

**Stewardship Talk**  
**REIMAGINE**  
**Laura Brubaker**  
**October 10, 2021**



Hi everyone. My name is Laura Brubaker. My family and I have been members of Trinity for almost six years, which I mark by the age of my youngest child minus about eight months. I can't believe how tall our time at Trinity is getting!

Since my first steps into the atrium, I've had the good fortune of being involved in many of Trinity's ministries, including a 2.5 year tenure on Staff as Trinity's Coordinator of Children's and Middle School Youth Ministry. I currently serve on your Vestry.

As I'm sure most of you know by now, the theme for this year's Stewardship campaign is 'Remember. Restore. Reimagine. Trinity Stronger Together.' I follow Sam Wiant and Mike Green, who spoke so beautifully in past weeks on Remember and Restore, two steps that are vital in getting to the third 'R' in our theme, the one I'm here to speak to: Reimagine. Today we look forward, with particular focus on our Children, Youth, and Families Ministry.

Trinity has always valued its children and youth. That is one of the top reasons I love this church so much.

On our first day at Trinity, my daughters were given roles in the morning's Epiphany pageant. Standing at the front of the Sanctuary as furry little lambs, they were a bit bewildered, but they also felt pretty darn special.

In our first weeks at Trinity, we were welcomed into the home of the Derkacz family during a Lenten Gathering. It was there where we met the Andersons and the Rohrs, and Cindy Derkacz taught my girls how to make Chinese dumplings.

And in our first months at Trinity, I listened to youth members like Matthew Humason and April Grabner give sermons on the ways their mission trips to White Earth Indian Reservation impacted them.

The following fall, my daughters were assigned prayer buddies, and I was in awe of the number of buddy pairs that filled Chamberlain Hall. So many adults were willing and eager to form quality relationships with Trinity's youngest members. My girls now have strong bonds with four lady Trinitarians apiece. As a family with no relative less than two states away, these intergenerational relationships are especially important to us.

And every week for about three years, not a Sunday went by where someone, usually Dick McFarland, didn't come up to us and tell us how lovely our family was and how wonderful it was to have us at Trinity.

I could go on and on about all the gifts the Trinity community has bestowed on our family. And I don't think our experience is unique. Trinity loves its kids.

And we have the data to back up my anecdotes. The results of our 2019 Listening Links initiative are compelling. The values and visions that emerged out of the **106** one-on-one conversations that took place between parishioners, overwhelmingly support prioritizing our ministry to children, youth, and families. For example, in answer to the question, "What is the vision for Trinity's future surrounding programming?" the most frequent response was "Strong youth programming - the commitment to high quality and engaging youth programming should be a part of Trinity's future." "Increased inclusion of children and youth" came in second: "Trinity should prioritize more opportunities for children and youth to get involved in the community beyond just through Sunday School and Youth Group, both in the Sunday service and in other events during the week."

And in response to the question, "What do parishioners hope to see prioritized around the theme of membership in the future?" the most frequent answer, by far, was, "More young members, attracting more young families and other younger members and making sure Trinity is a place that will meet their needs."

Our vision for children and youth has always been constant, but our ability to execute it has gone up and down. As Wilson Acevedo, Charlotte Frerichs, Heidi Groven, Sally Hockinson, Steve Roman, and Laura Williams -- otherwise known as the Transition Task Force -- found last year when they did a deep dive into Trinity's history ministering to children, youth and families, Trinity has struggled during times of transition or when there's been a lack of leadership. Volunteers have typically stepped up, but it's been very challenging to fulfill the church's vision and burnout has been high. As those of you who've been here awhile know, our ministries thrive when we have a dedicated staff person leading them. So our visions and hopes for the future of Children, Youth, and Family Ministry at Trinity can't become a reality without someone at the helm, whose job it is to plan, organize, build relationships,

support and develop volunteers, and generally oversee the connections and continuities in and among ministries as well as Trinity at large.

As I know personally, this is a big job that is not for the faint of heart. It requires a lot of devotion, a lot of care, and a lot of hours. And as I know from my time on the Search Team (with Wilson Acevedo, Megan Emery, Craig Schmidt, and Evie Wiant) and my time on the Vestry (with Sam Wiant, Julie Camanelli, Sarah Allcock, Ajit Daniel, Margaret DiMarco, Heidi Groven, Steve Roman and Craig Schmidt, in partnership with Devon), a great deal of prayer, discernment, and meeting hours went into our decision to act boldly and hire a full-time Children, Youth, and Family Minister, reflecting our congregation's repeated stated priority that we serve our youngest members to build a stronger future.

Now we have our Children's, Youth, and Family Minister in Sally Hockinson and this is where I clearly see the hands of God in our midst. I've been friends with Sally for a few years and worked with her when I was on Staff and she was leading Trinity Play 1, our faith formation program for children ages 3 to kindergarten. During that time, Sally would often come to me with wonderful, inspired ideas for how to improve the program and put wind in my sails to institute something new. From time to time she would share with me that she felt children's and youth ministry was her true calling but that it just wasn't a practical enough career choice. And I always thought, *'You belong here. This should be your job!'* My husband, Ben -- who sat with our son, Leo, through Sally's Zoom Trinity Play 1 meetings when the pandemic first hit -- he and I would even talk about how ridiculously talented she was. Don't get me wrong, I loved my time on Staff, and I think I did a good job. But Sally's gifts and experiences are insanely aligned with what's needed for Trinity to recommit to its vision for children, youth, and families. I mean, did you all hear her sermon two weeks ago?!

Since those first conversations Sally and I had about the impracticality of her working at Trinity, things have shifted, and it's become possible for her to be here. We couldn't be more fortunate. She will help us live out our Baptismal Covenant. She will help us, to quote our Bishop quoting a Haitian proverb, "climb mountains and the astonishingly beautiful mountains beyond those mountains."

This year, I ask you to join me in increasing your pledge by 20%, if you can. This additional funding will go in part to pay for the new full-time Children, Youth, and Family position as well as address a deficit that was experienced last year in financing our ministries. As we reimagine our future, we are blessed with the will and the responsibility to make sure Trinity remains strong.