

TRINITY NEWS

March, 2008

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

MT. POCONO PA

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

Happiness is.....

Happiness runs in a circular motion
Life is like a little boat upon the sea,
Everybody is a part of everything anyway
You can have everything if you let yourself be.

On a recent edition of "60 Minutes" attention was paid to a survey which sought to determine which country has the happiest population. We are way down the list. Denmark is at the top. So an interviewer went there to see what he could find out. He discovered a high level of contentment among those he interviewed. This led me to think about the connection between happiness and contentment.

In the Jerusalem Bible, the translation of the Beatitudes uses the word *happy* rather than the word *blessed*. Our common cultural understanding of happiness has evolved to a different place, perhaps causing us to scowl at the use of the word *happy* in relation to Jesus' teaching.

What does it mean to be happy? Many believe that it requires success in life, material acquisition, and other measurable criteria. I think perhaps the Danes have something to teach us. One of the interviewees spoke of not having such high expectations that they couldn't be achieved, and therefore being content with life. This is not about being complacent, although complacency is certainly a better state than dissatisfaction. The more I think about it all - happiness, contentment, complacency, the less sharply defined the distinctions become.

The lyrics above give a rather philosophical perspective to the question. If we allow ourselves to recognize and live into the truth that "no [one] is an island", then contentment may be found. The following is from the 17th Meditation of John Donne, 17th century English poet and priest:

No man is an island entire of itself;
every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;
if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less,
as well as if a promontory were,
as well as any manner of thy friends or of thine own were;
any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind.
And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.

In these familiar words, Donne reminds us of our connectedness with one another. Were we to live into that connection with joy, happiness could well become less illusive. Understanding that ours is truly a global village could have the effect of reducing competitiveness. When a mother with all of the latest and best in material goods for caring for her child in this country realizes that the mother across the world with nothing but the rags on her back wants the same things for her child, we begin to get it. When that same wealthy mother finds a way to replace the rags with clothing, food, shelter, medical care for her counterpart, her own contentment grows.

But what about reaching for the stars? Another song comes to mind:

Would you like to swing on a star? Carry moonbeams home in a jar?
And be better off than you are? Or would you rather be...

We would like to be better off than we are. We need to reach for the stars. We need to extend ourselves and pursue our dreams. But in the meantime, if we are to be happy, if we are to know contentment, we need to also recognize the God has granted us all that we truly need. Our contentment will come with our faithful use of the abundance which is ours.

Ginny+



MARCH/APRIL, 2008

March 5 - 8:30-11:30am Trinity at Food Pantry
March 5, 12 - 6:30pm Potluck, Holy Eucharist & Study, Parish Hall
March 6 & 20 - 9:30-11am Bible Study, Library
March 9 & 30 - 9am Teen Time with the Rector, Youth Room
March 11 - 7pm Vestry, Library
March 13 - 11am Chrism Mass, Cathedral Church of the Nativity Bethlehem
March 15 - 9:30am Altar Guild Brunch & Set up, Parish Hall
March 16 & 23 - No Church School
March 20 - 7pm Holy Eucharist Maundy Thursday
March 21 - Noon & 7pm Good Friday Liturgy
 Stations of the Cross Following the Noon Service
March 22 - 7pm Easter Vigil
March 23 - Easter Day
April 2 - 8:30-11:30am Trinity at Food Pantry
April 3 & 17 - 9:30-11am Bible Study, Library
April 8 - 7pm Vestry, Library
April 13 & 27 - 9am Teen Time with the Rector, Youth Room
April 20 - 11:30am Ryan Connell Forum, Parish Hall

**Save The Date - Saturday, August 2, 2008 Trinity Episcopal Church
Summer Music Festival at "The Roof" Paradise Township Park**

As spring comes our thoughts turn to lovely flowers. If you would like to help provide flowers at the altar, please phone the office (839-9376).

Thanks!

MARCH CELEBRATIONS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

5 Kayla Price
13 Bob Butiste
13 Fred Schultz
19 Vince Cole
27 Deborah Gower
30 Barbara Lord

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

7 Robert & Deborah Gower
31 Charley & Ginny Day

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
Bill Killpatrick
Jon Ross
Ester Stein
Rhonda Treible

Marion Braithwaite
Lauren Boyadis
Deborah Gower
Mary Baker
Jeff Landi
Anita Rivera
Alex Boehm
Victoria Forstein
Karen Kern
Lynn Tinsley
Ann Curry

Lois Rothrock
Dick Orner
Alistair Stewart
Penny Clark
Merrill Nanton
Mary Karlson
Ron Leone
Marilyn Croneberger
Elaine Tanis

Book of the Month

The Irrational Season by Madeleine L'Engle could well be considered to be a classic as it is some thirty years old. It is not, however, "dated." Working through the calendar of the church year from the beginning of Advent to the beginning of Advent, Ms. L'Engle invites the reader to a thought-provoking view of her life and her spiritual journey through the seasons. This is Book 3 of her series "The Crosswicks Journal" and yet it stands alone in its value. The chapter on Lent is titled "Lion and Lamb" and in it she offers food for each of us to ponder, to chew carefully, and to make our own as we proceed on the journey of life. She writes, "Perhaps what I am supposed to do about Lent is to think about some things I have put off thinking about." See what I mean?

Listen With Your Heart

At times, we want and need to be heard. Having someone to share our life with, whether it is the joys and frustrations of being a new parent, the excitement of a new career, the heartache of a lost love, or simple chitchat is a blessing. It is a wonderful gift to have, or to be, a good listener.

Most of us were born and raised in cultures that value the head over the heart and, as a result, we place our own hearts below our heads in a sort of inner hierarchy of which we may not be conscious. What this means is that we tend to listen and respond from the neck up, often leaving the rest of our bodies with little or no say in most matters. This is a habit which sometimes feels as ingrained as the way we breathe or walk.

The brain has a masterful way of imposing structure and order on the world, creating divisions and categories, devising plans and strategies. In many ways, we have our brains to thank for our survival on this planet. However, as is so clear at this time, we also need the wisdom of our hearts if we wish to continue surviving in a viable way. When we listen from our heart, the logical grid of the brain tends to soften and melt, which enables us to perceive the interconnectedness beneath the divisions and categories we use to organize the world. We begin to understand that just as the heart underlies the brain, this interconnectedness underlies everything.

Such listening is what Ryan Connell exercises. A graduate of Stroudsburg High School's Class of 2007, Ryan visited the West Bank of Israel, where he met with Arab and Israeli peace activists and entered the tents of Bedouins and the homes of Jewish settlers to listen to their stories and see the injustices first-hand. Having some frightening experiences while going through security checkpoints and viewing the walls of separation, rock throwing, machine guns and suicide bombings in the area where Jesus once walked, Ryan asked himself "How would Jesus feel about all this? Would he just go pray or would he go listen to people's stories?"

Ryan will be visiting Trinity Church at the invitation of the Evangelism leadership Team on Sunday April 20 of this year to share with us his stories of what he learned from those whom he listened to. Lunch will be served in the Parish Hall after the 10:00 worship and Ryan will be available to answer our questions and for conversation.

This amazing young man did exactly what we've been learning to do by listening to others tell their stories, which is a key piece of evangelism. In Ryan's own words, "Jesus talks about how faith without works is dead. Your first concern is who can we help? Who can we feed? It's so much more important to lift someone up for a day than to make our patio look nice. It's all dust – it's nothing."

We invite you to please join us in welcoming Ryan to listen with our hearts to what he has to share with us on Sunday April 20. Please also invite your friends and neighbors to share in what promises to be an enlightening experience.

With love & light,

Rob McMahon
Chair, Evangelism Leadership Team

Social Concerns: Be Sure It's True When You Say "I Love You"

A national religious organization recently ran an ad campaign featuring a picture of an imposing member of the cattle family with the slogan, "Nothing Says 'I Love You' Like a Water Buffalo." The idea was that our contributions to this group would help people in poor countries by giving them livestock.

The trouble was that the animal in the picture was not the highly useful domesticated Asiatic water buffalo but, rather, a Cape buffalo, the most dangerous animal in Africa, who doesn't say, "I love you" to anybody. To me, the organization's ignorance on this central point cast doubt on their whole mission.

That mission, in any case, seemed to be a recent attempt to copy the highly successful 60 year old Heifer Project, which has been providing livestock to poor people around the world, including our own country, since 1947. Recipients use the animals themselves and give their offspring to others in need. By now, great great great grand calves and kids and piglets and chicks of earlier donations are still feeding people, along with the many new yearly additions to these flocks and herds.

One principle of philanthropy I learned from my fund-raising father-in-law Joe Shutt is not to duplicate work that is already being done. The church organization apparently thought this animal sharing needed a church brand name on it. But we can remember Mother Theresa's answer to young Westerners who were helping her care for the sick and dying poorest of the poor people in Calcutta when they complained they weren't given time to tell their patients about Jesus. She simply said, "They have already met Him in your actions."

And this is what Jesus himself told us in several ways. "Those who aren't against us are for us" and "What you have done for the least of my brothers and sisters you have done for me." A college classmate of mine spent her whole working career with the Heifer Project while also being active in relief efforts as an Episcopalian, such as working in post-Katrina Biloxi with Rev Harold Roberts, who hosted Linda and me on our mission trip there. In responding to our desire to help others, it makes sense to do it in the most cost-effective way and in its chosen field, the Heifer Project is first in its class.

For all these reasons and because the Heifer Project is such a tangible, understandable way for children to learn about helping others, it is a delight to see the yearly Lenten effort by our Sunday School to raise money to support it. I hope and trust that we will all give generously these next Sundays. And we also get rewarded with birdfeeders and especially delicious chocolate chip cookies (OK in Lent for a good cause) that the kids give back in thanks. Jesus and his young disciples are still happily and constructively at work in the world!

Peter Salmon