Trinity Center

Report to Diocesan Convention

November 5, 2026

Greetings from the Trinity Center Board of Managers,

Over the past few weeks, board members and Executive Director John Koch have been traveling around the diocese on behalf of Trinity Center, promoting the 2026 Annual Appeal. The experience has surpassed our expectations!

As we travelled to far corners of the diocese, we met many of the wonderful people who support Trinity Center, and we loved hearing their stories and anecdotes. There were stories about meeting a spouse and about building the altar at Sanders Point. We heard a tale about losing a boat motor in the Sound, and another about setting off the fire alarm while showering and meeting the fire department dressed only in a towel —big moments, small moments, and everything in between. The list of memories is endless: acts of kindness, forgiveness, simple joy, wonder, and connection.

For 40 years, Trinity Center has spoken to people in many different ways. So far, 2026 has been no different. Thousands of campers, students, and conferees have come to Trinity and left changed for a lifetime.

This year, as we have been celebrating 40 years of Trinity Center, our programs have continued their strong and impactful ministries to a wide variety of guests. Here are a few highlights:

- Thanks to a generous benefactor, we completed a new housing bungalow for our Sound to Sea staff. This is the first new building constructed on campus in over 30 years. With this new construction completed our staff has worked diligently to bring Pelican House back on line for bookings in 2027.
- This year over 700 campers attended Camp Trinity. While we haven't had 700 every summer it has consistently been close to 700. It is safe to assume that over a 40 year span Trinity has hosted tens of thousands of campers.
- Adding Trinity's Sound to Sea program, that number increases exponentially. This past year we had 3,000 students go through our program. Multiplied by decades, the total is well over 100,000.
- Finally, adding numbers from the conference center, it is easy to conclude that hundreds of thousands of individuals have had the opportunity to enjoy Trinity Center over the past 40 years.

Recent research by Jake Sorenson, an outdoor ministry researcher with Sacred Playgrounds, notes that youth who attend a faith-based camp are three times more likely to continue a communal faith practice throughout their lives than those who never participate.

As noted above our annual appeal visits across the diocese have illustrated Mr. Sorenson's research. Each current board member has had some type of close connection to Trinity Center over the last 40 years. There are board members who are former campers and/or counselors; some met their spouses at TC; some had camp experiences that inform their work as clergy; others have spent time at conferences and programs that have had lasting impact on their spiritual growth. This is living proof of the impact of Trinity Center.

With time comes change. This year, as rising levels in Bogue Sound reclaimed more land, we repurposed Sander's Point from a chapel to a small meditative space. Access is governed by the tides now. With due respect, Bishop Sander's remains were reinterred next to his bust in the courtyard. The stones from the altar and the driftwood cross are in safe storage as the board discerns a location for a new outdoor chapel in the not too distant future.

As we close out 2026, we prepare to say farewell and Godspeed as John Koch retires after 35 years serving a variety of Episcopal Camps and Conference Centers. We appreciate John's passion and dedication to the ministry of Trinity Center. Well done, and thank you, John. Working closely with Bishop Fisher and Cannon Allen a search committee was formed is actively working. We will seek an interim director to guide us as John's retirement. During this interim time our search committee will partner with a national search firm. The Board of Managers is committed to listening to God as we seek the next Executive Director to lead Trinity Center.

2027 begins our journey into the next 40 years. The excitement for the journey is strong. Where will it take Trinity Center?

On behalf of the Board of Managers, thank you to Bishop Sarah and each parish of the Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina. Your enthusiastic support, encouragement, and love for Trinity Center is a blessing beyond description.

God's Peace

Terry Smith, Chair

Trinity Center Board of Managers.