

St. Francis



## From the Priest-in-Charge

Feels like there is lots moving and shaking this month. Jan, Peter, Joanne, Myra and I are just back from our Annual Diocesan Convention in Carbondale, PA. There was a different tone to it this year: excitement, hospitality, unity, gratitude for where we are and for the time and vision Bishop Sean has given us and an expectation that even though he will be leaving us as our Provisional Bishop, the future is bright.

What did we do? We reaffirmed the changes in our bylaws and canons we voted on last year. We listened to two presentations, three videos and worked in small groups to discuss Brene' Brown's learnings on vulnerability and daring. Some of her thoughts: Courage and Wholeheartedness are supported by vulnerability, curiosity and connectedness. Comparing ourselves to others kills joy. The opposite of scarcity is enough, not abundance. Vulnerability is courage, not a weakness. Shame cannot be separated from perfectionism. (This description does not do justice to her work on what keeps us static and what impels us to move and grow. View her videos on YouTube. I think you will be as awe struck as I was.) Our small group sharing was across parish lines and honest. I think it exemplified Browns idea that we only really connect with each other when we open ourselves and are genuine about our hopes, fears and experiences. I have known Browns work from TED Talks and I intend to use one of her books for the coming Lenten Series.

The first day was capped by an exuberant Eucharist celebrated and preached by Bishop Sean. The Eucharist was magnificent: music, sermon and pageantry. Gratitude for Bishops Sean's leadership was sprinkled through the two days and he received many standing ovations. As usual, our deceased member's names were read during the necrology: Ruth Solomon, Bob Grace, Ed Benintende and George Royle were our members listed this year. After the Eucharist we had dinner and much late-night sharing.

Second day was voting on positions on diocesan committees, the budget was passed and Bishop Sean gave his culminating address and extolled the gifts of our diocese. He also said that when he was elected the Bishop of Northwestern PA, he was not a good Bishop, that there was a steep learning curve. When we got him, he had had seven years' experience as a Bishop and he knew what he was doing. Hint, hint, when we elect our new Bishop, we will have to be patient as he or she find their way along that learning curve.

Some things I learned: Trinity is one of seventeen parishes whose audits are up to date. There are currently 58 parishes in the diocese. Only 16 of them have full time clergy. Thirty-four parishes have 50 people or less as an average Sunday attendance. We are in the next group: fifteen parishes have between 50 to 100 average Sunday attendance. Nine parishes have more than 100 people attending on Sunday.

We have been assisting a homeless family that is trying to get themselves back on their feet. I want to thank those who contribute to my discretionary fund that allows me to do this.

Many years ago, Trinity set up a support fund to benefit a disabled child raised here. (I won't use his name.) He is now an adult and a resident of a very good facility in Scranton. The Vestry voted to send the remainder of the fund (\$754.20) to the residence to be put in a fund designated to benefit him so he could get out and enjoy movies, field trips etc. We received a thank you note from the residence.

Despite all the work entailed in getting our revamped Sunday School running: clearances for 16 teachers and curriculum developed for three age groups of children. We seem to be pulling it off. I want to thank all the volunteers, Jan as the collector of all the clearance paperwork and our Director, Barb Gessner especially for her flexibility and the seemingly unending energy, skill, love and time she has spent to make this work.

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## From the Priest-in-Charge continued

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I sent out a request for cork or white boards to help me focus on what needs to be done on our various efforts: Fund Raising, Sunday School, Vestry, Pastoral Care, Communication, Music, Buildings and Grounds and Adult Education. I had three boards in my office the next morning and another one promised! Thank you all.

The Pastoral Care Committee members has been visiting all our homebound and nursing home or hospitalized members. Depending on circumstances, these visits happen monthly or as circumstances warrant as often as weekly. We want these members to know and feel that they are still a vital part of this community even if they cannot come to Trinity.

The Adult Discussion Group meets every Wednesday at 6:00 for a great potluck and then an hour and half discussion. We are in the middle of the Gospel of Mark since that is the book from which our Gospels will be taken this coming Advent.

Convention gave us an update on the Schools and people in Kajo Keji. The area where we built the schools was inhabited by a minority tribe and they have had to flee their homes. They had to abandon the schools our Diocese built. They are now back in refugee camps and our Diocese has built 5 temporary tent schools for the 4,000 children. Deacon Charlie Barebo is asking parishes to create a fund for books for the kids. \$20,000 is needed. While we were discussing this during announcements last Sunday it was suggested that we also try to help the Puerto Rican victims of the latest hurricanes. Transportation and therefore distribution of food, water and medical supplies are all stymied. There is a small task force here at Trinity that will make some suggestions about how we can help.

I want to share with you a milestone in my life. I realized last 9/26 that I had missed my anniversary of ordination to the priesthood which was 9/24/16. This has been a full and rewarding year for me and I hope for this parish and for all of you. As our Gospel said recently the harvest is ready and waiting for us spread the good news of God's love. Let us do so, first becoming more and more mindful of the call of God to us as individuals and a community and then joyfully and lovingly continuing His/our work.

Peace and Love,  
*Susan+*

## Food Pantry News

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HELLO ALL VOLUNTEERS,

Once again I am happy to report a slight dip in our statistics for September 2017.

Families served 250 comprised ADULTS 457 CHILDREN 223 AND SENIORS 128 TOTAL 808  
(INCLUDED WERE 8 NEW FAMILIES)

The Weis Food Store in Mt. Pocono has been having a food drive for our pantry and we so far we have received 26 large banana boxes of assorted food products. The Tobyhanna Army Depot Commissary had food drives in August and September filling 4 large carts of food and water products. Thanks to our Churches for their continuing support week after week we have managed to bag those extras and average 7 additional items for our clients to take along with the rest of the regular food order.

As we approach the holiday season lets pray for our country's families in need after the horrific weather from the September hurricanes.

Lastly, a friend and former colleague of mine Mr. Ed Watto has died and you may know his wonderful wife Kathy who volunteers on first Wednesdays. May God help his family in their time of need . And please remember them in your prayers.

As always thank you for what you do in helping our clients through their time of need.

*Lorraine*

# Rule of Thumb

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Although Turkey has joined some of our Southern states in removing all references to evolution from their science curriculum, the fact that life has evolved on earth is still perfectly clear to scientists. This does not diminish God's role as creator of our universe: it simply illustrates God's methods. And what are God's methods? The same ones used by any good cook or home repair worker - using the materials at hand, even if they were not designed for the present purpose.

This method does not appeal to those who prefer to design and then carry out a perfect solution, but it gets things done when perfect solutions are not feasible, as is often the case. This imperfect procedure is sometimes called a "rule of thumb" (as in a Joy of Cooking recipe for "butter, as one joint of your thumb" or in household projects using that same joint for a rough estimate of length). It is epitomized in evolution by the panda's 'thumb' - a wrist bone which has been modified to serve as a thumb for pandas to hold bamboo stalks as they eat the leaves which are their staple diet.

The same principle has a place in our political life. Many Americans are feeling frustrated these days because our government can't solve problems. We seem to be in a tug of war between the opposing 'perfect' plans of left and right, leaving no room for the rule of thumb solutions that used to be reached in the vital center by more practical liberals and conservatives working together. This problem has been very evident in the disturbing news of the past month, as political posturing has made bad situations worse. Here are some examples.

Stronger than usual hurricanes Harvey and Irma gained that strength from higher ocean temperatures caused, in part, by human activity. Their effects were exacerbated by building codes that have encouraged development in areas prone to floods or, as in Mexico, earthquakes. Yet we continue business as usual, even withdrawing from the modest achievements of the Paris accords on global warming because ideological lines have been drawn between socialism and unbridled free enterprise as the only alternatives when there is so much more we could all agree on doing to live more lightly on the earth.

Our political dialogue now includes demonstrators in white (KKK) and black (AntiFa) masks, who disrupt honest dialogue with violence and see no room for opinions other than their own. Their disruptions, rather than understanding issues and problem-solving, become the news of the day.

Medical care in America is a 30 trillion dollar enterprise today: that's \$10,000 a year for every man, woman and child. This is not sustainable, but it won't be solved either by embracing right wing proposals to essentially deny medical care to millions of lower income Americans or left wing proposals to have the government magically find the resources to pay everyone's medical bills. A middle of the road rule of thumb solution, working with materials at hand, would start by recognizing the God-given right to health (part of the Declaration of Independence trio as "life", along with liberty and the pursuit of happiness). It would also emphasize the old civics class principle that with every right there is also a responsibility.

In the case of medical care, for individuals, it means paying their affordable share of the cost through medical insurance, accepting a reasonably higher risk pool as they get older, and maintaining a healthy life style. For providers, it means adopting greater efficiency and more reasonable prices for their services, preferably offered through reorganizing themselves as non-profit institutions. For government, it means not supplanting the well-established insurance industry, but providing incentives for them to become non-profits, passing savings on to their subscribers, and using the bargaining power of numbers to achieve reasonable drug costs (which exist now as close to us as Canada), and continuing to be the ultimate safety net for those who can't afford the full cost of insurance. Having insurance, no different in principle than auto insurance, would continue to be a universal mandate.

All our efforts to create a more civilized society at home can only work out well if we can maintain a world of peace abroad. Our long-term friends as well as our foes are disturbed by rhetoric that threatens to wipe out a whole country because we disapprove of the actions of its leaders. Peace is achieved by building bridges, not walls, developing constructive relationships with other nations so that we have an enlightened self interest in each other's welfare. The multinational treaty with Iran to contain its nuclear development is just such a relationship, as are the Paris accords on climate change. It is self-defeating for a new administration to throw over everything done by the one that preceded it. This is not how to answer Rodney King's famous plaintive cry, "Can't we all get along?" We can do that by emulating that lovable symbol, the panda, and solving our problems practically if not perfectly by reasonable rules of thumb.

*Peter Salmon*

## From the Sr. Warden

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We had a wonderful turnout at the Trinity Annual Parish meeting. It was a “packed house”, last minute efforts to bring more chairs out allowed everyone to sit and enjoy a terrific lunch. Many thanks to all who helped set up, tear down, brought food items-but most of all for being there. It truly was a Parish meeting!!

I hope everyone got a chance to read the Parish Reports from the various ministries. As I read through the reports I really got the feeling that things are happening all around us. The music program is robust, we have a weekly adult bible study group (along with a supper), there is a team of people working on the Buildings & Grounds, a new photo directory is in process, the Christmas Bazaar folks are getting geared up with new items to be sold, we have a Sunday School program for kids of various ages with at last count 16 Sunday School teacher volunteers. Family Promise & Food Pantry, our two big outreach programs, are so successful because of strong leadership and broad participation by so many parishioners. Everywhere you look there seems to be a burst of energy and effort! It is indeed a good time to be at Trinity!

At the parish meeting someone expressed interest in seeing something about our Income Statement in the Newsletter. As I think everyone knows, we post the detailed Income Statement on the Bulletin Board every month. The statement has a lot of numbers and can be difficult to follow if you are not familiar with financial statements. Here is a very quick summary:

Total Contributions through August are roughly \$70,000 which is about \$12,000 behind budget. Most of the shortfall is results from Pledge contributions which have not come in. We continue to manage expenses tightly and currently our actual expenses are also below budget so we still have a surplus on the net income line. However, if we don “catch up” on pledges between now and the end of the year it is unlikely that we can balance the budget. Message to all: please do what you can to honor your pledges.

At the last Vestry meeting, we approved a locked in rate for fuel oil at \$1.99/gallon. This is the same as last year. When the hurricane hit in Huston, we moved quickly to lock in the rate since oil prices are expected to rise in the next few months. This will help us manage our budget. Also, we voted to extend Susan’s contract by two months, with an end date of December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017. With Susan’s agreement, this will align her contract with our fiscal year which begins on January 1. Once we have completed our Stewardship campaign this fall we will be able to prepare a budget for 2018 and set appropriate compensation, in line with projected contributions, for our salaried staff.

Speaking of Stewardship, Carolyn Tolley and Joanne Smith, our Chairs, will be kicking off the Campaign shortly. In anticipation of their efforts, I would like to emphasize that pledges account for 80% of our contributions. We have had several of our long-time members leave us either due to death or moving away. Therefore, we start off the campaign in a “hole”. Not only do we rely on new members but current members too will have to help with increased giving.

We have come a long way to stabilizing our Church finances. Trends in church attendance do not offer much hope that there will be droves of new parishioners. So while giving is an individual decision, keep in mind this phrase....**If it is to be, it is up to me!** The “me” in this case is each of us.

Let’s keep the spirit of energy and robust participation we saw at the Annual Meeting going through the fall and into the new year!

*Peter Gonze*

## Our Prayers have been requested for:

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Alex Backora  
Sean Beech  
Randy Criste-Troutman  
Victoria Forstein  
Bill Gessner  
Jim Rawson  
Fr. Charles Rice  
Jennifer Salmon  
Tom Sayer  
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*

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### *AT THE NAME OF JESUS* Hymn #435

Perhaps you may have noticed that some of the greatest writings have come from individuals whose lives have included the greatest of misfortunes. This well known hymn is a good example of praise to God, with trust in His power that we should confess Jesus as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, from a young woman who was bedridden at 40 years of age with a serious illness and endured great suffering.

Caroline Noel was born in London in 1817, who as a teenager tried to write poems but gave it up by the age of twenty. You might think that the tone of her work would be comforting and devotional considering her predicament, but this hymn focuses attention on Jesus and His power, rather than on sickness and loneliness. Read over the fifth verse of the hymn, it is a request by the author for you to accept Christ as your Savior. Caroline Maria Noel penned this lovely hymn that lifts our eyes and spirits to encourage us in times when we might be indulging in self-pity and self-concern, to Jesus who "God exulted to the highest place and gave Him a name that is above every name".

We will be singing this hymn in church on October 1, it is set to the tune "King's Weston" by Ralph Vaughan Williams, one of England's well known composers and the composer of many other hymn tunes.

*M.J.G.*

## Birthdays & Anniversaries



### October Birthdays

4 Mary Cole  
4 Sharon VanGronigen  
8 Ginny Day  
17 Mary Alice Holmes  
26 Nigel VanGronigen, Jr.

### November Birthdays

2 Craig Anglemire  
3 Andrea Hauck  
11 Joanne Smith  
24 Fritz Eidschun  
26 Richard Backora

### October Anniversaries

10 Craig & Jan Anglemire  
14 Bob & Carol Butiste

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*

## October/November Calendar of Events

- Oct. 15 – 22 – Family Promise Host Week  
Oct. 23 – Trinity Crafters, 10 a.m. – Noon, Library  
Oct. 28 – Fall Clean-up, Sign-up Sheet in Parish Hall  
Nov. 1 – Trinity at Food Pantry, 8:30 a.m. - Noon  
Nov. 4 – Rain Date Fall Clean-up  
Nov. 5 – Stewardship Celebration Brunch  
Nov. 7 – Worship Committee Meeting, 9:45 a.m., Library  
Nov. 8 – Lunch Bunch, Noon, Longhorn Steakhouse, Bartonsville  
Nov. 12 – Vestry Meeting, 11:30 a.m., Library  
Nov. 13 & 27 – Trinity Crafters, 10:00 a.m.– Noon, Library  
Nov. 18 – Popcorn & Movie Night, 5:00 p.m.  
“Ricki and the Flash”  
Dec. 2 – Christmas Bazaar, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.