

TRINITY NEWS

May, 2008

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

MT. POCONO PA

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

The Promise

As our journeys of faith continue through our daily lives and into God's future, I remain ever thankful for the many stories which people share in a variety of ways. The balance of listening and telling is crucial to faithfully living the Gospel. Within the rich diversity of the Anglican tradition, the Episcopal Church, and Trinity parish in particular, we are blessed with abundant and varied expressions of listening and telling. Through it all the underlying truth of our Lord's presence with us provides each of us and each of our stories with a rock solid foundation, the foundation of hope which we know in the constancy of God's presence.

Recently Barbara Crafton wrote of this in a powerful poem. It was part of her April 7, 2008 "Almost-Daily eMo" which she has granted me permission to print here. When I wrote to her, I told her that if I were to give her poem a title it would be "The Promise." She was reflecting on pain, something which is part of the human condition in varying degrees, and therefore something we all know about. Mother Barbara writes:

"... Of course, we don't have a bargain about escaping pain in our lives. People may or may not love you, and God certainly loves you, but none of that has anything to do with whether your back hurts... One's own well-being is a poor barometer of God's loving presence. It is precisely when life hurts that we need God most, not as the perpetrator of our suffering but as the companion of it.

What happened to your hands?

It was an injury.

That must have hurt.

It did.

And your side?

Same injury.

My back hurts. And my leg. I'm so sick of this.

I know. I'll stay here with you until it eases up.

What if it doesn't?

I'll stay anyway."

As I reflect on these words I stand in awe before our God who dwells with us in all circumstances of our lives. This is even true when we are being completely self-centered and unworthy of such care. But it is not about our worthiness or lack thereof, but about God's love for all of us. This remains an astounding and astonishing truth. The injured hands, the injured side, the pain and yet God stays with us when our back hurts.

The promise of Easter is just that, the promise. God stays with us and nothing we ever do will change that. On the first day of this month we will gather to celebrate the Feast of the Ascension. There is a custom of extinguishing the Paschal Candle at the conclusion of the reading of the Gospel. This is intended to be a reminder of how bereft the disciples must have felt for those days from the Ascension to Pentecost. I think that this time is not unlike the silence of Holy Saturday. But we know that we have not been deserted, we are not left as orphans, we are not without hope. So maybe this year we will leave the candle lit.

God's mercy and grace are astounding! I'm still looking for my socks...

Ginny+

MAY/JUNE, 2008

May 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 - 9:30-11am Bible Study, Library
May 4, 11, 18 & 25 - 11:30am Choir Rehearsal, Library
May 4 - Run for the Red Marathon
May 7 - 8:30-11:30am Trinity at Food Pantry
May 10 - People Walking for People, Tobyhanna State Park
May 13 - 7pm Vestry, Library
May 17 - 7pm Ice Cream Social with Bird Presentation by Darrell Speicher, Parish Hall
May 18 - 9am Teen Time with the Rector, Youth Room, 11:30am Lunch & Spring Clean Up
May 25 - Prayer Vigil for Peace
May 23 - Newsletter Deadline, May 30 - Newsletter Mailing
June 1 - 9am Teen Time with the Rector, Youth Room, Noon Church School Parish Picnic (June 8th Rain Date)
June 4 - 8:30-11:30am Trinity at Food Pantry
June 5, 12, 19, 26 - 9:30-11am Bible Study, Library
June 7 - 6pm Rector's Retirement Dinner, The Inn at Pocono Manor
June 10 - 7pm Vestry, Library
June 15 - 9am Teen Time with the Rector, Youth Room
June 20 - Newsletter Deadline, June 27 - Newsletter Mailing
June 29 - 8 & 10am Rector's Last Sunday, 10am service followed with farewell reception

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

Rector's Retirement

I have been asked several times this year who will replace Ginny when she retires and who will be on the search committee.

The Wardens and Vestry have received a document summarizing the policies and practices of the Diocese of Bethlehem from the time a priest announces retirement through the first year of a new priest.

First and foremost we will concentrate on saying goodbye to Ginny and you should all be aware of the party planned for Saturday, June 7th and our final celebration on Sunday, June 29th.

On July 13th The Rev. Canon Jane Teter will meet with the congregation after the 10am service and we will begin our journey.

I am always happy to talk about any of this at anytime.

Betty Speicher
Senior Warden

MAY CELEBRATIONS **HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

3 Donald Ayers
16 Erin Flaherty
16 Eleanor Price
16 Caroline Passno
17 Leroy Reaves
22 Benjamin Gower
24 Darlene Schultz
27 Rosalie Osbaker
31 Thomas Johnson, Jr.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

3 Wendell & Jutta Moser
16 Bob & Vickie O'Grady
19 Nelson & Chandanie Baboolal

Windows of Opportunity

With the return of mild weather we are resuming restoration work on Trinity's stained glass windows. We've made arrangements to restore the center section of the one depicting Jesus' baptism. This is the last of those which were listed as critical by the Lamb Studio when they examined our windows two years ago. We will continue our fund-raising efforts for other windows which, though not critical, still need attention.

We also have enough money on hand to take care of the windows' insulation problem. Storm glass installed in the 70's to conserve heat has, unfortunately, conserved too much heat in the area between inner and outer glass, with the resulting expansion and contraction harming the stained glass. There are two proposed solutions, and we would welcome anyone's informed opinion about them. One is to install ventilating louvers in the glass, permitting better air flow and less heat build up than we have now. In addition to providing some continued insulating benefit, this option protects windows from damage caused by outside elements like falling trees or driving rain. On the other hand, it does not provide ideal ventilation for preservation of the windows and somewhat detracts from their appearance.

The other choice is to remove the storm glass entirely, which does provide the best possible ventilation for the windows and would enhance their appearance by removing an extra layer of glass between the windows and the light. On the other hand, while danger from falling trees is probably negligible, there is some danger that driving rainstorms would further deteriorate the putty already damaged by the greenhouse effect of our current glazing and cause the windows to leak. The Vestry will be asked to decide between these alternatives and, again, would welcome informed input. I'm in favor of removing the storm windows, but certainly open to other opinions.

We would also like to find some of you who are willing to give a couple of hours to attend a teaching session with David Konrad of the Lamb Studio. David will show us how we can establish a baseline for measuring the state of our windows so we can make yearly inspections to decide what needs attention. If you are interested, please let me know, and I will consider your schedule in arranging a time for this event. Thank you all for your continued support of this project - and remember, we still have note cards featuring Trinity's windows for sale as an ongoing fund-raiser. Peter Salmon

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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
Lynn Tinsley
Lois Rothrock
Dick Orner

Alistair Stewart
Penny Clark
Merrill Nanton
The Yurchak Family
Ron Leone
Marilyn Croneberger
Elaine Tanis
Theresa Leone

Let's have Ice Cream with the Birds!

Set Saturday, May 17th aside to have ice cream (and toppings, of course!) at 7 PM. Darrell Speicher will be giving a presentation on area birds, which will be interesting for young and not so young alike. We will be requesting a donation for PARC (Pocono Avian Research Center), a cause that our speaker is very involved with. Please bring the family, a friend or just yourself for a nice get-together and educational opportunity. We will be putting a sign-up sheet in the parish hall to get an idea of how many folks to expect. Hope you will be there!

Cindy Hill & Mary Alice Holmes

Veggie Request

I am planning my garden and have been bemoaning the fact that I can't seem to grow beets or carrots with any success. Do you have luck with these yummy roots? Could you be persuaded to grow some for our veggie project? I sure would love some nice fresh homegrown beets slathered in butter! Let's all hope for a good growing season this summer, and many veggies to feed us and our brothers and sisters in Kajo Keji.

Fruitfully yours, Cindy Hill

American Guild of Organist Sunday, May 18, 2008

We designate one Sunday each year, as AGO Sunday, in recognition of this community of organists which promotes excellence in training of organists and excellence in their service to our church's music needs and life.

This Sunday, in the 10 o'clock service, we will celebrate AGO Sunday with the following music:

Chorale Prelude	Vater Unser im Himmelreich Chorale: Hymn-tune no. 575 Hymn-text, St. John Passion, J.S. Bach Prelude: Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)	
*Air		Gerre Hancock (b.1934)
Motet	Now the Eleven Disciples	David Hurd (b.1950)
*Motet	Antiphon III (1920) I am Black but Comely, O Ye Daughters of Jerusalem	Marcel Dupre (1886-1971)
*Postlude	Toccata and Fugue in D minor	J.S. Bach
*Organ		

Listening & Living the Life of Evangelism

Often when we have the experience of encountering someone whose life seems so completely different from ours, we can almost imagine we have nothing in common. However, if we go more deeply into listening, we might see that we all have many of the same things going on in our lives. It is as though our different lives are in essence the same gift, wrapped in an infinite variety of containers, wrapping paper, ribbons, and bows. We experience some level of loss, grief, happiness, excitement, anger, and fear. Perhaps we have money issues of one kind or another, and most everyone struggles with difficult choices.

On Sunday, April 20, the Evangelism Leadership Team hosted a luncheon during which Ryan Connell visited us to share his stories of the time he spent in the West Bank of Israel. Ryan traveled there on a peace mission, but he also had a goal of his own; to "bring the love of Christ without using words, but by using the universal language of love." It was there that Ryan visited the tents and homes of people far away from his home in Stroudsburg and listened to their stories. There were times that the language barrier hampered his attempts to understand them, but he knew that those he heard found some sort of relief in being able to talk and to cry as he listened. Some of these stories brought me to tears as well. As a colleague of his showed a group of angry young boys that their aggressions could be worked out through physical exercise rather than violence, Ryan noted that this done without his friend being able to communicate in a spoken language that the boys understood. The end result was that these boys went from hurling rocks and shouting curses at soldiers to running relays and shouting "What's up?!" at them. Imagine the perplex confusion as the soldiers attempted to process this new behavior.

It is this sort of "lifestyle evangelism" that St. Francis of Assisi spoke of when he said "Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words." The idea here is to live the Christian lifestyle with the hope that people will see Christ through your actions. Jesus encouraged his disciples to shine the light for other people to see. He never asked us to be salespeople for lights and bulbs. If we show our love of God through our lives, people will notice that and follow. People will see Christ through our actions. At Morning Prayer, we offer the General Thanksgiving, beseeching the Lord to "give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days."

This lifestyle lives on in another piece which Ryan shared. He also spoke of a single telephone line connecting one side of the wall which separates the Israelis from the Palestinians to the other. It all started with a wrong number.

An Israeli woman named Natalia Wieseltier misdialed a telephone number one day and accidentally telephoned a Palestinian living in the territories. The two began chatting, talking about their lives and Middle East politics, inadvertently creating dialogue with a member of the other side of what the world views as an intractable conflict.

Wieseltier's experience reached the ears of members of the organization "Parents Circle - Families Forum" a joint group of Israeli and Palestinian parents, each one of whom has lost children or close family members in the conflict, and who state that they "know from our own painful experience that to move beyond silent despair and isolation, people must begin talking again - especially with people on the other side."

After hearing about what had resulted from Wieseltier's wrong number, the question was asked: what if any Israeli or Palestinian had the ability to simply pick up the telephone and speak to a member of the "other side?"

"Hello Peace, Hello Shalom, Hello Salaam" was then inaugurated as an attempt to facilitate dialogue between ordinary Israelis and Palestinians about peace and reconciliation in order to increase pressure on their leaders to follow suit, and to demonstrate to their leaders and the world that there is a "hunger for dialogue" on both sides between people who are interested in listening.

Our lives show up differently for each one of us because we each learn in different ways. We each learn about work and love, with experiences that are tailored to our particular perspective. Even as it appears that some people have it easy while others are in a continual state of struggle, the truth is that we are all learning, and it is very difficult to tell, when looking only at the exterior of a person, what's going on inside.

This is one of the many things that can be so valuable about cultivating relationships with people from all walks of life. As we get to know those who seem so different from us, we get to really see how much of life's challenges and joys are universal. We begin to look beyond the packaging of skin color, clothing preferences, and socioeconomic differences, hairstyles, and the cars we drive to the heart of the human experience. It is important to honor and value the differences in our packaging, but it is just as important to honor the gift of life inside each one of us, and the fact that, no matter how different the packaging, the gift inside is the same.

Live the life which is evangelism.

Rob McMahon

Chair, Evangelism Leadership Team

Social Concerns: Turning Things Over

Inspired by Kathryn's article last month on eating locally and Linda's annual gardening-centered birthday, I've been turning over our vegetable plot this week, along with thoughts about Sunday's sermon. In doing so, I've almost missed my newsletter deadline. But I would like to share two thoughts I dug up.

I. Standing Up by Sitting In: This morning's Peanuts cartoon rerun from the late 50's features Linus wearing a Civil War soldier's hat. At the dawn of the 60's America was preparing a nostalgic recognition of the centennial of the Civil War, awash in Gone With the Wind sentimentality and ignoring both the horrors and the purpose of that war. We would have celebrated gallant officers and beautiful Southern belles with lots of commercial spinoffs like those Civil War hats.

Instead, in February 1960 four young African Americans who were not willing to accept the lack of progress in 100 years turned our national attention from the Civil War to Civil Rights. By sitting down 'against policy' to ask for service at a Woolworth's lunch counter, they launched a non-violent revolution which changed the face of America for good and for the good.

They were inspired in this by Martin Luther King's earlier leadership of the Montgomery bus boycott, just as Martin was inspired by the courage of Rosa Parks that began that movement. All of them began their efforts as very ordinary people like the rest of us and could not have dreamed how widely their influence would grow. But grow it did, from a few individual efforts, reminding us that we, too, have the ability to make a positive difference in the world by standing up (or sitting down) for our beliefs.

II. Voodoo Economics: (I use this title with an apology to our friends in Haiti, where Voodoo is a respected form of religious expression, but it has a different meaning here in North America.)

One day a year, Linda and I clear off our kitchen table, then pile it high with tax forms, bills, receipts and cancelled checks to face an onerous duty of citizenship. When we get to the last line and find out how much we owe, we wish we had the same advantage as the government that requires all this effort from us. When they need extra money to pay their bills, they just print more of it. We don't have that option.

But the government is not 'them' - it is all of us. If we can't manufacture money out of thin air for our private needs, neither can we do it for our public ones. What we are actually doing is borrowing from the future - our grandchildren - to pay for current needs. We just have to have that bridge to nowhere, the \$575 hammer, the museum of cigar box art or \$12 billion a month for the war in Iraq. Let the kids pay - they don't vote.

The latest folly in this line is writing checks to all of us as so-called tax rebates when our taxes already don't equal our expenditures. I hope we can have the financial ability and moral resolution to give this money to our grandchildren, to whom it rightfully belongs, either directly or by donations to organizations working to build a brighter future for them.

Public policy has strayed from the simple rules of household economy under both parties for many years. There have been times when government spending, as 'pump priming', has paid off in higher revenues later on and borrowing is certainly justified to meet a national emergency. But neither of these is the same as running deficit budgets year after year. The first President Bush called it 'voodoo economics' - the idea that deficit-creating tax cuts would somehow trickle down into jobs.

Henry Ford had a better idea, because he understood that you can't sell cars without customers to buy them. He increased productivity with mass production so he could lower his prices and pay his workers more and they could afford to buy those millions of Model-T's. One would like to see a similar initiative and concern for the welfare of consumers and workers on the part of the companies that now sell the gas to put in our cars!

That's how it seems to me, but I'm not an economist, just a guy trying to balance a family budget on the kitchen table. Peter Salmon