

TRINITY NEWS

January, 2008

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

MT. POCONO PA

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

...and now...

The ambience lingers in the church and the parish hall. The scent of incense and candles, the reverberation of the many drums carried by a whole gang of little drummer boys during the pageant, the sound of voices in our annual exuberant rendition of "Go Tell in on the Mountain" at the close of the midnight service on Christmas Eve, fill the church. Poinsettias and greens remain in place as the twelve days of Christmas continue. The wise men and their camels wait on the mantel in the parish hall to take their journey to the crèche in the church at the Epiphany dinner. The crèche will remain in place through the Baptism of our Lord, and then gradually all of these things will be carefully and lovingly put away until next December.

These symbols of Christmas remind us of the power of God's love for each and every one of us. That love shines forth in the gift of his son, our Lord Jesus. What an amazing gift of love God granted to us. That is the most important thing for us to know! In the current newsletter from the Moravian Church in Hellertown is this delightful story:

A Sunday School teacher decided to have her young class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the Bible, namely Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the verse. Little Rick was excited about the task but he just couldn't remember the Psalm. After much practice, he could barely get past the first line. On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, he was nervous. When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, "The Lord is my Shepherd, and that's all I need to know."

That is all that any of us needs to know. The Good Shepherd is the one who constantly watches out for us and makes sure that our most important needs are taken care of. That is what a shepherd does.

The announcement of the birth of the Prince of Peace was made first to the shepherds on the hillside near Bethlehem. They worked long hours, the job was a dirty one, and they were looked down upon even though others were dependent on the work they did. Too often we still disregard those who do menial labor, and yet where would we be without them? These folks take care of many of our most important needs. My sociology professor in college spoke of the garbage collectors as the foundation of society, upon whom the rest of us are utterly dependent. Half a century later he is still right. We depend on many people for many things, including the shepherds of today.

God chose to have the shepherds hear the news of Jesus' birth first. This is really no surprise if we remember that God has chosen the poor to be the most beloved of all of us. Next to hear the news and come looking for the new king were Gentiles, the three wise men from beyond Israel. Those who understood themselves to be the chosen people maligned those who were not like them, including the Gentiles. But these men were open to the gift of the Savior, no matter how he came. That does not seem to have been true of those who considered themselves to be in a special relationship with God.

There is something for all of us here. May we remember that even as God's beloved children we are not to remain aloof or to consider ourselves superior. We take our cue from the Good Shepherd who leads us by love and by giving himself for us. May we begin the year in humility seeking to simply love one another as God loves us.

Blessings,
Ginny+



JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 2008

January 4 - Newsletter Mailing
January 6 - 11:30am Epiphany Dinner, Parish Hall
January 8 - 7pm Vestry, Library
January 10 - 9:30-11:00am Bible Study, Library
January 13, 20, 27 - 9-9:45am Confirmation Class, Youth Room
January 13, 20, 27 - 11:30am - 12:30pm Choir Rehearsal, Library
January 15 - 6pm Stewardship Leadership Team, Library
January 18 - Newsletter Deadline
January 24 - 9:30-11:00am Bible Study, Library
January 25 - Newsletter Mailing
January 29 - 6pm Archdeacon's Visit, Library
February 2 - 7pm Candlemas
February 3 - 10am Bishop Croneberger's Visit/Confirmation
February 6 - 9am & 7pm Holy Eucharist, Ash Wednesday
6pm Soup Supper, Parish Hall
February 10, 17, 24 - 11:30 Choir Rehearsal, Library
February 12 - 7pm Vestry
February 13, 20 & 27 - 6:30pm Potluck, Holy Eucharist & Study, Parish Hall
February 22 - Newsletter Deadline
February 29 - Newsletter Mailing

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

When I was in Oil City PA for my cousin James Frawley's funeral I went to Christ Episcopal Church for Sunday services. I noticed a plaque as I entered the church. I wanted to share what it said.

*Be Silent, Be Thoughtful, Be Reverend
For this is the House of the Lord*

Before the service Speak to the Lord

During the service Let God Speak to you

After the service speak to each other

These four lines yet simple says a lot. It touched me as I read it over and over again.

Bob Butiste

**Trinity Episcopal Church Mission Statement:
Share Gods Unconditional Love
With Everyone.**

Trinity Episcopal Church
HCR 1 Box 25
Mt. Pocono PA 18344

Phone: 570-839-9376
Fax: 570-839-7277
Email: trinitychurch@nni.com
Website: TrinityMtPocono.org

Our Prayers have been requested for:

Ed Benintende
Steve Clark
Joyce DeGasperi
Bob Dexter
Al Eisenecker
Bill Killpatrick
Jon Ross
Ester Stein

Rhonda Treible
Marion Braithwaite
Lauren Boyadis
Deborah Gower
Mary Baker
Jeff Landi
Anita Rivera
Alex Boehm
Victoria Forstein
Rose Smith

Karen Kern
Lynn Tinsley
Ann Curry
Lois Rothrock
Dick Orner
Alistair Stewart
Penny Clark
Julie Beech

The book of the Month

The Real Mary: Why Evangelical Christians Can Embrace the Mother of Jesus, by Scot McKnight provided material which was used during the Advent Wednesday Evening meditations on Mary, the Mother of God. Focusing on the message and power of the beloved *Magnificat*, the song of Mary found at the beginning of the Gospel According to Luke, McKnight brings to our attention a very young woman who was profoundly faithful and who had a deep concern for the world in which she lived. Do we find such concern among the people of her young age today? Yes, I know several who have her concern. And so do you. This book is enlightening for all of us.

A PRAYER FOR THE WORLD

**Let the rain come and wash away
the ancient grudges, the bitter hatreds
held and nurtured over generations.
Let the rain wash away the memory
of the hurt, the neglect.
Then let the sun come out and
fill the sky with rainbows.
Let the warmth of the sun heal us
wherever we are broken.
Let it burn away the fog so that
we can see each other clearly.
So that we can see beyond labels,
beyond accents, gender or skin color.
Let the warmth and brightness
of the sun melt our selfishness.
So that we can share the joys and
feel the sorrows of our neighbors.
And let the light of the sun
be so strong that we will see all
people as our neighbors.
Let the earth, nourished by rain,
bring forth flowers
to surround us with beauty.
And let the mountains teach our hearts
to reach upward to heaven.
Amen.**

-Rabbi Harold S. Kushner

To many, the coming of a new year represents an opportunity to begin again. It is a chance to step off of dead-end paths and create a fork in the road, disassociating from the old, and aligning ourselves with fresh possibilities. Harnessing the power of this transformative energy is a matter of truly believing that resolutions can conquer past patterns. If we believe we are capable of changing our lives, we are more apt to believe that we are capable of leaving our mistakes behind and growing in the gift which is forgiveness. Our dedication, which might otherwise falter, is buoyed by our faith. The beginning of the new year is traditionally a popular time to tackle difficult tasks such as quitting smoking, losing weight, or fulfilling worldly ambitions. However, the transition from year to year can also be an opportune occasion to pursue emotional and spiritual growth because we no longer feel burdened by regret and disappointment.

It is for this reason that we need to be aware of the realities of others who might be searching for a meaningful change in their own lives, perhaps seeking a new beginning at church or in a life of prayer. Walking that spiritual path of a prayerful life with another seeker is truly a gift and can be an enlightening experience for both.

Perhaps the seeker exists within us, and that is where evangelism begins. Once we can embrace our own spiritual journey, it becomes easy, almost second nature, to begin to share with others our own stories and experiences found along our way.

Whatever your reality, it is within our power to create the fork that allows us to walk a more prayerful, grounded path. Viewing the start of the coming year as a time of our own rebirth, following the birth of Christ, allows us to focus on what we want to accomplish in the coming weeks, months, and years; and to do so with a clean slate.

In the ancient Babylonian, Chinese, and Celtic traditions, the period marking the transition from the old year to the new was viewed as a struggle between chaos and order, in which order always prevailed. Our belief that we, too, can banish chaos and integrate our dreams, desires, and goals more fully into our lives will give us the determination and fortitude not only to change for the better and grow in love of one another and in Christ Jesus, but also to share that love, God's unconditional love, with everyone.

Wishing you peace & light,

Rob McMahon

Chair, Evangelism Leadership Team

Social Concerns: No Coal In These Stockings

As we come to the end of the year it is appropriate for us to thank the people who do so much for all of us to express our concern for others and the world we live in. We have no social concerns committee at Trinity, so they don't spend time in meetings - they just do it, and we all appreciate these efforts.

First and foremost is our good Rector Ginny, who has made social concerns a central focus of her ministry. She not only provides inspirational leadership for them, but also often serves as a spear carrier to help do their jobs.

The longest running project is the Ecumenical Hunger Ministry, which began over 20 years ago with a major initial effort by Trinity's Fran Schick and Linda Salmon. Linda went on to serve as president for 7 years and is still actively engaged in helping to feed about 5000 people a year. (Sounds almost Biblical.) She is ably assisted by Trinity helpers including Ginny, Betty Speicher, John and Ann Curry, Bob and Vicky O'Grady, Joan Roche, Pat and Mike Goodwin and others I'm sure I've missed. Many more of you donate food and household needs every week (including enough toilet paper, which is not provided by government funding, to decorate the Pocono's for the next 1000 Halloweens, but is quickly distributed at the pantry). You also participate by giving to the annual fund-raising walk which provides the money for Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets.

Kathie Herling, assisted by husband Bill, directs an active ministry to visit and help members of our Trinity family who can't get out to church or may have other special problems. Tom Sayer, Pat and Mike Goodwin, Chuck Bubar, Barb Gessner, Ellie Schenk, Jeanne and Lisle Hixenbaugh are all involved as well, along with Betty Speicher and Rob McMahan in their role as lay Eucharistic ministers.

Cindy Hill put Trinity on the journalistic map and kept us well fed all summer by selling "Kajo Keji Veggies" - the amazing produce of her garden, with all the sales going to support our Diocesan program in the Sudan. Deb Gower chairs our chapter of Episcopal Church Women, who have been selling beautiful hand made African clothing for the same purpose. Julie Beech directs our participation in the national ECW's "One Great Hour of Sharing" which provides money to churches to help them carry out helping projects.

Charley Buttz heads Trinity's effort to promote the Diocesan New Hope Campaign, aimed at providing millions of dollars to fight poverty in Kajo Keji and in Northeast Pennsylvania. One potential recipient of those funds is the Family Promise program, presently being organized to start early next year. Darlene Schultz directs Trinity's participation as a host congregation four times a year. For a week at a time we will feed and house homeless families and provide some evening recreation. During the day kids will go off to school and adults to a social service center where they will be equipped with skills to find jobs and housing. Jan Anglemire has volunteered to co-ordinate providing supplies: they still need more fitted sheets, blankets and blow up mattresses. Many of you have volunteered to help provide services. Darlene is still looking for two more coordinators, one to work with other churches that will help us and one to lead the early evening activities.

Torrey and Rachel Salmon were part of a youth delegation from the Diocese that spent a memorable week in New Orleans helping people there to dig out from the long lasting effects of Hurricane Katrina and rehab homes and landscapes.

Our Sunday School, directed by Marianne Ayers, assisted by Caroline Passno, Edith Armstrong, Jennifer Tolley and Eleanor Price, continues its yearly Lenten project of raising money for the Heifer Project, which gives livestock to poor families around the world and in the US as well. According to an ad by a similar agency, "Nothing says I love you like a water buffalo" and I imagine nothing does.

There are many individual efforts as well. Letters to the Editor of the Pocono Record by Ed and Joni Benintende, Chuck Bubar and me and Ginny's column there express different points of view, but all are contributions to making our society work. Kathryn Ritter is an environmental hawk, always reminding us to recycle. And I'm sure the list could go on and on.

Last and least are these monthly reports on it all, where I stand amazed at how much you are doing. We wish you all a happy new year, confident that it will continue to be filled with the blessing of your concern for others.

Peter Salmon