

Christ
is
Risen!

From our Priest-in-Charge

We are more than half way thru our journey to Holy Week and Easter. I would like to initiate a conversation about several areas that come up frequently but there never seems to be enough time to actually discuss.



I have talked about Baptism and our communities vow during the Baptism service to be a model of the Christian life in word and action for each other and especially for the individuals whom we baptize. We will be Baptizing six children between the ages of 10 months and 13 years of age at the Easter Vigil, Saturday the 15 of April. The five older children have been participating in classes focused on Bible Stories about Jesus' teachings and the vows they will be making. The parents of the 10 month old: Zackary Harrison have met with me several times. Since the Episcopal Church teaches that Baptism is the full enrolment of the individual into the life of Christ and full inclusion in the community, the children will all receive communion at this service.

Because of these Baptisms and others that are coming up in the year, we looked at the placement of the baptismal font. The guidance of the church is that the font should be at the church entrance. Ours was in the back corner. The font has at least two purposes: It is the vehicle where we are initiated into our life in Christ. Its placement at the entrance reminds us of that initiation but it also greets us as again we enter into the community of the church for worship. There were several suggestions floating about where it might be placed to best achieve these purposes. We explored some placement options and their pros and cons. We also explored how feasible it was to move it. It has been moved at least twice in its history here but there seems to be no institutional memory of how that was done so we started from scratch. I want to thank all those who made suggestions and the three men whom Jan and I watched actually move the font: Jim Siglin, Craig Anglemire and Bob Butiste.

Now seems a good time to share with everyone my policies on Baptism. As I told all the adults: baptism is not a magic ceremony that keeps anyone out of purgatory, limbo or hell. Baptism is the sacrament that initiates us into a relationship with Christ and into a life following Christ and His teachings. It is a first step and if it is the last step the child or adult is still at the bottom of the staircase. During the actual service our community and the parents and godparents vow to support the person being baptized in their life with Christ. As a community we vow to be role models in deed and word to the Baptized. This can not happen if the person or in the case of a child, the adults rearing the child are not members of a Christian community, do not themselves attend church and will not bring the child to experience worship and learn about Christ thru the community and thru attending Sunday School which we are obliged to provide. I therefore try not to baptize children or adults whom we will never see again. I believe it gives the parents a false idea that they have fulfilled their obligation and prevents us from carrying out our vow to God and to the Baptized person. A request for Baptism entails a commitment from the person, parents, if it is a child, and godparents to meet with the priest, attend classes so there is an understanding of what commitments are being made. Baptisms should therefore be requested at least six months before the hoped for date.

Continued from our Priest-in-Charge

Similarly, weddings require a series of sessions with the priest or the priest's designated representative. In the Roman Church these sessions are called Pre Cana after the wedding in Cana. The sessions cover areas that often are sources of conflict and topics that couples may not have discussed before: attitudes about finances, spending habits, children, child rearing, safeguarding existing or future children by executing wills, family of origin, sex, communication styles, Church, Spiritual life, etc. How the couple, whether opposite or same sex, hope that each of them will support the interior spiritual life of the other as well as the union itself. Again, wedding dates should be requested at least six months before the hoped for date and NOT after the hall, caterer, and musicians have been booked. As a priest, I am happy to participate in weddings where the couple understand and want to celebrate their spiritual life with each other. I do not substitute for a justice of the peace in instances where the couple wants a civil union.

Next: You will notice that we are slightly changing the entrance to the 10:00 service. Our organist Margaret helps transition us from our everyday life into our worship life with a reflective piece of music both before and after each service. Sometimes this music and its purpose are drowned out by our entrance and exit hub bub. To try and change this, we will ring the bell to announce the start of the 10:00, we will then have a few minutes to get settled in the Church, and Margaret will then play the prelude followed by the entrance hymn and procession. At the end of the service Margaret will play the postlude after the announcements and before I dismiss the community.

Continue to have a fruitful Lent.

Susan+

Words from the Senior Warden

Reflection

The March Vestry meeting began with a prayer, as usual, and then a time for some reflection. The focus of the reflection was what does this sentence mean to you.... **“The call to serve on the Vestry means balancing our role in discerning God’s mission and vision with sound stewardship of its property and resources.”** This was the first time we had reflection time on the Agenda. Usually we just launch into the “business of the church” without stopping to think about what we each may feel we are being called to do by God. On the front of the Bulletin, every Sunday is the statement: “Our mission is to share God’s unconditional love with everyone”. This was hard work, thinking about what our roles are in discerning God’s mission. The reflection and discussion is something we will return to at future Vestry meetings. We recognize that this will be an ongoing question to be prayed on, contemplated and revisited to help us understand where God is calling us to be as a Parish.

Treasurer’s Report

Through the end of February our total contributions are running slightly behind the budget. The largest variance is in Pledge income. Some of our bad weather Sunday’s may have contributed to this. Total expenses are in line with the budget although some line items have negative variances, this is due to paying for some items (such as landscaping upkeep) up front, to take advantage of the discounts offered. Again, our goal is to achieve a balanced budget while building our programs, deepening our outreach with existing programs and possibly new programs. On balance, two months into the year we appear to be on track and will continue to monitor the debits and credits through-out the year.

Photo Directory – coming soon!

Joanne Smith has stepped forward and suggested that it is time for us to publish a new directory-with pictures. Jan keeps us updated with periodic “new additions” which is great. But, it has been a few years since we had a pictorial directory. If you have participated before then you know that photo times are scheduled, you sit, smile, pose. There is no obligation to purchase any of the pictures and the parish gets a photo of everyone participating. Then, the photo company compiles the pictures into a Trinity Parish Directory. If you choose to purchase photos, that is arranged between you and the photographer. Pretty simple, isn’t it? More details dates, times etc. will be made available later in April (after Easter!!).

Fund Raising Committee

Marie Milone has stepped up and will be convening a group to come up with some ideas for one or two things to help us raise funds for general purposes. Traditionally we have relied on the annual Bazaar to generate roughly \$2500 to the budget. Carol Butiste and Jan Anglemire have stepped down as Bazaar co-chairs after “several decades” of service (just kidding, I know it’s been a long time and we thank you for all the work). The goal is to assess what else we can do either at the Bazaar to raise more money and appeal to a wider audience, and/or are there other ideas folks may have to do something in addition or instead of the Bazaar. Marie Milone, Pat Goodwin, Andrea Hauck, Chris Eidschun and Jan Anglemire will all participate in some brainstorming.....who else would like to be included? What ideas do you have? Please share your time, your talent and your ideas with Marie, Pat, Andrea, Chris or Jan. By the way, this is not an exclusive club...if you would like to participate, let Marie know. Thanks ladies for doing this. Hey, I just realized there are no men working on this-come on guys!! We are looking for one or two ideas that we can execute, that are doable by our parish and will be fun!

We are looking for a new Treasurer!

I have served as treasurer for the past several years and really enjoy doing it. However, as Senior Warden a good management practice is to have someone else in the role of Treasurer. This builds in an inherent check and balance for oversight of our finances. Now that our finances are back to steady state, I would like someone to take on the role of Treasurer. Some experience with excel worksheets is helpful, along with a very basic understanding of accounting. I am happy to help/mentor....who wants to give it a go?

Finally

Going back to the beginning of this piece, perhaps we should expand the reflection to the entire parish and ask...What are you feeling called to do as you discern God’s mission and vision for us at Trinity?

Peter Gonze

Food Pantry News

Hello Everyone,

Time seems to fly by in the month of March and it was another busy month at the pantry as well. We served 267 families that included 794 people including 452 Adults, 226 Children and 116 Seniors. As well we had 7 new families register this month.

It has been a good month to receive donations our regular sources of support of churches and civic groups continue as well as support from the community . Our clients have been receiving a well rounded selection of food products. Our donated room has been a busy place with the number of families served increasing. The food comes in and is bagged and on the way out immediately.

As we move into May and June I would like to see our donations focus on cereal once again. The last I heard was school would be out early but then we were gifted with Winter so late and snow days began accumulating. Cereals are a good food for our families and can be great as a snack too. Healthy snacks are encouraged and peanut butter and jelly are a staple in many families.

Thank you for all our continuing support and for the regularity of the volunteers who make this pantry a good source of help for our families in need. Let us not forget to ask for help in our daily prayers and remember we receive what we need not necessarily what we want. But let us be thankful for all our gifts.

Sincerely,
Lorraine

Save the Date - Trinity Annual Book Sale

The third annual Trinity Book Sale will be held on Saturday, June 24 and Sunday, June 25. This year the sale will be located downstairs in the classrooms rather than in the parish hall. The location will give us more room to display books and media. It also allows us to leave materials out longer, providing you and the community more time to shop. The "mini" book sale in the parish hall will be ongoing and the books available will be rotated periodically.

Thank you all for your support, whether you donate books or buy books! The money earned from book sales helps Trinity. So let's spread the word and keep it going!

Cathy Siglin

Sunday Morning Coffee Hour Coordinator

We are now using the sign up boards in the Parish Hall on either side of the kitchen window for Coffee Hour Host sign up. You may sign up to serve after either the 8:00 or 10:00 a.m. service.

Anyone wishing to serve as a Coffee Hour Host who has not yet served in that ministry should contact Cathy Siglin, our Sunday Morning Coffee Hour Coordinator, at 570-595-2099 or csiglin1@gmail.com for details on this ministry.

Birthdays & Anniversaries



April Birthdays

5 Timothy Vincent
8 Monique Girard
16 Barbara Gessner
16 Margaret Gythfeldt
17 Linda Salmon
17 Kathie Herling
22 Jaden Harley Cook
22 John Ferrantino
26 Dylan Scott Vincent
28 Margot Atherton
28 Riley Keiper



April Anniversaries

11 Vernon & Inga Yeich
24 Michael & Pat Goodwin
30 Dick & Janet Orner

O God, our times are in your hand: Look with favor, we pray, on your servants as they begin another year. Grant that they may grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen their trust in your goodness all the days of their life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen*

April Calendar of Events

April 5 - Trinity at Food Pantry, 8:30 a.m. - Noon

April 9 - Palm Sunday

April 10 - Trinity Crafters, 10:00 a.m. - Noon, Library

April 13 - Maundy Thursday, Retreat Quiet Day beginning at 8:00 a.m.

Morning Prayer, 9:00 a.m., Church, Noon Day Prayer, Church
Dinner, 6:00 p.m., Parish Hall

Holy Eucharist, Foot Washing, Stripping of the Altar, 7:00 p.m., Church

April 14 - Good Friday Liturgy, Noon, Church will be open from Noon - 3:00 p.m.

April 15 - The Great Vigil of Easter with Holy Baptism, 7:30 p.m., Church

April 16 - Easter Day, Festive Holy Eucharist, 8:00 & 10:00 a.m.

April 18 - Vestry Meeting, 4:00 p.m., Library

April 22 - Popcorn & Movie Night, 5:00 p.m. Dinner, Parish Hall, Movie, 6:00 p.m.,
Library, *Bridge of Spies* is the April Movie

April 23 - 30 - Family Promise Host Week

April 24 - Trinity Crafters, 10:00 a.m. - Noon, Library

April 25 - Worship Committee Meeting, 9:45 a.m., Library

Shepherds Meeting, 11:30 a.m., Library

How Firm A Foundation?

Susan Treanor has asked me to resume writing a monthly column on religion and public affairs, as I did during the ministries of Ralph Roth and Ginny Day. I thank Susan for this opportunity in these challenging times and hope you will find this commentary useful and constructive. But you may reasonably ask if religion has a place in public affairs and, even if it does, what can an artist know about such matters as health care or defense budgets.

In regard to the first question, there has been a long-standing but unnecessary argument between those who say America was founded as a Christian nation and should be guided by Christian principles and those who point to the Bill of Rights' creation of a "wall of separation" between religion and government. Both are partly right, which means they are partly wrong as well, as we shall see.

America's leader is, of course, the president, but he (or someday she) does not make the laws. That is up to Congress - but the power of Congress is also limited by the power of the courts to say whether its acts are legal under the Constitution. The Constitution is not the ultimate authority either. It gets its authority from its first three words, "We the people". But where do the people get their authority? For that, we have to go back to America's other founding document, the Declaration of Independence, which is the heart of the American creed. "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men" (which we understand to include women) "are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these rights are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness....To secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed..."

In other words, like the scientific search for the origin of the universe, the great chain of causation finds its beginning in God, as religious conservatives have argued. But not in a particular religion. Our founders were very well aware of the destructive religious wars which had devastated Europe and wanted no more of that. Hence the wall of separation: religion would not control government, but remained free to offer advice from many religious perspectives, including our Episcopal one, and government would not control or promote specific religions, though religions had to abide by the laws of the land, with a few special exceptions. So religions do have a voice in public affairs, not one they can impose on others, but one that can, rather, try to convince others to listen

In response to the second question above, years ago, when the great poet T.S. Eliot made a statement opposing nuclear weapons, New York Times editor C.L. Sulzberger questioned his right to do so, saying "The opinions of a poet on disarmament are likely to be valueless." But no one is just a member of their particular profession. We all go to school and strive to keep ourselves informed about public affairs in our adult lives and inevitably have opinions about them. I've lived through a third of America's history since 1776. Before art school, I majored in history and minored in religion and philosophy and have remained active in community affairs while pursuing my career as an artist. We all have similar qualifications, based in the particular circumstances of our lives.

There is another side to this as well. Although Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes was quite right to say we should be involved in "the passion and action" of our times, I have known many artists who have been able to go to their creative worlds and by doing so avoid getting bogged down in small-minded debates. One such philosopher famously said, "I don't care who writes the laws so long as I can write the songs." Again, this path of focusing your deepest attention on eternal values is open to everyone in different ways. And we have something else going for us in America. Americans, by and large, are practical problem solvers who try to get things right, rather than being slaves of any particular ideology. My conservative friend George worked on community problems for almost 40 years with his liberal friend (me) and we never disagreed about any of them. We wanted solutions that worked and were the right thing to do, and they were there to be found.

This is the perspective I hope to bring to these columns. The political philosopher Jeremy Bentham said the purpose of government is "the greatest good of the greatest number". That is a worthy goal, but we can set our sights higher, looking for win-win solutions in our political conflicts, in which we can harmonize everyone's legitimate interests in the service of the good of all. This, after all, is not rocket science or brain surgery and, anyway, if it gets that complicated I can always call on my granddaughters, Rachel the astronomer and Torrey the neuroscientist, for help. And always, of course, the source of all our good efforts, God. I will appreciate and take seriously your responses as well. Again, thank you Reverend Susan. - *Peter Salmon*

Our Prayers have been requested for:

Alex Backora
Mary Banzhof
Randy Criste-Troutman
Victoria Forstein
Bill Gessner
Jutta & Wendell Moser
Jim Rawson
Fr. Charles Rice
Lois Rothrock
Jennifer Salmon
Ellie Schenck
Katie Scully
Heather

Heavenly Father, giver of life and health: Comfort and relieve your sick servants, and give your power of healing to those who minister to their needs, that those for whom our prayers are offered may be strengthened in their weakness and have confidence in your loving care; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen*

Walking the Labyrinth

On March 4th I attended a Labyrinth workshop at St. Steven's Episcopal Church in Wilkes-Barre. My knowledge of the labyrinth was very general at best. For example, do you know the difference between a labyrinth and a maze? Some of you do, but again, I wasn't sure I knew. A maze requires the skill of decision making to negotiate a way out. The average human will make approximately 2,800 decisions in the course of one day! On the other hand, the labyrinth requires no decision making, one simply follows the path, without concern, confident in knowing that following that path will lead to where one needs to go.

Labyrinths are divine imprints and have been known to the human race for over four thousand years. These imprints can be found in almost every religious tradition around the world. There are no tricks to them and no dead ends. The rhythm of walking, putting one foot in front of the other, quiets the mind, relaxes the body and refreshes the spirit. I had the opportunity to walk two different labyrinths at St. Stevens, one in the nave of the church and one in the parish hall. The longer I walked, the easier it became to let go of thought and make room for prayer.

We are very fortunate to have our own labyrinth here at Trinity. As we move into Spring, with warmer weather ahead, think about walking your labyrinth. Use it to find inspiration, reduce stress, to grow spiritually through prayer or simply to find a silent place. Go alone or grab a friend, a family member. Each walk, each experience is different. Happy walking!

Cathy Siglin