

## Between Bench and Pulpit

Pastor Greg Shook

“A Gospel that doesn’t deal with the issues of the day is not the gospel at all.”—Martin Luther (1483-1546)

Garrison Keillor, famous storyteller, author, and host of the radio show “A Prairie Home Companion,” starts his weekly musings about the wonderful, fictitious town Lake Wobegone: “It’s been quite a week in my hometown.”

It’s been a week for me in my hometown. On a recent Monday morning, as I do every morning, I stopped for my unsweet tea at McDonalds on the “Dual.” I usually go through the drive-through, but on this particular Monday morning, I parked and went inside. There were not a lot of people inside the restaurant, and it didn’t appear that anyone was waiting, so I went to the counter. Behind me, a woman with two small children began yelling and using some colorful language, and as I turned she “flipped me off.” With the events of the week ahead of me, some personal anxiety over an upcoming appointment, and a few other things, I kind of had an out-of-body experience, my mouth engaged before my brain did, and I simply said, “Why did you do that?” The woman began crying, her children were crying, and she was able to mutter, “I don’t know,” and then she explained the circumstances of her recent weekend. Her husband walked out on her Friday night, the children were tired and cranky, she didn’t have much food in the house, and she was not sure what to do. She and the children were fatigued, sad, and just generally disoriented. I bought them breakfast, and we talked a bit. I hope you don’t think horrible thoughts about this woman. She was broken, and she apologized.

As I write this, I am doing some “clearing out” and even a little purging of “stuff” in our apartment. It’s time to reflect, reorganize, and regain some space. I came across a large glass vase with shells in it. I had a flashback, and some “flashbulb moments” from times spent long ago on the Gulf of Mexico. The sound of the surf and the lonesome call of the gulls speak to my soul. When walking along the Florida beaches along the Gulf, it is still possible to find complete sea shells of all sizes and shapes.

Millions, perhaps billions of shells line the beaches. I have collected shells from each trip. The complete shells are beautiful, but my biggest fascination is with the smaller pieces of shell. This collection started some years ago, and I keep all the shells in the same jar.



What engages me the most is when I get home, I clean the shells, and then can admire all the different shapes and sizes, both of the full shells but especially the pieces. The complete shells are wonderful, but I treasure all of the, even the broken ones. I believe I know why. Sometimes it seems that the people I encounter are like the broken pieces of shells I have found. There are some people who are complete, or nearly complete,

but for the most part I find many who have been buffeted by life’s storms, and they are fractured or broken. What makes my heart joyful is when the light goes on and they are given a new brightness or insight through the impact of Christ. I identify more with the broken shells, for I see in them symbols of my own life. How often I have failed to be or do what I could; how often life’s storms have pushed me off course. —Continued on page 6

Pastor Greg

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# August News from Christian Education & Family Ministry

Stephanie Angles

## FAMILY MINISTRY EVENT— PICNIC IN CITY PARK



### Picnic in the Park

Picnic in City Park prior to the Municipal Band Concert on Sunday, August 13, featuring our very own Pastor Greg!

Bring a picnic dinner, blanket, and chairs to enjoy this evening of fellowship and music. We will meet for a picnic dinner at 6:30 p.m. The concert begins at 7:30 p.m. A fun evening for the whole family!

## MOVIE NIGHT

Movie Night will be August 20. We will show the movie “Sing” at 8:00 p.m. in the back yard of Memorial Hall. We will be serving hot dogs, sno-cones, popcorn, and beverages. This event is free for the whole family.

## CHILDREN HELPING CHILDREN

Thank you to all who have donated to Children Helping Children so far this year. We have already collected more than \$750! We are hopeful that we will be able to help multiple children have a Merry Christmas this year.

Thank you for your generosity!

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE MEETING

The next Christian Education Committee Meeting date is to be determined.

# Repeat Showing of “My Brother’s Keeper”

Peggy Hardinge

If you were unable to attend the original showing of “My Brother’s Keeper,” you have another opportunity! Save the date of August 27 to attend a second showing of “My Brother’s Keeper: A Surgical Mission in Sierra Leone, Africa.”

At the screening, I will explain a bit of what it means to be a volunteer in a third-world country and why conditions continue to be so dire for such a large population of our world neighbors. I will explain how the most destitute of our neighbors are able to survive on \$80 a year.

You will see inside a third-world country operating room as well as inside both the poorest and the richest homes in the village. You will learn about their food supplies, their culture, and the difficulties with which their sometimes barbaric religious beliefs beset them.

As you contrast and compare with your own life experiences, this could be a powerful tool in your process of discernment if you are considering volunteering in an underdeveloped country.

Although mission work is not exactly a walk in the park, it is deeply gratifying when you understand that this is what Christ meant in Matthew 25:40 when He said, “Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these, my brothers, you did it to Me.” Good works without sacrifice is not what He had in mind.

Please, make plans to attend! Blessings,

—Peggy Hardinge

Candidate for the

Order of Saint Stephen Deacon

## MOVIE NIGHT—“SING”—AUGUST 20!



# The Order of St. Stephen Deacon: What Is That, Exactly?

Peggy Hardinge

Many of you have heard of the program Inge Dudda and myself entered become a Lutheran deacon. What it will mean for Trinity? What is our purpose, exactly? This is a brief overview. If you would like more details, please feel free to talk to Inge or me. The order has a nice website: [www.saintstephendeaconmaryland.com](http://www.saintstephendeaconmaryland.com). I encourage you to explore its content and become more familiar with the requirements of the order. The Order of Saint Stephen Deacon (OSSD) is a Lutheran organization that provides education for lay leaders for the purpose of:

- Assisting the pastor in liturgical functions historically and traditionally prescribed to deacons,
- Providing word and service to the community as identified by the deacon, the call supervisor, or OSSD,
- Promoting, providing, and nurturing religious education and training to those entering and/or serving OSSD
- Other functions.

## WHAT IS THE PROCESS TO BECOME A DEACON?

First and foremost is discernment; meeting with one's pastor to determine one's inner reasoning and readiness for such a responsibility. For me, I remembered having seen a kiosk at the Lutheran Synod meeting in Ocean City and became interested three years ago. I am a hospital chaplain and this seemed to be a good fit for me.

Other requirements for getting started include applying, writing a faith journey essay and submitting academic credentials. These are followed by a face-to-face meeting with the archdeacon regarding discernment, a background check, a psychological exam, and successfully completing a three-year course of study. There are retreats and continuing education requirements, projects, and mandatory meetings during the three-year training process.

Classes are held anywhere in Maryland, but the farthest Inge and I have gone is Eldersburg. Classes are taught by a variety of pastors and deacons, are held in a continuous loop consisting of: Christian Ethics, Hospital Ministry, Lutheran Writings, Church History I, Liturgy of the Lutheran Church I, Old Testament, Church History II, Liturgy of the Lutheran Church II, New Testament. Candidate deacons start with whatever class is scheduled next. Candidates can join anywhere in the loop. I will complete the Old Testament class this fall and the New Testament class in the spring; each of these lasts about 16 weeks.

After that, I will submit some administrative requirements and then meet with Bishop Gohl to determine what I will be best suited for and the specifics of what I will be given permission to do. Much of this permission revolves around the deacons' specific interest as well as his/her capacity.

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR TRINITY?

After the successful completion of the three-year course of training and classes, deacons have a "setting apart" ceremony at their church. It is very similar in nature to the ordination of a pastor. The first ceremony for a Trinity member will probably be my own, slated to be held in late spring of 2018, Lord willing. Inge's will occur after she completes her class rotation in a year or so, again, Lord willing.

After a deacon's "setting apart," we are required to wear a black shirt with the deacon's cross over the heart whenever we serve in a the capacity of a deacon, within or without the church. There may be occasions when deacons are required to wear a black shirt and collar, but that is up to each pastor/deacon agreement. Those occasions would be weddings, funerals, services, and so forth, when the deacon presides. Deacons may wear albs and cinctures in more traditional settings, and are expected to process with pastors whenever there is a procession.

Deacons can be called to other Lutheran churches nearby, or throughout tMaryland, to fill in for a Sunday service or a period of time when that church's lectern is vacant, for whatever reason. If required, deacons may stand in for a pastor who is ill, on vacation, or when a position is suddenly vacant. We must be ready to give sermons, visit the sick, attend council meetings, and oversee the church's day-to-day operations as approved by the bishop, if that is our calling.

The extent to which we will serve is dependant upon the discernment process between the bishop and the candidate deacon; what the dandidate deacon desires, and is prepared, to do. Some deacons may only have an interest in visiting the sick. Some prefer to teach and to be an altar assistant. Others may desire to deliver sermons and preside over weddings and funerals, as needed. Every function we wish to perform will be decided upon, and approved by, Bishop Gohl during our discernment interview with him. His written authorization will be sent to our pastor and we will be ready for "setting apart."

For Trinity, a deacon (OSSD) will become an additional go-to person for both the pastor and the congregation. We bridge the gap between church and community. We can be recognized by our black shirt and deacon cross logo. Visitors may feel more confident speaking with a person wearing a Lutheran logo. We have the heart of a servant and exist to serve in whatever capacity is needed. OSSDs are *volunteers*; we do not get paid.

We ask that you please pray for us, that we are able to enhance the worship service, the visitation of home- and hospital-bound, and are able to assist in the care and maintenance of both church and community as we enter this new phase of life at Trinity. To God be the glory!

Blessings to you and yours,  
Peggy Hardinge, Candidate Deacon, OSSD

# Thank You

Pastor Bettye



Dear Friends in Christ,

Grace, mercy and peace to you this day in the name of the one who calls us by grace to love with grace, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

It has taken me these past six weeks to get my head and heart out of boxes and on to paper so that I might share my thanks to you, my fellow workers in the vineyard. I am not sure that I am able to adequately share the depth of my love and thanks for the varied expressions of thanks and appreciation to each of you for the sending gifts you gave me in June but I will try.

First, the gifts which came from the individual teams spoke of our efforts to see ourselves as greater than just a few silos working in the same hemisphere but rather people joined in work for God's kingdom, celebrating a shared moment in time with our harvesting hands. Each team provided a thoughtful manner in which I might remember them (like I could forget!) and the mission we shared. I am the proud owner of "everything Trinity" from a Micah's backpack to a piece of the beloved pew engraved for all time.

From peace plants to snacks from the Dutch market, from note cards to colored stones and ornaments, my home is saturated with items which call to mind the ministry and friendship we were blessed to share. The beach pillow with the staff sentiments adorns the guest room. I have found new places in my prayer room and office to hang the pictures of the Holy family and Sue Bell's painting of the Good Shepherd window. The Words "Rejoice Always!" from Tuesday Bible Study—the resilient remnant—rests high above my office door reminding all who enter and leave to rejoice in God's glory at all times.

For my personal and spiritual comfort, I will be warmed by your love through the children's blanket, the St. Francis pin, the tree of life pendent, and my prayer shawl with sleeves! The bag with "gifts for the journey" have already provided comfort on the long drives up and down the coast. Greg's book of prayers I carry with me from church to church and the cross from the choir goes with me to the different churches in which I currently preach.

Your gift cards have gifted my family with new cushions for the front porch and a new rug for the family room . . . a little of Hagerstown pops up inside and outside of our home. The apron from Parish Life hangs in the kitchen and makes me smile every time I see it as I remember the eating and sharing times in the kitchen. . . . I even made Sue's "secret" cake my first week back. The tech support items have been so very useful in this new role—I think they were the first items I needed as I started the new job

and opened my computer in my new work space.

My thanks to the praise band and choir and the staff for the most sacred sending service. Pastor Robin has asked to keep a copy. She has never had this experience before and wants to use the service as a reference for other churches. Love of God and love of each other poured out of the walls that last Sunday. The reception was an opportunity to say another joy filled good bye. I so much needed the love and humor around the table that day. I am humbled and blessed to have been a part of this day.

The one thing I missed at Trinity was that I never had a copy of my call document to the church. What I do have, however, as the best possible reminder of the call we shared is the baptismal picture reminding me that as children of God we did remember our baptismal promises together for a season. You now have the unique opportunity to share those promises with another pastor.

Finally, I received a card in the mail yesterday which I think summed up our time together. Linda Tantillo wrote this, "*You showed us how to be kinder and more loving to one another. . . .*" I ask that you remember these lessons we shared together as a community in Christ as you complete your search for the next pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Hagerstown. May God bless you all as you have been a blessing to me.

Serving in Joy!

—Pastor Bettye

Reverend Bettye Wolinski

Assistant to the Bishop, Delaware Maryland Synod  
ELCA

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## Membership Reminder

Colleen Gildee

Per Trinity Bylaw B1.01, to remain in active membership, the member must commune and make a contribution of record during the calendar year. At the end of the calendar year, if the member does not commune and contribute, the member will be moved to inactive status.

While in inactive status, the member remains on the roll and maintains voting privileges, provided that the member communes and makes a contribution of record one within 24 months. (See Section C8.02 of the Trinity Constitution and Bylaws.)

If the member does not commune and contribute within a 24-month period, the member is removed from the membership roll.

# From Social Outreach: Our Neighborhood Speaks

June Habeck-Holler

A four-year-old girl with bright brown eyes and a gleeful smile runs up to me as I'm distributing food and wraps her arm around my right leg. I look at her mother for an explanation. "The cake. She's so happy you're giving her a chocolate cake," her mother says.

Such a small gesture but not an infrequent experience at Trinity's outreach programs.

A 30-something man came in last week and while he was packing up the food he could use from what we offered him, I said, God bless you, Deshaun." He responded immediately, "He's blessing me now!"

A young woman, looking much older than her 25 years, manages two small children when she comes. She has commented on several visits, "I wouldn't be able to make it each month without your help."

After more than two years, I recognize many faces of our regular visitors. If Dottie is off on a trip one week, the regulars will ask after her—checking on her status and seeking to see her caring, familiar face and exchange news.

When Pastor Bettye was here, she would frequently pass through the outreach areas. One day in May of this year, I stepped into the waiting area with my clipboard, ready to sign in the next guest. Pastor Bettye was standing next to an 80-year-old woman, Marie, who sat crying. I recognized this woman who, although weary, ailing, and without support, had been taking care of her grandchildren for months after her daughter had been incarcerated. When I had retrieved a box of tissues, Pastor Bettye placed her hand on Marie's shoulder and leaned her forehead against Marie's, and prayed for her. Then Pastor Bettye explained to me that Marie's niece had died and left Marie with two more young ones to feed; Marie knew that her Community Action Council Food Bank card had only herself and her two grandchildren listed to receive food. Pastor Bettye assured her that we would help her with extra food for the two new ones. Marie now wept with joy and said, "I don't know what I would do without the Food Bank and the people here."

There have been a few unexpected reunions for me here also. I once looked up from my clipboard to see a familiar face of a 27-year-old woman. She thought I looked familiar too, and once we figured out our connection (I had worked with her for two years in the Emotionally Disturbed Program at Clear Spring High), we rejoiced over her progress since high school: getting out of a dysfunctional home and finding purpose and love in her children. She was grateful for our help with food and left with a bounce in her step (and even if my step wasn't bouncing, I felt the same on the inside).

However, when I entered the waiting room on another day, I met the eyes of a very agitated and familiar face. A 25-year-old woman who I worked with for four years at the same program at Clear Spring High School was stand-

ing there. She had been very manipulative and deceptive for weeks in my program, unknown to staff. One day I discovered her elaborate ruse and ended it. She was livid, would not rebuild a rapport with me, and became unmanageable. Her angry disruption necessitated her attending Brook Lane for her last year in high school. I showed up at her graduation there, but she would only scowl and avoid eye contact.

Now she was facing me to ask for help. When I recognized her, I spoke her name and greeted her with joy (the Prodigal Student?). She became more neutral and passive as we gave her food. While she was packing her groceries, I asked what her life had been like since graduation. She described her struggles with abusive men who ran off, and trying to manage five children with little to no emotional or financial support. As she spoke, she softened and finally seemed to understand how we had tried to help her. I gave her the names of a few other places she might get help with her children's care. With astonishing hugs and smiles, we parted.

Finally, we have the story of a Haitian family of five who started coming to our Food Bank in January 2016 where they shared their story with Judy Melby Robinson. They had escaped Haiti fearing for their lives and had sought political asylum in the United States

They managed to find housing in a Hagerstown group home while waiting for work visas and Social Security cards. During that wait, they had no resources for months and had come to Trinity for help. Each month, Judy heard from them about their hardships, including a cancer diagnosis. Craig Robinson was able to offer a short-term job for the husband in the construction business, and Judy gathered household goods from friends willing to help.

The Robinsons talked a property manager into renting to this family when they needed to move and still had no documentation. Today, this family, who arrived in our city with nothing, has worked diligently to achieve full-time jobs for the husband and older son, two part-time jobs for the wife, and even a scholarship at Hagerstown Community College for the older son. Both parents say they would never apply for welfare and would rather work.

The wife cooked a traditional Haitian meal of goat meat and plaintains for Judy, who they call their "angel," to thank her for her tireless help. They also thank Trinity for the food and clothing and hope that God blesses our outreach ministry.

Quietly, behind the scenes, week after week, Jesus' sheep are being tended.

These are the unseen workers at Trinity Outreach: Jeff Reed, Ralph Conrad, Junior Michael, Judy Purdham, Judy Melby-Robinson, Dottie Rhodes, June Habeck-Holler, Vi Carlson, Barbara Shearer, Jean Price, Dorinda Roof, Eileen Andrews, and Nancy Krueger.

# Thoughts from Mutual Ministry

Hunt Hardinge

One of the many things that Pastor Bettye did for us was to make Mutual Ministry a vibrant and integral part of the fabric of Trinity. However, at the same time I think a clear definition of the function and purpose of Mutual Ministry remains elusive for most people. The reality is that there is so much more to it than merely being an advocate for the pastor.

Bishop Robert Driesen, in his *Handbook for Mutual Ministry*, makes the point that *it is the whole people of God that is called to ministry*. He goes on to say that each of us has unique and special gifts and that as people of God, we are mutually responsible for moving his Ministry forward. This may take the form of a choir member, an usher, a food pantry volunteer, a committee or council member, or yes even a pastor. We are asked to do what is necessary and to use our gifts to the glory of our Father in heaven.

Perhaps more importantly, we are to build God's ministry on a foundation of "**Love.**" Jesus repeatedly tells us that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves—an easy to understand concept, so difficult to achieve. We must constantly ask ourselves if our anxieties and our anger blinds us to God's purpose? In each and every action we take, is it for love of our neighbor or for love of ourselves? It's not an easy question. It is so easy to love those who think, act and believe as we do and yet so difficult to feel charity toward those who do not.

When I was in business, just about everyone could tell me when I was wrong, but hardly anyone would ever tell me what was needed and how to achieve it. Our team has come to realize that for many years Trinity has had a co-dependent relationship with its Pastors. We have often demanded the impossible of them and they have in turn enabled us to do so without requiring us to shoulder more of the load. We are people of God and as so we are required to step up to the table.

A healthy Church requires balance. Thanks be to God I do see the wheel turning and a healthy balance coming into focus. Our team has approved the following as a mission statement for Mutual Ministry.

There is one ministry in Christ, and all baptized people participate in it according to the gifts given to them and the specific ministries entrusted to them. The Church's ministry is the mutual concern of both the laity and the pastor.

This is the first in a series of articles concerning Mutual Ministry and what it can mean to us here at Trinity. My wish is that you will take this to heart. Please call me or any of our team members with your thoughts or concerns. We would love to talk with you.

Blessings to you from Mutual Ministry,  
Hunt and Peggy Hardinge, June Habeck-Holler,  
Sam Young, Jane Guyton, and Kevin Dagliano



## BETWEEN BENCH AND PULPIT, CONTINUED

Once the sand and sediment is off the little pieces of shell and they are placed in the same container with the complete shells, they are every bit as beautiful and valuable to me. They glisten and glow with the reflection of the other pieces and are a spectacular sight. Sometimes when we become broken and fractured, our pieces do better in combination with other peoples' pieces. Separate we are not as strong, but together, once God washes away the sand and soil, we glisten and shine with the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

We are going through several of Jesus' parables in our Sunday readings in August. I love hearing stories. My favorite stories are when people write their own parables and don't even realize it. God created each of us and loves us in our "uniqueness." He particularly loves us when we realize that there is great strength in united community. I'm going to challenge you to keep notes, and let's see if we can have some "Parables from the Pews." It doesn't have to be lengthy. Doesn't have to be fancy, just coming to life through sincerity and love. See me if you need some guidance or have questions. Let's see if we can have one or two for the next newsletter. Have you been blessed? Well, then share about it!

—Soli Deo Gloria!  
Pastor Greg

## PLEASE CALL US IF YOU NEED US

If you have a caregiving emergency, please call Pastor Greg on his cell phone. It's okay to leave a message on the office phone (ext. 206), but should you have an immediate need, his mobile number is the best way to contact him: (301) 992-1305. It's okay to leave messages there, as they will be heard and addressed sooner. Thank you!



Dear Members of Trinity and Altar Guild,

Thank you very much for the flowers I received on June 18th for my 81st birthday. I am still enjoying them. They are lovely.

Also, thanks to Carol & Mike Brashears for delivering them. My wife and I enjoyed their visit very much.

God's blessings to all,  
Ken Leedy

Dear Trinity Family,

Thank you for the lovely flowers brought to me at my birthday time. Thank you, Inge, for taking time away from your guests to present the flowers to me and to chat a bit – se welcoming to me.

Sincerely,  
Dottie Wallace

To my Trinity Church family,

Thank you so much for blessing me with a scholarship again this year. It means so much to me to have support through my college experience and always have a church to come home to.

Thanks again and blessings,  
Elizabeth Dagliano

Thank you! The birthday flowers are lovely. And I am grateful to be the recipient of this generous and gracious Trinity tradition. Special thank you to Maggie Stone who delivered them.

Sincerely,  
Alleen Carl

Dear Friends,

What a wonderful surprise to receive a beautiful bouquet of flowers for my birthday! They were so lovely and fortunately, my cat, Molly, didn't try to eat them! Thank you so very much for your generous kindness to me.

Blessings,  
Willa Kay Bowers

*\* Indicates under 10*

Dana Kreichbaum  
Lisa Kelly  
Beverly Longanecker\*\*  
Bill Munz  
Robert Brechbiel, Jr.\*\*  
Emily Kelso  
Doris Teter\*\*  
Ryan Angles  
Cole Conrad  
Wilma Condo\*\*  
Brenda Martin  
Ruth Dunleavy\*\*  
Thelma Wolf  
Ann Kline  
Scott Bitner  
Elizabeth Dagliano  
Eric Bitner  
Caroline Bradford  
Courtney Clark  
Edward Drawbaugh  
Norman Bradford  
Bayla Cochran\*  
Dorinda Roof  
Michael Conrad  
Madison Hammond\*  
Judith Wood\*\*  
Joan Heil\*\*  
Kathy Griemsmann  
Barbara Pottorff  
Walter Atherton\*\*  
Patty Enders\*\*

*\*\* Indicates 75 and over*

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August 29

## Anniversaries

*\*40 years or more*

Douglas and Susan Stull\* August: 1  
Keith and Jena Staley August 6  
Curt and Inge Dudda\* August 9  
Junior and Scarlett Michael\* August 19  
Michael and Carol Brashears August 23  
Timothy and Frauke Higgins August 30

**Trinity Lutheran Church**  
15 Randolph Avenue  
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

Phone: (301)733-2878 [www.tlchag.org](http://www.tlchag.org)

Sunday Worship at 8:45 a.m. and 11 a.m.  
Sunday School for All Ages at 9:55 a.m.  
Church Office Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

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Washington County Literacy Council: (301)739-4208  
Tuesday and Thursday: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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