

TRINITY NEWS

November, 2007

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

MT. POCONO PA

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

With an exceptionally warm and beautiful autumn this year, our appreciation for the glories of God's creation abounds. A few weeks ago I made a decision to take a "news sabbatical". Some might see that as irresponsible. I found it to be a wonderfully healing experience. It has invited me to focus in a new way on my immediate surroundings, on those I encounter in various places, and on those I correspond with by e-mail or snail mail. This week I have begun to read Time magazine again and to look at the headlines for the New York Times which I receive on line. I find that I continue to be distressed about so much of what is happening in our world today. At the same time I am aware of so many blessings in the lives of folks caring for one another.

One of those blessings is Family Promise of Monroe County. Following the presentation last spring we as a parish, through the action of the Vestry, made the commitment to be a host parish for this ministry with families who have lost their homes. This will stretch us and grace us in ways we will not know until it happens! As it has been some time since the commitment was made, and as we pray daily for our support of this work as a parish, I want to bring you up to date a bit on the project.

Here at Trinity we are fortunate to have Darlene Schultz as our parish coordinator. She and I are working together to build the team of coordinators for the various organizational aspects of this ministry. We are beginning with the list of those who signed up at the presentation. However, PLEASE let us know that you want to know more so that everyone has an opportunity to participate. This work will transform your life! Just meeting the leadership and others involved has been a blessing for me.

On the county level, at the most recent meeting of parish representatives we learned that the needed 13 parishes have made the commitment to host families. Once the program starts, each parish will have guests 4 weeks during the year on a rotating schedule. Host parishes will be assisted by support parishes. There are 15 of them at this time. If you have friends who are interested in this ministry and whose parish has not made a commitment, encourage them to speak with their clergy. OR invite them to be part of our team at Trinity! Many have volunteered, but we cannot have too much help!

Supplies are being gathered. We at Trinity are in that process as some things will be accumulated here for use here. Other things will be shared among host churches. Our list is in its nascent stages. Darlene and I are discerning storage areas and she is growing a list of what we have so that we can discern what we need. For instance I know that we will need 16 fitted twin sized sheets for the air mattresses. (We already have flat sheets and pillow cases.) The list continues.

The Board for Family Promise is seeking folks to serve on the Fund Raising Committee, the Public Relations Committee, and the Board itself. They have several applications for the position of director. The next step is major fund raising. This has begun and there will be events coming along for you to enjoy as you support this mission. Once the required base amount is in the bank a director will be hired. Two months after that the program will begin. During that time the details will be fleshed out as to scheduling, supplies, transport, screening families, and on and on. There is much to do.

We are already receiving back from this work. The group that gathers to talk about all of these details is fully focused on this mission, on what we hold in common. All of us at Trinity are needed for this ministry. In the midst of a world in turmoil, fear, and despair, the light of God's love shines brightly in the work we have been given to do. As it shines upon us, may it also shine through us.

"Let your light shine..."

Ginny+



NOVEMBER/DECEMBER, 2007

November 1 - 9am Holy Eucharist, All Saints'
November 1, 15, 29 - 9:30am Bible Study, Library
November 4, 11, 18 - 9-9:45am Confirmation Class, Youth Room
November 4, 11, 18, 25 - 11:30am - 12:30pm Choir Rehearsal, Library
November 7 - 8:30am - 12:30pm Trinity at Food Pantry
6:15pm Potluck & Study, Parish Hall
November 13 - 7pm Vestry, Library
November 20 - 6pm Stewardship Leadership Team, Library
November 23 - Newsletter Deadline for Articles & Information
Office Closed Thanksgiving Holiday
November 25 - 8 & 10am Celebration Sunday
9am Prayer Chain Meeting
November 30 - Newsletter Mailing
December 1 - 10am - 4pm Christmas Bazaar
December 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 - 9-9:45am Confirmation Class, Youth Room
December 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 - 11:30-12:30 Choir Rehearsal, Library
December 5 - 8:30am - 12:30pm Trinity at Food Pantry
December 11 - 7pm Vestry, Library
December 15 - 9am Pastoral Care Team Meeting, Library
December 24 - 7pm Pageant & Holy Eucharist
8 pm Christmas Eve Hospitality Gathering, Parish Hall
10pm Carols & Festive Holy Eucharist
December 25 - 10am Christmas Day Holy Eucharist
December 25, 26, 28, January 1 Office Closed Christmas Holiday
December 28 - Newsletter Deadline
December 30 - 10am Lessons & Carols

NOVEMBER CELEBRATIONS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

1 Rachel Lyn Salmon
2 Tom Parry
2 Craig Anglemire
16 Vickie O'Grady
25 Liz Leary

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

8 Liz & Jamie Leary
23 George & Lillian Waters

**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
Benjamin Gower
Jacob Gower
Deborah Gower
Mary Baker
Jeff Landi
Stacey
Anita Rivera

Alex Boehm
Victoria Forstein
Rose Smith
Karen Kern
Lynn Tinsley
Rob McMahon
Betsey Hassrick
George Emery
Lois Rothrock
Dick Orner
Alistair Stewart

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Make All Things New: Stories of Healing, Reconciliation & Peace by Caroline A. Westerhoff. As Ms. Westerhoff begins to tell one of the 14 stories in this book, she selects a quotation from Scripture. They set the tone and lead the reader into the poignancy that follows. At the end, her husband John provides a collect which allows the reader to offer to God the experience of reading the story. In a way one does not want to put the book down. On the other hand, each story deserves to be savored for a time before the next one is read. The book is from Morehouse Publishing.

Part of our heritage at Trinity is the series of stained glass windows which depict some of the turning point events in the life of Jesus. We have embarked on an on-going project of restoring some of the windows which are bulging or otherwise damaged. A piece of clear glass indicates that that window has been removed for this work. If you wish to assist with this project, contributions of any amount are gratefully received. If you are interested in full responsibility for a window, please speak with Peter Salmon.

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH THIRD ANNUAL CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2007

10AM - 4PM

BEAUTIFUL HAND MADE CRAFTS

GREAT CHRISTMAS GIFTS

TRINITY STAINED GLASS WINDOW NOTE CARDS

DELICIOUS FOOD

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW SO YOU ARE SURE NOT TO MISS

THIS FUN DAY OF FOOD AND SHOPPING

"City Year Blog 1"

For the last month, I have been working with City Year Greater Philadelphia, a non-profit, youth leadership development program. It's part of AmeriCorps, so I make a stipend and I receive an education award upon completion of 1,700 hours of active community service. I serve at Taylor Elementary, a 90% Latino school in Northeast Philly. 87% of the kids (like many schools) qualify for free/reduced lunch. When I picked up trash at the neighborhood rec-center, I collected more dime bags and drug vials than I can count. It's different when you see it on the news.

I went into college without really considering whether or not my choice of major was realistic. Four years and a photography degree later, I didn't like where I was headed. I took a leap and joined City Year. I lived in Philly for four years and never really got involved in the community. I lived in residential neighborhoods, but I never really KNEW my neighbors. I got caught in one of the after school riots at University City high school, but I didn't understand why.

Over half of the CYGP's corps members are graduates of Philly public schools. After spending the last month teambuilding, camping and conversing with these kids, so many of my questions have been answered. One of our activities was called The Privilege Line. All 250 corps members and staff lined up across a field and we were asked questions. "If you had more than 50 books in your house growing up, step forward. If you ever had to go hungry for a meal because there was no money in your house, step back. If you have a friend or family member that was killed in a violent crime, step back." And then this one, which was the hardest, "If you grew up in a house where you were told and felt that you were loved, step forward."

I stepped forward, and when I looked back, I could see some of my new friends way behind me. It was the most heartbreaking feeling. Gratefulness clashed with guilt and sadness like an emotional thunderclap. I've never felt that way before. I never even thought about how my life would be if I didn't have a family that loved me. I can't remember a single day of my life where my parents didn't read to me.

It's one thing to read the dismal literacy statistics on paper, but another to actually see it. Some of my teammates had trouble with words like "modality," and "auspicious." I sat in on a 10th grade grammar class, and they were learning what I learned in 7th grade. I spoke to a high school teacher whose 10th graders could barely handle writing a paragraph on how they felt about 9/11. She bemoaned the low expectations of the school district, and how she can't give a student a grade lower than a 50%. The kids just fall through the cracks.

Today I dedicated my red bomber jacket to my parents and sister for being the foundation of strength upon which I stand. Other corps members dedicated it to their families, their kids and people they had lost due to violence. Opening day is tomorrow, and I'm excited to get started in my school on Monday. Dr. Thuy, principal of the Multi-Cultural Charter school told us, "teaching is not a job, it's a mission." I'm starting to believe him. The last month has been really eye-opening for me. I've gotten to meet people that I though were very different, and I've found we're not really so different after all. I've had the opportunity to converse with some of the most brilliant community leaders, and be motivated by their enthusiasm. And this is just the beginning.

Miya Benintende

Social Concerns: “The Devil Made Me Do It”

In introducing his autobiography, Henry Adams, grandson of one president and great-grandson of another, compared his effort to the “Confessions” of the French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau. Rousseau’s aim was to let it all hang out as we say today, appealing to God’s judgment, showing himself good when he was good, but “contemptible and vile when I was so”. Adams suggests that most of us, including him, rather not parade “the faults with which nature has generously embellished us all”, feeling that God may not particularly want to be reminded of “the least agreeable aspects of his creation”.

At Trinity, we tend to agree with Adams. We don’t spend a lot of time bemoaning “our manifold sins and wickedness which we from time to time have committed”, but prefer to focus positive energy on trying to help bring about God’s kingdom. While I strongly agree with that approach, we still have to recognize that there are times when we blow it, to the detriment of our good intentions.

A column on social concerns is not the place to dwell on individual sins but this month I want to look at a universal human tendency most of us share which works against our higher aims.

It goes back to the story of Adam and Eve, caught in the act of disobeying God’s rules for them. “The woman you gave me – she made me do it,” says Adam, to which Eve responds, “The serpent beguiled me and I did eat.” So begins the story of people unwilling to take responsibility for their actions. Two widely used modern versions of this are the apology that runs “I’m sorry if you feel bad about what I did” – making the offended party guilty of “feeling bad” – and “mistakes were made” – implying that some impersonal force goofed something up, not us.

In this atmosphere, it was a true breath of fresh air to follow the recent sad story of Marion Jones. This young woman, who had owned the world with her athletic ability and charm when she won five medals in the 2000 Olympics and made a fortune with those two talents afterwards, finally came clean about her suspected use of performance-enhancing drugs. Knowing that she faced jail time and fines for the revelations and that she – and, sadly her teammates in the relays – would lose her Olympic gold medals, she nevertheless stood up and took responsibility as she addressed the world:

“It’s with a great amount of shame that I stand before you and tell you that I have betrayed your trust. I have been dishonest and you have a right to be angry with me. I have let my family down. I have let my country down. I have let myself down. I recognize that by saying I’m deeply sorry, it might not be enough and sufficient to address the pain I have caused you.

Therefore I want to ask for your forgiveness for my actions and I hope you can find it in your heart to forgive me. I am responsible for my actions. I have no one to blame but myself for what I have done. Making the wrong choices and decisions can be disastrous.”

It can indeed be disastrous: there are examples all around to show that. It will take Ms. Jones years to put her life back together and she cannot right the wrong done to her teammates, who will have to give up their gold medals too. But still, in her ringing declaration she has established a bedrock of personal responsibility which is a great example. As she and all of us try to build lives based on this foundation, I think even Adams’ God – the one who “doesn’t want to be reminded of the least agreeable aspects of his creation” – will smile.

Peter Salmon

Trinity Episcopal Church

The Rev. Canon Virginia Rex Day, Rector

The Rev. Ralph C. Roth, Rector Emeritus

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October 21, 2007

Dear parishioners and friends,

It is time again for the annual pledge drive. I usually do not look forward to this time of year; it is awkward to talk about money and even more uncomfortable to ask people for money. However, this year I am excited to start the pledge drive because it is not about money. I realize that sounds like I must not know what I am talking about. Of course money is a part of the stewardship campaign, but it is not the heart of the matter. I repeat; Money is not at the heart of the Stewardship campaign.

What is stewardship about? The simple answer: GOD & YOU. It is about your relationship with God. We are all stewards. We all take care of the gifts that God has given us (sometimes we do a good job and sometimes we know we could do better). Your stewardship is reflected in your choices, your attitudes and actions, the way you take care of the environment, your attitudes about the world, the way that you interact with others, the way that you worship and the importance of God in your life. The list could go on and on.

Here are some simple but not too easy questions:

- o How are you living your stewardship?
- o Do you think that God is pleased with your stewardship?
- o What steps can you take to make a difference?

How can you grow closer to God?

Please take time to reflect and consider the spiritual connection formed by your pledge, your daily activities, and how you interact with the world. This is a very powerful act representing your commitment to yourself, your church, your community, and most importantly God.

The logistics of this years pledge drive are the same as last year:

The pledge cards for this year will be available at the annual meeting and then placed on a table in the parish hall. Please pick up a pledge card and return envelope. After you have prayerfully reflected on your commitment please place the completed card in the collection plate, in my mailbox in the office, or return it by mail to the office. We will always accept a pledge cards but we are hoping to have all of the pledges returned by November 18th so that the finance committee can prepare an accurate budget for approval at the December Vestry meeting.

Respectfully,
Kelly Johnson
Stewardship Leadership Team

Evangelism Through Forgiveness

In life there will always be times when we are affected by the actions of another person. When this happens, we often receive an apology. More often than not we say, "It's all right" or "It's okay". By saying this we are allowing, accepting, and giving permission for the behavior to happen again. When we say "thank you" or "I accept your apology", we are forced to sit with our feelings rather than ignore them.

There are many of us who feel that it is easier to brush off how we really feel than to express our discomfort with something that has happened to us. While this may initially seem like the best thing to do, what it really does is put us into an unending pattern of behavior. Since we are not honest with the person, we continue the cycle of letting them overstep our emotional limits time and time again. By doing this we place ourselves in the position of victim and we deny the offender an opportunity for intimacy with God. We remove the chance for that person to see the face of God in our actions as we show them that we value the person more than we do their transgressions. God forgives us because He loves us and He values us. The night before Jesus died, we were given a commandment to love one another just as Jesus loved us. If we don't forgive, we are essentially sinning against God and our neighbor.

We can put an end to this circle by first acknowledging to the other person that we accept their request for forgiveness. Often a simple "thank you" is enough. To truly create a greater sense of harmony in our relationship, however, we need to gently, and with compassion, express our innermost concerns about what has transpired. By taking a deep breath and calling upon the deepest parts of our spirit, we can usually find the right words to say and verbalize them in a way that lets the other person recognize the consequences of what he or she has done.

As I thought about writing this article, my office telephone rang. I identified myself and the caller apologized; "Oh, I'm sorry, I dialed the wrong number." I simply replied "that's okay" and we each hung up. Now, I had to smile at my immediate realization of the hypocrisy of my response compared to my reflections on this article. That smile quickly turned to laughter as I tried to imagine the caller's reaction to me drawing a deep breath and saying, (with the utmost of compassion), "Thank you for that, I value you as a child of God so much more than your misdeal." I don't know that an epiphany would have occurred in that caller's life, but I'll bet they would get the telephone number right the next time!

When dealing with a more serious infraction than my telephone call, we must remember that our response to others is important and that, when one seeks forgiveness, there is a desire for that intimacy with God. We can then begin to realize that trust and forgiveness go hand in hand. Also, when we react in a way that engenders a greater amount of honesty and candor, we establish a more positive and empowering way of being and interacting with others as one in Christ.

Each of us drops the proverbial ball in our relationships and interactions with each other. We hurt others and we have been hurt by others. In order to experience life to the fullest we need intimacy with Christ. In order to experience that intimacy, and in order to evangelize and share that intimacy with others, we need to extend and receive forgiveness. God has given us the gifts of extraordinary love, mercy, and kindness in His forgiveness of our sins. When we share that gift that God has given us, when we forgive as we have been forgiven, we are evangelizing. We are sharing that Good News of God's Unconditional Love.

Respectfully submitted,

Rob McMahon
Chair, Evangelism Leadership Team