

The Rev. Bettye Wolinski, Pastor

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Pastor's Ponderings

Pastor Bettye Wolinski

Begin the New Year with your Council looking at the following verse, Acts 20:28: ²⁸“Now it's up to you. Be on your toes—both for yourselves and your congregation of sheep. The Holy Spirit has put you in charge of these people—God's people they are—to guard and protect them. God himself thought they were worth dying for.”

Take time to ponder and answer the following questions.

1. Think about and name the actions in the verse.
2. Read the verse again.
3. By whose authority do we use these actions?
4. To whom is this verse addressed?
5. Why do we pursue the actions in this verse?
6. Relate this verse to your role as a child of God at Trinity.

Your Council, your leaders, are studying the book of the Acts of the Apostles and we are learning a lot! Each month we read and study a chapter and ask and answer questions about what we are learning and how God's Word is affecting our ministry. We are thankful for our time and study together. We now bring this one verse to you; a verse which is guiding our decision-making process this year.

The wonder of God's Word is alive and relevant in today's world and today's church. Please join us in this thoughtful devotion this month!

Serving in Joy!
Pastor Bettye



Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper



SHROVE TUESDAY

When: February 28

Where: Fellowship Hall

Time: 5:30 p.m.

Come join us for pancakes, sausage, and scrambled eggs. Plus music by Carl Disque and friends and a basket raffle. The proceeds from the raffle will go to the Trinity Food Bank.

Tickets will go on sale February 5 after both services.

Dinner for adults is \$6, and for children aged six to 12, \$5. Children under the age of six eat for free.

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February News from Christian Education and Family Ministry

Stephanie Angles

PRAYER BLANKETS

The Christian Education Committee will continue to support prayer blanket sponsorships throughout 2017.

Blankets can be sponsored in several ways; a monetary donation, a gift card to Jo-Ann Fabrics or Walmart, or a donation of two matching pieces of fleece fabric (usually one print and one solid) that are 48 inches by 60 inches, or 60 inches by 72 inches.

Please see or email Stephanie Angles (sangles@tlchag.org) with any questions regarding the prayer blankets.

To date, we have donated four blankets to Safe Place and 46 prayer blankets to homeless students in Washington County Public Schools.

YOUTH QUAKE

Middle school youth had a wonderful experience attending Youth Quake in Baltimore, Maryland, from January 13 through January 15, 2017.

Thank you to Lisa Norgard and Maggie Stone for chaperoning!

YOUTH SUNDAY

Thank you to the youth who served during the 8:45 a.m. service in Fellowship Hall on January 22. February's Youth Sunday will be February 19 during the 8:45 a.m. service in Fellowship Hall.

CHILDREN HELPING CHILDREN

Youth will be collecting an offering during Youth Sunday services this year. The money collected will be utilized by the youth to help children in need during the 2017 Christmas season. Thank you in advance for your donations.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Christian Education Committee will meet on Wednesday, February 22, at 6:00 p.m. in the Parlor. All are welcome to attend.



Social Ministry

Carol Brashears

Remember the thrill of getting and giving Valentines to your classmates when you were in elementary school? The tradition is still alive, and we want to help give this experience to our Micah's Backpack children. We would like to put a pack of Valentines into the bags with their food in February so they can prepare them and give them to their classmates.

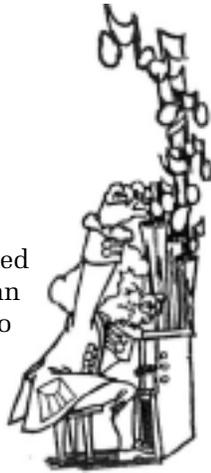
Many of our children would not be able to participate in this activity because they do not have the cards to give. When you are at the grocery store or drug store, pick up a pack of Valentines and bring them to church. There will be a special Valentines box for you to put them in in Fellowship Hall and in the Narthex.

The same Valentines box will then be used as our Valentines prayer box on Sunday, February 12. You will be able to write your prayers and place them in the Valentines Box. Think of it as your Valentine to God as we remember His Love for us.



From the Organ Bench

Pastor Greg Shook



Dear Flock,

- Do you *realize* that by being involved in the ministry of Trinity Lutheran Church you are honoring a “call” to be disciples?
- Do you *accept* that being involved in the ministry of Trinity Lutheran Church (regardless of what you do) that you are honoring a “call” to be disciples.
- Do you understand that once realized and accepted, there’s work that is ongoing for our collective ministry to be successful?

Once processed, that language kind of hits us right between the eyes. In joining a church, we agree to support the ministry of a given congregation through the use of our time, our talents, and our gifts. In joining any organization (whether it is band boosters, civic organizations, or the church) is our obligation and our responsibility over, just by joining? On the contrary, the journey is only beginning.

Let’s recall Matthew 4:21, that was part of the gospel lesson for January 22: “²¹As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them.”

I call your attention to the phrase “*mending their nets.*” This was called to my attention some years ago by pastor, friend, and colleague Dean Miller. Mending nets. Think about it. It’s what we need to be doing as worker bees in God’s kingdom.

You have to give Jesus some credit here in his selection of people to be on his task force. I would guess that fishing for people is similar to fishing for fish. You need to have a plan, you need to have good equipment (a boat that stays afloat) and a strong line, and you need to have nets with no holes. Once caught, the fish (and the nets) need attention. People, too! There needs to be a plan, good equipment, and time for tending and mending. Our new Church Council met for their first work day last weekend. They prayed, processed, and planned. Mending and readying the nets!

Our society has become very disposable. I’ve heard more than once, “well, it will cost you more to repair this than it will to replace it.” OK, maybe. However, that doesn’t work with people. In our world that is sometimes wacky and hurtful, solid and caring relationships are more crucial than ever before. I believe that sometimes we pursue

and treat our faith and our church as something that is disposable or that can run on its own. Sometimes there’s tears and holes that need mending. I think Jesus knew this and he chose his worker bees wisely. He wanted disciples who were good at tending and mending. Come on, grab a corner, some needle and thread, and let’s get to work. Our fishing expeditions will only be as effective as our nets, and if there are holes . . . well, you get the picture.

New Year. New Us.

Thanks be to God!

Pastor Greg



Senior Ministry

Karen Spessard

There are individual pew cushions available in the narthex for members’ use at the 11:00 a.m. service.

Please try one out and then return it to the narthex after the service.

Communication Styles: What Your Pastor Is Learning

Pastor Bettye Wolinski

“¹⁴Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.”—Psalm 19:14

This past holiday season I experienced a jolt of reality regarding communication styles. After spending time with nieces and nephews and younger friends, I have come to the conclusion that no one talks to each other anymore. My new house rule is that cell phones will be checked at the door upon entering. My daughter reminded me that communication is happening between these folks—just at a level I do not prefer.

This started me thinking about a thread of reality, which I am working on along with our Mutual Ministry team, namely, how do people communicate with each other? As the New Year began, I decided to keep a list of just how people communicate with me and how I communicate with them. For the first part of my personal exercise I decided to think about verbal communication and found myself lead to Psalm 19:14: “Let the words of my mouth and the mediations of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.”

Just what does it mean to use good words—“God words”—when speaking with others? How about all the other ways we also communicate—letters, texting, emails, word of mouth . . . what is most effective for me and for you?

I am a person-to-person communicator. I dislike texting, but have learned to try to honor folks who prefer this style of exchanging needs and ideas. My husband has taught me how to “talk” into the phone for texting since I am very literally “all thumbs”! I have come to distrust emails. I think we can all fall prey to “impulse” email responses “without thinking” about how it may affect another. Anybody ever had an email you wish you could have deleted after it was sent?

As a person-to-person communicator, I value the truth and honesty behind good, old fashioned face-to-face exchanges, counting on the fact that the “words of my mouth and the meditation (thoughts) of my heart be acceptable,” not only to my Lord but also to those with whom I come in contact. I think this comes from my former career as a nurse and spiritual counselor, desiring clarity, which comes from one-to-one, face-to-face contact.

One of the reasons my private cell phone number has been available to the congregation on the church’s answering service is so that the folks I am called to serve will indeed feel welcomed to communicate with me at any

time. Mostly, the folks who use my cell phone are from the community, and they are usually in some dire need. This is so different for me! I am used to frequent calls from parishioners to chat, complain, cry, or set up time to get together so that understanding and relationships can develop—person to person. I am also learning that pastors especially need partners in communication.

Partnerships in communication are very valuable in the church setting. I have been fortunate to use the listening skills and prayerful presence of people like Pastor Greg and Pastor Chris to sit in on person-to-person communication to make sure I am hearing and listening to my best ability . . . “may the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable . . .” are in front of me always—and partners are a big source of support for all people and help keep lines of communication open!

One of the key elements for healthy, effective communication in a church setting has to do with availability for contact. Learning the varying styles and preferences of communication of others is another element for effective healthy communication. My request is that if anyone would like to contact me, please do so in person or on the phone. As this New Year unfolds, I hope that we can all keep the lines of communication open and free of “disconnections.” My door is always open; my ears are always ready to listen!

Serving in joy with a listening ear!

Pastor Bettye



Who Do We Love?

June Habeck

WHO DO WE LOVE?

Valentine-shaped hearts from candy to pillows surround us this month; time to declare love for persons special to us. As a teacher, I applauded the elementary teachers who had their charges send Valentines to everyone in their class instead of having only the popular ones receiving them. Because, as Christians, we pray that God's Spirit will fill us, motivate us, and guide us to act in love for everyone. St. Paul told the Galatians that the Spirit in us produces nine fruits (outcomes):

LOVE

Compassion that identifies and anticipates needs of others and that unhesitatingly responds with generosity to bring comfort and joy.

Among us: Our Social Ministry Team Leader stockpiles heaps of stuffed animals to give to fidgety young children when they accompany their parents into the food and clothing banks so they are surprised, moved, occupied, and happier.

JOY

Unexpected peace expressed through celebration.

Among us: Many of the 4,118 individuals who come in during the year enter appearing downcast to be seeking help with their basic needs. When offered a choice of meats, some are delighted and feel valued. A mother's attitude can change to profuse gratitude when a sheetcake we've been holding back for a large family is offered.

PEACE

Acceptance and goodwill (putting our egos aside) promoted in all circumstances.

Among us: In debates over national issues of value, using the phrase "we can agree to disagree," disliking the words but loving the speaker, and speaking Jesus' words with gentle, strong faith and understanding.

PATIENCE

Waiting for understanding, for things hoped for, and for others. Remembering to practice openness to where God has placed us (whether it's in a difficult marriage or in the grocery aisle) to be, to serve, to receive guidance or to wait.

Among us: Volunteers for the food and clothing banks wait until there is a lull in the stream of people before taking a lunch break. Often there is no lull.

KINDNESS

Reacting to others as though they are precious to us and that their needs are above ours.

Among us: listening to our guests' stories—even if we've heard them before; giving back sympathy, consideration, and hope when your feet are killing you.

GENTLENESS

Whenever we find ourselves reacting emotionally and in haste, violent words and actions surely result; be still and open to the Spirit, cling to peace, and take care to attempt healing in tense circumstances.

Among us: Tone of voice conveys whether or not we are acting in the Spirit or in retaliation from damaged egos; even when people seem to "deserve it," we do not know the totality of the stress, loss, or fear they are dealing with.

SELF-CONTROL

Reasoned, Spirit-guided choices made.

Among us: Speaking God's word of love to each other in situations of stress when we'd rather speak our own words from a hurting heart.

GOODNESS

We are made in God's image, given the law and the prophets, forgiven through Grace on the cross, and brought to renewal of hope and purpose when we weekly commune and hear the Gospel. This goodness is ours!

Among us: Worship together affirms every week that we are loved people of purpose, free to live in response to God's grace.

FAITHFULNESS

Despite our willful natures, we can turn back again and again with openness for God's love and guidance through meditation on God's Word and listening in our souls and minds to the Spirit's response. Thus equipped, we can act in faith.

Among us: Week after week the Clothing Bank teams faithfully spend hours sorting many bags of donated clothing and arranging hundreds of items to display seasonally.

So this year let everyone be your Valentine. And make sure they know the sender is Jesus.

(The contents of this essay are things this author needs to be reminded of daily and thought I'd share.)

Pub Theology

Pastor Torben Aarsand



Please join us on Thursday at Maloo's Pub & Grill for time of conversation about life and God or whatever questions or concerns that come up! The non-church venue and menu offers those interested a chance to gather as brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, to connect with each other on a weekday, to think about the Church, Faith, Society, and to offer a stepping stone between Sunday gatherings.

All are welcome. Come just as you are.

When? 2/9

Where? Maloo's Pub & Grill, 325 Virginia Avenue, Hagerstown.

Time? 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. (dining? come a bit early and get started as you desire . . . conversation will begin about 6:45)



Shrove
Tuesday



* Indicates under 10

** Indicates over 75

- 2 Zachery Repp
Dave Warner III
- 3 Dorothy Benchoff**
- 5 Judith Hess**
Rick Anthony
- 6 Hazel Eichelberger**
- 7 Scarlett Michael
- 10 David Paddack
Aaron Staley
- 11 Jean Price**
Molly Warner
- 14 Rick Toms
- 16 Greg Shook
- 21 Amy Cochrane
- 22 Christopher Bradford
- 23 Mary Catherine Spangler**
Keith Staley
- 24 William Greimsmann**
- 25 Hannah Hardinge
Kristina Norgard
Brianna Scheer
- 26 Diona Minnich
- 28 Akira Williams



- 13 Dave and Lauren Williams-Rowe
- 18 Tom & June Habeck Holler



What a wonderful Thanksgiving our Veterans will celebrate and what delicious aromas will be coming from our Veterans North Point program! On behalf of Way Station and our Veterans, I would like to thank Trinity Community Outreach for the generous \$150 donation to purchase our Thanksgiving feast. *(Excerpted)*

Sincerely,
Scott Rose, President/CEO

On behalf of our North Point Veterans, we would like to extend deep gratitude to the Trinity Lutheran Church Outreach for the generous donation of 25 \$50 Walmart gift cards. This gift will bring much joy to our program members who will be able to purchase something special for themselves. *(Excerpted)*

Sincerely,
Scott Rose, President/CEO

We received your extremely generous donation of 25, \$50.00 gift cards for the veterans at North Point. Each veteran received a card as part of their Christmas gift. You certainly helped make their Christmas special. One veteran told me this was the best Christmas he has had in over five years; another said he became emotional because it had been so long since he has received gifts.

Being able to go out and purchase needed and wanted items with the gift cards made their day.

I just wanted to thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you do for North Point. You are all making a difference in these veterans' lives.

Warmly,
Jennifer Drake, Program Supervisor

Pastor Bettye and Church family,

Thanks for all you do and for your support. Enjoy Christmas and one another amidst the "crazy busy" of the season!

Fondly,
Cheryl Hershey

To Senior Ministry Committee:

Many thanks to Barbara Pottorff for bringing a poinsettia from church and for her nice visit—a real treat!

Sincerely,
Helen Ludwig

Senior Ministry Committee:

Thank you so much for the lovely poinsettia you sent to me for Christmas. It was so kind of Karen Spessard to deliver it and a pleasure to see and talk with her.

Sincerely,
Helen Rohrer

Dear Friends,

Thank you for the lovely "Jingle Bell" poinsettia you gave me for Christmas. And a special thanks to Carol Brashears for delivering it. I have really enjoyed it.

Janice Keefer

On behalf of the over 500 children and families that we serve, I want to thank you for thinking of us during the past holiday season. We were able to distribute hats and gloves to all of our children, many of whom had none. Your parishioners have shown that our community does care about those less fortunate.

We are thankful for your response and ask that you consider us in your future giving, so that all of the children and families in Washington County have a Head Start.

Paul G. Pittman, Jr., Executive Director
Head Start of Washington County, Inc.

Thank you so much for caring
Our hearts are filled
Our pain is lessened
Our sleep is restful
Our fear is silenced
You took the time to care
Thank you!

—North Point Veterans

God bless, thank you so very much for sharing!

Nariesa

Altar Guild,

I want to thank Barbara Smith for delivering a beautiful arrangement of flowers for my birthday. I enjoy them every day. Also thanks to the Altar Guild for all they do every week.

Donald Dayhoff

Trinity Lutheran Church

15 Randolph Avenue
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

Phone: (301)733-2878 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

MAKING DISCIPLES FOR CHRIST

Food Pantry and Clothing Bank: (301)733-5651
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 11 a.m. to 1:45 p.m.

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

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21740

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
& my spirit rejoices in
God my Savior...."
Luke 1:47

