Our Redeemer/Trinity Merger Investigation FAQ's

Updated September 27, 2026

• Have We Already Formally Decided to Merge Our Two Congregations?

No. On May 3rd 2026 the members of Our Redeemer Lutheran Church (ORLC) voted on whether to enter an exploratory period to evaluate a potential merger with Trinity, Utica (TU). Shortly thereafter the members of Trinity also voted on the same matter. The overwhelming result was for both congregations to enter a 12-24 month period where we will explore the advantages and disadvantages of merging.

• How did the discussion on a potential merger begin?

Twelve years ago, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) began encouraging larger congregations to explore how we might leverage the resources and ministry culture of larger congregations to help other LCMS churches in the area. When Pastor Draeger retired in June of 2025 after serving at Our Redeemer for 27 years it was necessary to call a new pastor. As ORLC worked through the call process, Synod formally suggested they consider a merger with Trinity. After much discussion and prayerful consideration, ORLC congregation overwhelmingly (113 Yes – 13 No) approved entering into a 12-24 month contract with Trinity to evaluate a potential merger

- **Are there other LCMS churches that have successfully merged?**

  Within the Michigan District, between 2017-2024, seven churches have successfully merged. Currently there are another 8-10 are in some form of discussions about merging.

•How will pastoral services be provided to ORLC during the 12-24 month exploratory period?

ORLC will contract Trinity to provide pastoral support during the evaluation period. Beginning Sept 1, Pastor Josh Britton will become acting site pastor at Our Redeemer. ORLC will compensate Trinity for Pastor Josh's salary and benefits during the evaluation period. If we ultimately move forward with a merger, Pastor Josh Britton would become the site pastor but would still report to Pastor Justin Krupsky as Senior Pastor. All Trinity pastors will preach at Our Redeemer during the evaluation period as it is important for us to become familiar with all of the Trinity pastors.

• What is a multi-site church?

A multi-site church is a single congregation that operates in 2 or more sites while sharing the same overall leadership, vision, ministries, and sermon teachings.

• What is the vision after a merger?

If the merger is completed, we would be a single congregation operating in 2 sites (Utica and Washington). We would have one senior pastor (with a site pastor at Washington), one leadership team, one budget, a single staff (some centralized, some localized), shared ministries, and a common mission of Making Disciples who Share Christ's Story with Love.

• Why is Trinity considering merging with ORLC? What's in it for Trinity?

Trinity's mission is to Make Disciples who Share Christ's Story with Love. Merging with Our Redeemer affords a greater opportunity to fulfill that mission. By merging we can leverage each other's strengths to potentially win more souls for Jesus. That is our ultimate mission and ministry. As a practical example, Little Lambs Preschool operates out of Our Redeemer's building but is an independent organization. There is an opportunity to work with those families to bring them into the church, strengthen their faith, and also be able to offer a Christian education at Trinity's Day School. Those families do not have that K-8 Christian education option today at Our Redeemer.

• How will we evaluate the possibility of a merger?

A Merger Committee (consisting of Pastor Justin Krupsky, Pastor Josh Britton, and a few lay leaders from both congregations) has been formed which will lead the evaluation. Through the 12-24 month evaluation period we will be investigating synergies where we can work together to better accomplish our mission of Making Disciples who Share Christ's Story with Love. If we identify enough of those opportunities that will help us to continue to accomplish our mission, then leadership will recommend the merger to both congregations.

• Is ORLC being purchased or acquired by Trinity?

No. This is not an acquisition or purchase of assets or property. This is a potential merger of 2 established congregations. We are using the term merger, but other terms might be partnership, collaboration, unification or consolidation.

• Why is there a 12-24 month merger evaluation period?

We need time to conduct a thorough evaluation to determine if there are significant benefits to merging. The target is a 12-month evaluation period with the option to extend the evaluation up to 24 months.

- **What happens if we decide not to merge?**

If we decide not to merge, Trinity and Our Redeemer would continue to operate as separate LCMS congregations as we have in the past and Our Redeemer would return to the traditional call process.

- **Who will make the decision – voter's or church leadership?**

The Merger Committee (Pastor Justin Krupsky, Pastor Josh Britton, and a few lay leaders from both congregations) will be leading the investigation. However, they will be relying on expertise of staff and members to study specific aspects of the investigation. For example, a financial subcommittee consisting of staff and members from each congregation will conduct a financial review of each organization and will provide recommendations on how to combine into a single organization. Although the Merger Committee will lead the investigation, the voters at both congregations will be the final decision makers on the merger. There will be multiple communications and congregational updates throughout the evaluation period to keep both congregations apprised during the process.

- **Will merging affect our worship style?**

We don't see where the merger will affect our worship styles. We will still offer various traditional and contemporary worship styles.

- **How will merging affect our ministries at Our Redeemer and Trinity?**

Ministries at both churches will be a significant discussion during the evaluation. We will be looking for areas of synergy where we can build from each other's ministries. We anticipate some ministries to remain the same and others to be enhanced through merging.

- **In corporate mergers, people typically lose jobs. Are people getting fired?**

While companies merge in order to gain efficiency through reduced headcount, our motivation for merging is to share the gospel with more people. We don't anticipate any reduction in staff directly related to the merger. We will be looking at staffing and how to best utilize or leverage the various talents of all staff members.

- **Is ORLC financially healthy?**

Our Redeemer is a financially healthy congregation as is Trinity. Both congregations will have completed an extensive financial review process as part of the merger discussion.

• Can I attend Trinity if I live closer to them or wish to get to know them better?

Members from both congregations are welcome to attend each other's services to see their worship style and get to know the members of each congregation as we explore the possibility of becoming one congregation in two sites.

• Where is my offering money going?

During the merger evaluation period, the finances will remain separate between the 2 congregations. We are encouraging you to continue to support your current congregation with your giving.

- **Are Trinity and Our Redeemer Members Receiving the Same Information?**

A merger page has been set up on both churches' websites containing identical information. Any updates to information occur concurrently on both websites. It is extremely important that information is shared consistently with both congregations.