

# TRINITY NEWS

January, 2007

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

MT. POCONO PA

*Mission Statement: Share God's unconditional love with everyone.*

On February 2<sup>nd</sup> we will welcome Bishop Paul to Trinity. This is our annual celebration of the *Feast of the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple* when we gather to remember the day Jesus was brought to the temple by his parents. Mary and Joseph were obeying the law of Moses by making that journey and offering the prescribed sacrifice to God. As the holy family entered the temple, they were greeted by faithful Simeon and the prophet Anna who recognized the child as the one so long awaited. The *Nunc Dimittis* comes to us from their encounter. The presentation was a significant rite of passage in the time of Jesus. As we remember it in our time, we will be blessed to witness one of the rites of passage of young people in the Church today.

During the service we will present a fine group of teen-agers to Bishop Paul for the Rite of Confirmation, in accordance with our tradition:

"In the course of their Christian development, those baptized at an early age are expected, when they are ready and have been duly prepared, to make a mature public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism and to receive the laying on of hands by the bishop." (BCP, page 412)

I would like to share with you some of the things I know about these people. Not only do they worship regularly, they are also participating in confirmation class, they are involved in our youth group, they sing in the choir, they are acolytes, they serve at the food pantry, they help take care of our buildings and grounds, and they help with hospitality. They enjoy the computer, they are good students, they have lots of friends, they participate in sports, they are in drama club, they are artistic, they like puzzles, they have a variety of siblings, they have pets, they like reading, they like food, and they like to sleep. (However, not one of them has fallen asleep in confirmation class! - at least not yet!)

With family members present to support and affirm them, the participants in this confirmation class will present themselves to Bishop Paul and receive the laying on of hands from him as they make their public statement of faith. Their "family members" include all of us who are part of the parish family of Trinity Church, for we are their family of faith. Please be there to support them.

One of the concerns so often expressed in the church has to do with the presence and participation of young people in the life of the parish. We prayed daily for over a year for our youth ministry. We have a viable youth group and a fine class to present to the bishop. If you share the concern about the life of the Church, this is the preeminent opportunity for you to witness to your conviction. It is important to be present at these events.

Over the years Dr. John Westerhoff, theologian, scholar, and teacher (among other things) has written a number of accessible books on the life of the Church. One of the tantalizing titles is *Will Our Children Have Faith?* It is abundantly clear that if they are to do so we, all of us, share the responsibility for modeling our faith and building relationships with our young people. We know the phrase, "it takes a village to raise a child." I would suggest that it takes the entire parish family to raise our children in the faith of Jesus Christ. If you and I do not do it, who will?

February 2<sup>nd</sup> is in a real way their night. But it is also your night, your night to celebrate the fact that within our community these young people have come to the place in their lives where they are ready to make this serious commitment. This is your night to be present with them and to make your personal commitment to continue walking the journey with them. This is your night to let them know how very important they are to you. What a gift you will grant them by your presence.

In the meantime, please pray for these teenagers: Brian Cannonier, Leon Cannonier, Megan Griffith, Chris Kelly, Doug Kelly, Peter Kelly, Joshua Lee, Connie O'Grady, Raeann Passno, Rachel Salmon, Jennifer Tolley, and support them by your good wishes and your presence.

May you know God's blessings in the year which has recently begun,  
Ginny+



## JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 2007

January 3 - 8:30am – 12:30pm Trinity at Food Pantry  
 January 5 - Newsletter Mailing  
 January 6, 13, 20, 27 - 9-11am Confirmation & Inquirer's Class, Library  
 January 7 - 11:30am Epiphany Dinner, Parish Hall  
 January 8, 15, 22, 29 - 7pm Yoga, Parish Hall  
 January 9 - 7pm Vestry, Library  
 January 18 - 7pm Prayer Beading, Library  
 January 19 - Newsletter Deadline  
 January 26 - Newsletter Mailing

### **February 2 - 7pm Bishop Paul's Visit to Trinity Candlemas, Confirmation & Reception**

February 4 - 11:30am Evangelism Luncheon, Parish Hall  
 February 6 - 7pm Worship Committee, Library  
 February 7 - 8:30am - 12:30pm Trinity at Food Pantry  
 6:15pm Potluck/Study, Parish Hall  
 February 13 - 7pm Vestry, Library  
 February 14, 21, 28 - 6:15pm Potluck/Study, Parish Hall  
 February 20 - 5:30pm Pancake Dinner, Parish Hall  
 February 21 - 9am & 7pm Ash Wednesday Liturgy  
 February 21 - 6:15pm Soup Supper, Parish Hall

**Please note for 2007 Trinity will serve at the food  
pantry on the first Wednesday of each month ONLY.**

## JANUARY CELEBRATIONS

### **HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

2 Wendell Moser  
 2 Charley Day  
 9 Don Scheck  
 14 Ingeborg Yeich  
 19 Ken Smith  
 19 Ron Smith  
 19 Ed Benintende  
 20 Bonnie O'Brien  
 20 Natalia Holman  
 21 Chris Holman  
 23 Carolyn Tolley  
 23 Janet Orner  
 23 Cindy Hill  
 24 Miklos Holman

### **HAPPY ANNIVERSARY**

17 Peter & Linda Salmon  
 21 Leroy & Dorothy Reaves

## **Pastoral Care News**

Let's all start the New Year off right! If each of us made a phone call or a visit, once a week or even once every other week, to someone who is shut in or who just can't always get out to go to church or shopping, think of the joy we could spread to others and also the good feelings we would have ourselves.

I recently spoke to a friend from another parish, which shall remain nameless, and she mentioned an experience she had just a short while ago. She happened to think of someone from her church that she had not seen for a few weeks. It could be, of course, that the lady (let's call her Susie) was visiting relatives, or had gone on vacation. But, she thought, maybe it wouldn't hurt to give her a call. She came up with the idea to call and say she was going out shopping & wondered if Susie would like to join her. Susie replied that she would love to, but she had fallen and injured herself and wasn't up to walking about in shops, but she would love to have a box of greeting cards to send to her friends so they would know she was okay, if not 100%. My friend did this small errand for her and they had a nice visit, with a cup of tea, when she delivered the cards. It didn't take a lot of effort, but it made a huge difference to Susie. Let's try to think along those lines – even a phone call can be a big lift to someone who's feeling down and lonely.

What is that line about spreading random acts of kindness throughout the world? Sounds like a good idea.

Kathie Herling

**Trinity Episcopal Church Mission Statement:**

**Share Gods Unconditional Love  
With Everyone.**

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**Our Prayers have been requested for:**

Ed Benintende

Steve Clark

Joyce DeGasperi

Bob Dexter

Al Eisenecker

Theresa Goffreri

Bill Lord

Flora Rinker

Rudy Roscher

Jon Ross

Ester Stein

Allistair Stewart

Rhonda Treible

Marion Braithwaite

Lauren Boyadis

Jacob Gower

Deborah Gower

Mary Baker

Jeff Landi

Raphael Bannister

Stacey

Martin Kilanowski

Richard Backora

Anita Rivera

Natashia Tomala

Alex Boehm

Taylor Ayers

Annie Turner

Matthew

Madeline

Helen

Violet McMahon

Mary Flaherty

Have you read the hall bulletin board lately?

TREASURERS REPORT - NOVEMBER, 2006

Total Contributions: \$8,635.95

Total Expenditure: \$8,153.60

Net income: \$482.35

Budget Pledged Offerings: \$7,517.00

Monthly Pledges received \$7,447.73

Christmas Message

You will see that for the month of November that we had a surplus in our finances at Trinity. Christmas is a time of rejoicing and we should certainly rejoice that for that particular month we "paid our way". I would like to thank the members of our congregation for their increased financial support during 2006. As most of us know we are experiencing some financial difficulties at our church, but much has been accomplished during the past year. We expectantly look forward to 2007 and there are strong indications that in the coming year we will have cause to rejoice as our situation continues to improve. The Finance Committee and myself would like to wish everyone a Happy and Blessed Christmas.

*Michael Goodwin, Treasurer*

Arts on the Mountain presents

JILL SANDT

Paintings

JOHN ABEL

Classical Guitar

Opening Reception      Sunday, January 28, 2007      12 Noon to 2 PM

Come enjoy fine art, fine music and fine refreshments for lunch after church on January 28th. Jill Sandt Swersie, winner of many regional prizes for her work, will share her classic still life paintings and humorous pictorial observations of the human scene with us from January 28th to February 19th. On January 28th we will also have the pleasure of John Abel's very pure classical guitar music.

## Change of Address

A few years ago, the Post Office changed our rural route box number again in a process that has taken us from number 36 to 1655 as houses have gone up all around us while we stayed in the same place. Somehow, this time we weren't able to get this message across to Episcopal Life, so we didn't receive the national publication of our church for almost two years. We didn't realize what a blessing that was until it started coming again and we found the church still mired in a never-ending argument about the place of homosexuals in the church.

All the arguments in news stories and letters on this subject are the same ones we have heard or read 1000 times before. No one's mind is being changed by this exercise but the subject is tearing the church apart on every level from the Anglican Communion, where other continents no longer talk to us, to dioceses where whole parishes secede, to individual churches where some parishioners simply leave, "voting with their feet". In the midst of these distressing developments, the real work of the church -caring for others and bringing all the good news of salvation - gets set aside.

This is not a subject that I wanted to tackle in these columns, which have been aimed at social concerns that bring us together. But since it is getting in the way of those matters, I'd like to try to propose a truce at least, if not a peace treaty, based on the following well-established Christian principles:

1. We are all sinners, in need of God. Homosexuals are sinners - not because they are homosexuals but because they are people, sharing the universal human need for God's grace.
2. God (and therefore God's church) welcomes sinners, asking only that they do their best (with God's help) to amend their lives.
3. It is up to God alone to judge the nature of anyone's sin. It is very likely something entirely different from what the world sees and judges so hastily. Our place as a congregation is not to judge each other but to welcome and encourage each other in our individual searches for God's grace.
4. Members of the clergy can also be sinners. The sacraments, Bible readings and prayers have their own sanctity, totally apart from the character of those who deliver them. If we were to eliminate all sinners from the clergy, there would be a great number of empty pulpits and no one to fill them.

To these well-established principles, I would add these practical notes:

1. Those who object to a gay bishop in New Hampshire (or a woman as our new Presiding Bishop) seem to think that activists chose Bishops Schori and Robinson as a political statement about gender or sexual orientation. In fact, they were chosen because duly qualified voters felt they were the best people for their jobs.
2. Saint Paul tells us to put away childish things. It is childish to stomp out of an organization when a vote goes against you as long as a process remains open for future votes that can take a different direction.
3. Both sides in this controversy need to realize that they can't convince each other. Homosexuals cannot change who they are - and those who try to change them are working in vain. Opponents of homosexuality are not going to be persuaded to validate this way of life - and those who try to change their views are also working in vain. Rather than trying to convert each other, let us simply accept our fellow Christians as we are, work together, and leave the judgments up to God.

If we could follow these simple principles for a generation, thus getting to know each other in an atmosphere of shared goals, I believe today's burning issues will seem like quaint historical relics in a living, vibrant, diverse and relevant church.

Peter Salmon

As we say so elegantly in Yonkers, whaddayathink? P

New Year's has always been a time for looking back to the past, and more importantly, forward to the coming year. It's a time to reflect on the changes we want (or need) to make and resolve to follow through on those changes. It is also a good opportunity for us to resolve to find a way to serve others.

Studies show that only 3-5% of believers consistently share their faith. It is not due, however, to a lack of evangelism training tools. In reality, while terrific tools are available for teaching various approaches to presenting the Gospel, there is a breakdown in application. It seems that most people still face the challenge of overcoming their inertia - getting out of the pews and into the community.

Evangelism doesn't have to be intimidating. Many people have discovered new joy in witnessing through a tool known as Servanthood Evangelism.

Servanthood evangelism is intentionally sharing Christ by modeling biblical servanthood. It is the simplest, most transferable, and most fun approach for moving closer to a biblical lifestyle through simple acts of kindness and intentional personal evangelism.

The concept is as old as the New Testament. Christ overlooked the obvious taboos of His day in order to reach-out to a Samaritan woman needing the "water of life." Although conventional wisdom dictated that Christ should have avoided any contact with the woman in order to guard against religious defilement, He chose to converse with the "woman at the well" presenting the opportunity for evangelism as she asked the simple question "why?" In the end, because of Christ's overwhelming love and commitment to the principles of servanthood, the woman was compelled to bring multitudes of others to meet the Savior.

While servanthood evangelism is intentionally evangelistic, by no means is it coercive in a negative sense. When doing an act of kindness, the doer says, "I am doing this to show the love of Jesus in a practical way."

Shoveling someone's walk, sharing your umbrella in bad weather, clearing a stranger's car of ice, vacuuming the carpets of an elderly neighbor – these are all acts of kindness which can be done and offered in the name of sharing the love of Jesus -- servanthood evangelism.

My personal New Year's resolution is to commit one act of servanthood evangelism each day. What a joy it will be to wake and wonder what I will be called to do for someone.

Respectfully,  
*Rob McMahon*  
Evangelism Leadership Team