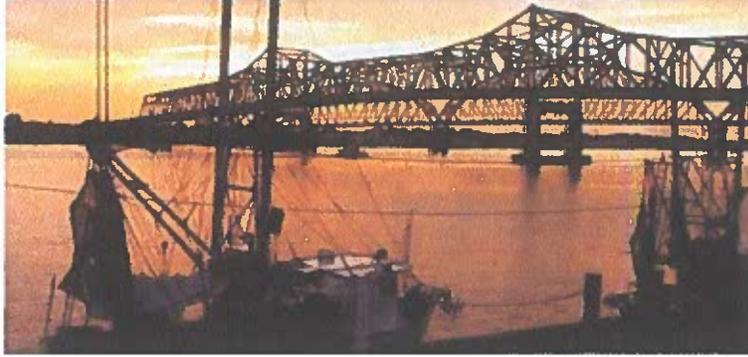
While service and worship are large parts of who we are as a church family, Trinity is also a vibrant, small community. Members enjoy ECW socials at Christmas and the annual St. John's tea. Members represent Trinity Morgan City at both the ECW Annual Gathering and Diocesan Annual Convention. Last, our parish gathers for weekly Wednesday Lenten Evening Prayer and soup dinners hosted by parish families.



*Trinity Enjoying St. John's Tea*

Trinity is present for each other in the joys of life: births, marriage, new jobs, good medical reports, successes at work, and the celebration of Sunday Eucharist in person. Members are also there for each other in the sadness of life: deaths, illness, job loss, and moves of parishioners to other communities. We laugh, support one another, celebrate one another, and would love to have more people become part of our parish community.

### Our Community



Morgan City was originally named Brashear City for Dr. Walter Brashear, a prominent physician who settled in the area from Maryland. He owned three large sugar plantations, Tiger Island Plantation, Golden Farm Sugar Plantation in Berwick and Bayou Boeuf Sugar Plantation, eight miles east of Morgan City.

Brashear City was embroiled in the Civil War from the very beginning. Preparing for the war, three forts were built: Fort Berwick, across the bay, Fort Chene, eight miles to the south, and Fort Bisland, located near Patterson where the H.P. Williams Airport is today. With the fall of New Orleans on April 25, 1862, the forts were abandoned. The Union erected two sizable forts: Fort Brashear became known as Fort Star and Fort Buchanan, a mile north of Morgan City. Union forces brought in swelled to 16,000 men in Brashear City by 1863. Many families left and went to Mexico only to find their homes and businesses destroyed when they returned home.

In May, 1876, a committee of the council, along with Mrs. F. Brashear, widow of Henry Lawrence, changed the name of Brashear City to Morgan City and donated land downtown for a park named Lawrence Park. Charles Morgan was a great benefactor who made the Atchafalaya River town a booming port for years. He is credited with owning the first steamboat to navigate the Gulf of Mexico and in his lifetime owned over one hundred vessels--more than any other single man in American history. He extended the Gulf-Western Texas and Pacific Railroad from Indianola to San Antonio and when he was more than 70 years old, he dredged a deeper channel through the Atchafalaya Bay to accommodate his fleet of steamboats.

Anyone who has ever been to Morgan City, or heard of it, knows of its connection to the shrimp and petroleum industries. There is even a festival each Labor Day weekend to celebrate: The Shrimp and Petroleum Festival. Morgan City once celebrated the proud title of Shrimp Capital of the World and when oil was discovered in the Gulf of Mexico, the city became a boom town. Shrimp is still harvested in the Gulf and shrimp can be bought fresh off the dock in Morgan City, but much of the oil industry has moved on to other areas.

### Trinity Episcopal Church History

Morgan City's Trinity Episcopal Church, founded in 1874, is one of the oldest congregations of worship in eastern St. Mary Parish. Dedicated members and generous

benefactors sustained Trinity in the early years and enabled the growing congregation to weather the hardships of the Reconstruction Era, the terrors of yellow fever, and more recently the Covid 19 pandemic. In 1878, the local school had closed for lack of funds, so a schoolhouse, which could be used for divine services on Sunday, was constructed by Trinity and sixty students were enrolled.

In 1911 the church was remodeled with the project funded by Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Methodists, and Jews as well as Episcopalians. The rapid development of the offshore oil industry in Morgan City in the years following the Second World War enabled the church to expand and flourish. The church remained a mission until 1956 when Trinity called its first resident priest, the Reverend James Douglass, who helped the mission church move to parish status the following year.

The church is lovingly referred to as "the Little Green Church on the Corner" by people in the community. As oil companies moved from Morgan City to Lafayette and Houston, membership dwindled.

## Our Hopes For the Future

### Survey Results from Trinity for new rector

February-March 2021

Areas of expertise most important for new rector were

1. Church Growth-We would appreciate having a priest who could help guide and lead us to increase our parish size with new members in our congregation each week. We would love to see an influx of young families and single people who are actively involved in parish life and bring new ideas to the parish community.
2. Counseling-We would like a priest who could provide spiritual, personal, and family counseling. A priest who has experience working with older parishioners and their needs would be wonderful.
3. Crisis Ministry: Having a pastoral presence during a major event is comforting and very much needed.
4. Pastoral Care-We would like a priest who would visit our church members at home when life events occur, both good and bad. We would want a priest who would share our joyous events like baptisms and graduations as well as hard times like job loss, illness, and death.
5. Theological Background-Our priest should be able to lead and teach about matters of theology and biblical interpretation at Eucharist and during other times of religious formation. He or she should be able to work with and reach young children, teens, young adults, and older adults.

6. Worship-Our priest should have the ability to plan and conduct worship as a central event. The Eucharist is very important to the spiritual life of Trinity.

While all areas are of importance, the least important is capital development. We have traditionally been able, through generous benefactors, to maintain financial stability.

Other areas of importance not listed in the survey were

1. Inclusive of all people: Our priest should be willing to work with all people from all walks of life who enter our church.

2. Keeps politics out of church: Our priest should be able to be politically neutral. Many of our parishioners are conservative. Others are more liberal. We are a parish that respects all who come to our church family. We hope our priest will be able to work with all of us.

3. Integrity in all aspects of life and work: Finally, we want a priest who lives out Christ's message in his or her daily life, representing our parish and the Episcopal Church in all that they do.

A sentence that describes Trinity:

Trinity is a spiritual, loving, giving church. The historical church's members have big hearts and deeply care for each other.

Financial compensation: Trinity follows the diocesan recommendations for salary based on years of experience.

Our Social Media

We can be found on Facebook as Trinity Episcopal Church ([www.facebook.com/trinitymcla](http://www.facebook.com/trinitymcla))

Our Contact Info:

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302 Greenwood Street  
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(985) 384-7629  
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Our Vestry

Lisa Parsiola, Senior Warden  
Judy Weber, Junior Warden  
Mary Hughes

Sam Jones  
David Webster

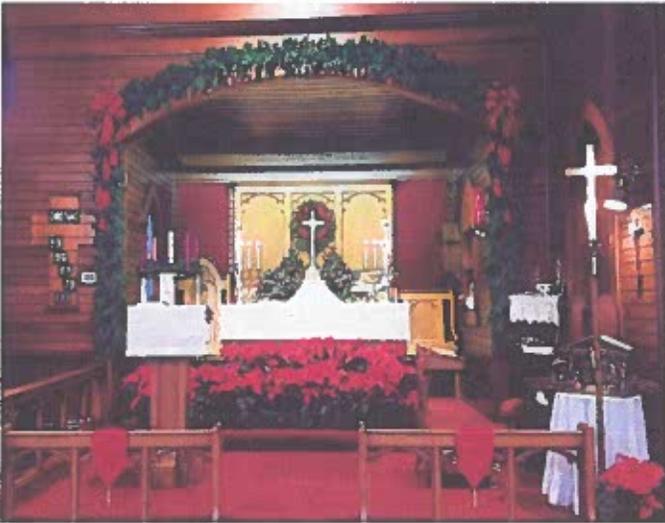
#### Our Priest Search Committee

Claire Hagen  
Sam Jones  
Judy Weber  
Robbie Wiggins

#### Our Staff

Peggy Coats, Secretary  
Fr. Travers Koerner, Supply Priest

### Final Thoughts



Trinity Episcopal Church in Morgan City, LA, is a loving, close community of people who help each other, care about each other, and work for the good of all in the church parish and community at large. We come from diverse walks of life, histories, and dreams for what our future holds as a parish and city. Trinity has thrived in the prosperity of the petroleum and shrimping industries.

We respect and love our area and work within the confines of being a small Episcopal Church in a predominantly Roman Catholic region. As with most Episcopal churches, ours is one of service to others, worship of God through word and action, and love for all humankind. We have a very special home here at Trinity. We are indeed family. We look forward to having a new priest who will be a part of our family, too.

