

Pastor's Ponderings: A Heavy Weight

Pastor David Eisenhuth



As you know, my installation as pastor of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church took place on Sunday, June 10. It was a wonderful service. I would like to offer special thanks to Pastor Greg Shook for all the hard work he put into special music. Despite recovering from his winter fall on black ice, he even managed to play my favorite piece for organ and trumpet, "Marriage at Cana," by David Pettit. (The trumpeter, Matt, was great and promised to return to play for us.) Our senior choir was out in force and did a great job. "Thank you" to Andy Wallace and the Praise Band for sharing their uplifting and stirring music. Colleen Gildee, our executive administrator, and Ricky Stoner, sexton, put a lot of effort into the kind of behind-the-scene work that makes an event happen! And of course, the Fellowship and Parish Life Team should be given a huge round of applause for the reception that followed the service. This was one of a number of events that saw around 1,000 people fed over the course of a few weeks—no mean feat.

I was really happy to share the joy of the occasion with many people from the Church of the Nativity and Holy Comforter. About 25 people make the trek over the mountains to join us. They could not fail to be impressed by our incredible sanctuary. And to a person, it was remarked that everyone at Trinity was extremely welcoming. While these people, many of whom I have known for 17 years, were sad to see me leave, I think visiting here reassured them that I am in a good place and am genuinely happy to be the pastor of Trinity and shepherd of its flock.

My installation was the fourth time in a couple of weeks Bishop Bill Gohl was at Trinity. He was here for Sarah Wright's ordination, the setting apart of Deacon Peggy Hardinge, a pastoral boundary workshop for clergy, and then my installation. When I arrived to greet the clergy, Bill was sprawled across

several chairs in All Saints' Chapel. He had been at two previous events in the morning and was checking his phone in the down time. He, too, is impressed by the church. He said to me on more than one occasion that ours is the most beautiful worship space in the entire synod. Bill has remarked that we should open a catering business. Unfortunately, he could not stay for the reception after the installation. The father of a youth counselor at Mar Lu Ridge Camp died suddenly and he wanted to go and speak with the campers and offer them comfort. I don't know how Bill keeps up his schedule. We should thank God for his ministry among us and pray for him as our bishop.

Something happened to me during the installation that I want to share with you. Part of the service entails having ordained rostered leaders lay hands on the person being installed. The laying-on-of-hands has a long history in the church, right to the present time. When a person is baptized, the pastor lays hands on the head of the newly baptized and prays for the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit. The same is true

Continued on page 7.

CONTENTS

From the Organ Bench	2
Church Council News	3
State of Our Finances.....	3
What About the \$\$\$ Sent to Our Synod?	4
Reconciling Works and Trinity	5
Visits with Pastor David	5
Reconciling in Christ.....	6
150th Anniversary.....	6
VBS Cancelled	6
Talent Show and Ice Cream Social.....	6
July Birthdays and Anniversaries	7

From the Organ Bench

Pastor Greg Shook



Dear Flock,

I've been thinking a lot lately about teaching. Not about just my teaching, but that of teachers I've had along the way. Teaching is quite a responsibility for those who teach. Several scriptures come to mind from various encounters over the years. My father's favorite quote comes from Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it." One of my oboe teachers along the way had this quote from Psalm 32:8 in his studio, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you" (and he did!).

Being somewhat "sidelined" from my regular routine, I've enjoyed attending Hagerstown Municipal Band concerts and listening to former students play in the oboe and bassoon sections. I also was quite moved with the Maryland Wind Festival concert when former student Tyler Austin (the artistic director of the Wind Festival) thanked me as a major influence in his life. Amazing how throughout life we probably influence many people and almost never know how things turn out for them. There is a great sense of fulfillment to experience the fruits of our labors, both from student and teacher.

Being an effective teacher is more than restating facts from books. It is far more than standing in front of a classroom or on a one-on-one basis and saying "learn." Effective teaching comes from a working combination of education, books, and being able to get ideas across. One of my music education professors once said that we should have 10 ways to get an idea across. He also said that probably throughout our lifetimes we would possibly add 10 more ways to the original 10. He was right on the mark with that.

Looking back through time, I can pinpoint teachers who were the most influential on my life and career. I won't list them all here, but there were many who left a lasting impression. To impress our teaching, we must not only offer knowledge, but also give

the knowledge a chance to work. If we approach offering knowledge with an arrogance that we are always correct, unfailing in our facts and figures, and that our way is the only way, there will be a low success rate. Think about how Jesus taught. He used stories. Stories that used everyday information and facts and situations that the people could relate to. His students were excited to learn of this new and different way to exist in society, and the effectiveness of his teaching is history.

Let's take it a step further. Do you realize that (whether we want to be or not) we are *all* teachers on some level? For sure! You could be "teaching" and not even realize the impact of an action or something you said. A gesture; a bit of gossip; inaccurate information. Scary thought.

As we at Trinity look to redefine our ministry (*not* the message) and how to make it welcoming, inclusive, and relevant to others, let's consider this teaching stuff. If we are trying to make the Gospel relevant to others, maybe the method that worked in years past doesn't reach people in the same way today. That's okay. So we work together to develop new strategies for sharing God with the everyday person.

For sure, whatever we attempt has to be shared with sincerity, love, and hospitality, and that has to start inside the walls of Trinity before we attempt to do a "road test" outside our walls. It's about sharing, listening, exchanging information, and doing it with open minds and hearts. The most effective teachers for me were the sincere ones who were welcoming and appreciative, and welcomed feedback. If we teach with impatience, expect things to work the first time, with only one way, and not be open to feedback, the success rate will be low.

So, remember that you are "teaching" when you are in discussion, in line at the checkout, waiting in the doctor's office, *et cetera*. We are ambassadors and teachers for Christ whether we realize it or not, and someone is observing and learning, good or bad.

One of Martin Luther's quotes on teaching is, "I pray that God would open the mouth in me and the heart in you and that he would be the teacher in the midst of us who may in us speak and hear."

And so, let's be busy, in faith, love, and hope, to teach through word and example.

Soli Deo Gloria!
Pastor Greg

My personal thanks to members and friends of Trinity for the cards, casseroles, prayers, and caring while I've been sidelined following shoulder surgery.

Church Council News

Judy Conrad

Your Church Council met on June 19 and discussed several things. We were so excited that Trinity is sending five youth and two adults to the national gathering in Houston. Council had voted to collect personal donations from Council members to provide a gift card for those attending to spend on “something special” of their choice. We can’t wait to see what they do with their gift!

The Personnel Team bought a motion to the Council to extend Hunt Hardinge’s position for another year, and it easily passed the Council vote. Hunt has been doing a wonderful job on the website and our Social Media presence. If you have any information, photos or ideas for him, please send it to him at hunt.hardinge@gmail.com.

Pastor David spoke about his goals for the future here at Trinity: Jazz Vespers services, his Monday evening Bible studies, a Bible study at W House right up the street from us, a Youth Ministry Chorus, and other ideas not fully formed yet. He has a great energy and is full of ideas! Council is proud to support him!

As most of you know, finances are tight here at Trinity. Our expenses are well in hand. Teams are very careful with our spending, but giving is down as well as attendance. Our biggest expense is staff salaries. The budget passed last year at the 2017 congregational meeting is a difficult one to uphold. If the trend continues as it has been, we will be deep in a hole and require an unplanned withdrawal from the endowment in order to close out 2018.

Some of you may know that I volunteer in the church office on Wednesdays. This week as I was sorting mail, I came across four envelopes addressed to Trinity in what appeared to me to be “senior” handwriting. They all contained contribution checks from some of our senior and homebound members. I quickly placed them in the safe.

Even though they can’t attend, these members continue their giving to our church in order to keep the lights on and keep us going. These are long-loved members of our church who continue with responsible giving. I would bet that there is not a lot of extra money for them to spend on fast food, fancy coffees, or adult beverages, yet these lovely people continue dutiful giving to the church they cherish. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if everyone followed their example?

I hope everyone is having a good summer. We all

Continued on page 6.

State of Our Finances

Craig Fentress

Currently, finances at the church are not great. Offerings are behind for the year and expenses are only slightly behind projected expenses. In addition, the number of people that give to the church is falling every year. All of this together has put the church in a delicate financial situation.

The church’s income comes from two main sources: offerings and endowment withdraws. From January to May, the church community had given \$108,245. If we project the current giving trend out for the year, we will have received \$259,768. The problem is that the budget was built with expected offerings of \$320,000. Our current expenses are \$185,111 short of the \$176,240 income between the endowment and offerings. Most of the churches expenses are tied up in personnel, utilities, and maintenance of the building. Very little is spent on actual programs-less than 10% of the budget. Additionally, the number of people giving is falling every year. Currently, there are 135 individuals/families giving to the church.

There are three main options available to close the income gap. The first is to cut expenses. The problem is only around \$10,000 can be cut from this year’s current budget across all program areas. The next option is take more money from the endowment. This is not advisable because at the current rate of withdrawal, the endowment will run out of money in the next 12 to 15 years. If we take more money out than the current rate, it will be sooner than that. The third option is to increase income. Since our only source of income is offerings, we need to find a way to increase giving.

What is being asked of our current givers? **\$8 more a week or \$32 more a month.** This amount, while relatively small per giver, will help close the gap. \$8 more a week is equivalent to:

- Two coffees at Starbucks
- One meal at McDonalds

In addition, we need you to commit to this every week. The church expenses continue every week even if you are not in church or you forgot your checkbook. Suggested tips to help remember your offering include online giving and writing the checks out when you pay the rest of your bills.

In conclusion, our giving per person is the same it has been for the last three years. The number of

Continued on page 5.

What About That \$\$\$ Sent to Our Synod?

June Habeck

Here are some new things discussed at the June ELCA Delaware/Maryland Synod Assembly.

We learned that when our bishop has a yard sale at the assembly, he freely gives worship items (robes, stoles, candle holders, offering plates, *et cetera*) from churches that have closed, at no cost to anyone who can use them. People kept trying to pay for the goods. "This shouldn't be surprising," he says. "It's called grace."



Many of the 9,900 U.S. Lutheran churches, caught in a financial crunch, have stopped pledging and sending their state synods and national organizations money, as a way to cut expenses. Of the average amount of \$1.75 billion nationally that is sent to synods, what is it actually used for?



25 percent is used for new congregations in the U.S. or all Lutherans to renew and expand their ministries: for Caucasian, African, Indian, Alaskan, Arabian, Asia, and Latin American ministries in the U.S. to develop and share resources for faith, discipleship, prayer, and worship. Last year this money began and assisted 357 new congregations.



18 percent is used for Christian outreach in foreign countries. With 230 missionaries sent to more than 48 countries and 84 young adults sent on global mission programs, these missions receive training and support.



16 percent is used to enter church records into databases, preserve historic archives, provide working space for synod workers, and assist with congregational legal matters.



15 percent is used to develop new ministers and leaders in the ELCA. This money helps recruit, prepare, and assign the 9,900 rostered Lutheran ministers in the U.S.



8 percent is used for technology and communications; funds are used to grow awareness of our Lutheran missions and ministries through use of available technologies.



5 percent is used to provide governance and leadership in the synods of all states, and to organize lay and clergy leaders to serve on 65 oversight boards.

5 percent is used to grow and sustain financial resources, to help churches educate about stewardship, understand about mission, and make the best use of resources.



4 percent is used to work for justice to support Lutheran Services in America (that impact one in 50 Americans), and other social ministries to promote social justice and peace, and to create social statements that communicate Christian values in public arenas.



2 percent is used to do strategic planning and research. In this endeavor, money is used to analyze trends that impact the ELCA churches and to develop strategies to improve mission and ministry in the 21st century.



The last **2 percent** is used for ecumenical and interfaith relationships. In this area, funds are used to develop discussions and common action with other religions, and to seek unity in faith and life with all Lutherans and Christians.

With our contributions to our synod, TLC's ministry expands beyond Randolph Avenue, spreading the love of God to many we never see around the country and around the world.



State of Our Finances

Continued from page 3

people giving is down. Our dependency on the endowment is too high and needs to be decreased. If you are able, please consider giving \$8 more a week every week. Finally, please pray for more solutions and more members.

Reconciling Works and Trinity

Hunt Hardinge

I expect that many of you have questions about the Reconciling Works ministry and perhaps some skepticism as well. Questions such as What actually is this ministry? What are we trying to do? What would this mean for Trinity and for each of us personally? Our team, which has about a dozen people on it, appreciates the need and wants to be as open, candid, and transparent as possible.

We believe that God teaches us to love our neighbor and that many of our neighbors have been neglected by the church universal. In a nutshell, we recognize that there is a need in our community, we're having a conversation about what can do about it, and we want to know if this is something Trinity can or wants to be a part of.

So far we've had about a half-dozen meetings over the past year. We were asked to delay doing anything until Pastor David came on board, so most of these have been this year. During this time we've been trying to learn as much as possible about the Reconciling in Christ ministry (RIC). We're trying see what that can mean for Trinity and how best to present it to everyone.

Although RIC specifically focuses on the gay community, we believe that it can be a vehicle to a larger goal, one that welcomes all people whether they're gay, straight, divorced, addicted, or just in need of God's abiding love. We believe that loving your neighbor is not a passive thing, but calls for you to be intentional about it. At present, there is not one mainline church in all of Western Maryland that is RIC affiliated.

According to the RIC website, "Reconciling Works builds community for worship, education, and support; fosters welcome and acceptance in all Lutheran settings; and advocates for the ecclesial changes necessary to ensure full participation in all sacraments, inclusive liturgical resources, and ministries of the Church, inviting all people into Gospel lives of authenticity, integrity, and wholeness."

So what is the process? Where are we going forward? On July 21 the Church Council and all of its teams and committees will meet to discuss the budget. Our team has been asked to make a presentation about the RIC ministry at that time. I'd like to invite everyone who is interested to join us on that day and

hope that you'll be part of this important conversation.

Following this meeting will be a period of discernment. Over the next six months or so we intend to present more opportunities to understand and discuss the implication of what being an RIC-affiliated church may mean for Trinity. Finally, sometime in 2019, we will decide as a congregation, if there's a consensus, whether to become an RIC-affiliated congregation.

No matter what your personal feelings may be, our meetings are open to all. Not only do we invite you to be part the conversation, we encourage it. In any case, If you have questions, you're certainly welcome to talk with any of our team members. Blessings to you.

The RIC Team: Hunt and Peggy Hardinge, Torben Aarsand, Arlene Shuster, Lauren Rowe, Craig Fentress, Ralph and Judy Conrad, Pastor David, Pastor Greg, June Habeck-Holler, Colleen Gildee, Carol Scofield, Tim Higgins

Visits with Pastor David

Pastor David would like to visit personally with every member of our congregation! Volunteers in the office have been making calls to schedule visits, but cannot always make contact. Many messages have been left on answering machines and with spouses or family members. Often the first response is, "But my house is a mess!" Trust us, he doesn't mind!! He would like to get to know you as a person, not inspect the cleanliness of your home! We also hear "We've been so sick or I have too much on my mind right now." That's when you need your pastor the most!

If a home visit is uncomfortable for you, he would love to meet for coffee or you can come by the office. He just wants to know you better. Please give the office a call at (301)733-2878 to schedule a time. Press 5 to get Colleen or a volunteer and they will find a time that is convenient for everyone. Thanks.

Reconciling in Christ

Pastor Torben

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As you probably know, I have taken leadership in exploring the possibility of Trinity's mission to be intentionally welcoming of LG-BTQ (an acronym for lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, queer) people. We know that the idea of welcoming people is easy when we don't know their personal realities, but when we do know them by a label, such as "Gay," it can be more concerning. It is one thing to be tolerant, and another thing to be welcoming.

Trinity's exploration group has been meeting for months, basically sharing our own stories. Some of us have gay family members who have not found a warm hand of welcome in the church. You and I know that some Christian churches are down right cruel about the reality of gay people. Our denomination has been more open and, in fact, has agreed to disagree about this issue, but has opened the door to gay pastors, and of course, gay members. Nevertheless, many congregations in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America have done nothing to be more open, in their own communities. That's where the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) program has focused on helping churches like Trinity to be welcoming.

We have been talking about being welcoming! What does it mean to be unwelcoming?

Stories are important ways for us all to wrap our minds and hearts around this issue.

I would like to recommend to all of you who watch Netflix to watch an episode of "Queer Eye," a Netflix television program geared at helping us to be accepting. The episode is the first one of the second season of this show, which was broadcast a few weeks ago. It is about five gay men who help a lady in Georgia, her son, and her church family. It is heartwarming, and a powerful proclamation of the love of God.

I hope many of you are able to view this episode on Netflix and in the privacy of your home reflect on the Love you have in your heart, and upon the Good News we together share in our church and community. God be with all of us as we consider, in the coming months, what it means to be a welcoming congregation!

150th Anniversary

The next planning meeting will be on Tuesday July 10 at 7 p.m. in Memorial Hall. All are welcome! We look forward to getting your information and memories. "Memory . . . is the diary that we carry with us."—Oscar Wilde

VBS Cancelled

Due to a number of circumstances—children and volunteers on vacation, families moving, and work schedules—the Christian Education/Family Ministry Team made the hard decision to cancel this year's vacation bible school. There are many opportunities for children to participate in VBS activities at other churches, and a listing of these locations and dates can be found by contacting the Washington County Free Library Children's Department or watching the newspaper for weekly listings.

It is our plan to begin work on a joint VBS venture with another church or churches for 2019. We will use the materials purchased for VBS as our children's fall Sunday school curriculum.

Talent Show and Ice Cream Social

There will be a talent show including members of all ages from our congregation on Saturday afternoon, August 18, beginning at 1 p.m. Talent possibilities include dance, art and photography displays, gymnastics, musical instruments, voice and more. One rehearsal for performers will be scheduled the week before the show. This will be a great time to enjoy the many talents of lots of individuals in our congregation. Plan to be a performer or a spectator or both. The talent show is sponsored by the Christian Education and Family Ministry team.

Immediately following the talent show there will be an ice cream social sponsored by the Senior Ministry team.

Registration forms for both activities are available in Fellowship Hall and the Narthex.

Church Council News

Continued from page 3

need these sunny days to recharge our batteries, spend time with family and friends, and prepare ourselves for whatever lies ahead. As Pastor David said last week, our word for the summer is *hope!*

God's Blessings to each of you as you travel and relax. Come see us on Sunday morning. We are always hoping to see you!



** Indicates 75 and older

- 1 Rhonda Munson
- 3 Stephen Gallahan
Michelle Hess
Leslie LeBlanc
- 5 Inez Jones**
- 9 Adam Shuster
- 10 Brent Pryor
Ricky Stoner
- 12 Kelsey Reed
- 13 Marianne Zeigler**
- 14 Alleen Carl**
Mattie Stull
- 15 Nancy Hahn**
Aaron Little
- 16 Carol Aarsand
- 17 Todd Cochran
Joshua Repp
- 18 Ron Smith**
Debra Warner
- 19 Devon Little
- 23 Megan Clark
- 23 Casimer Kriechbaum
Varner Paddack**
- 25 Philip Pietro
- 26 Elaine Flores
- 26 Genny Hammond
- 26 Jordi Repp
Tyler Repp
- 28 Chad Brashears
John Holden Hershey
- 29 Katy Hornbecker
Kelly Pietro
- 30 Sue Kershner
- 31 Kirklyn Kline**
Ashleigh McCoy



* Indicates 50 years or more

- 1 Barry and Sara Oxendine
- 6 Rick and Kelley Anthony
- 17 Ed and Jane Drawbaugh
- 18 Richard and Kay Melby
Ron and Barbara Smith*
- 29 Brian and Genny Hammond

Pastor's Ponderings,

Continued from page 1

when affirmation of baptism is offered in the rite of confirmation. When I visit the sick I lay hands on the ill person and pray for healing. At an ordination, this is an extremely important part of the service, as the candidate for the office of Word and Sacrament receives the gifts of the Spirit needed to do the job! At installations, the gift of the Holy Spirit is affirmed in the laying-on-of-hands.

Ordinarily I would have knelt for this part of the service but I hadn't talked to the bishop about this, and while Ricky had a kneeler on hand, there wasn't time to put it in place. Also, a few weeks ago I fell down a couple of steps on that treacherous stairwell leading from the narthex to the lower level, and my knee was very sore. I was happy to stand, until. . . . As each of the ordained pastors laid their hands on me, the weight became almost unbearable. At one point I thought I was going to collapse. It was physically stressful. But there was also an intense emotional feeling accompanying the great weight of collective hands placed on me.

You know that I like to joke a lot. I personally think God has a tremendous sense of humor. I like to illustrate things with stories. But I can never forget that a great weight of service is placed upon me as an ordained person of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The stole worn around my neck is a sign of this, but it is light compared to those heavy hands laid on me that day. I want you to know how seriously I take the office of your pastor. The pictures in the stairwell of Memorial Hall of the pastors of who have preceded me—let's get Bettye up

there, too!—remind me of the long history of this congregation. Every time I step into the pulpit I think of the thousands of sermons that have been preached there. At the altar I cannot but be struck by the uncounted times the Words of Institution have been spoken there. What a great weight is upon my shoulders!

I want to thank all the members of Trinity for entrusting me to be your pastor. We face lots of challenges, but I think there is much for us to accomplish here at the corner of Potomac Street and Randolph Avenue. In the coming year we will celebrate our 150th anniversary. Trinity has experienced lots of changes over the years, but there are still good things to come. As we work together to make this future unfold for us, please know that I am praying for you. I hope you are praying for me. I was reminded to the seriousness of the office to which I have been called as you pastor and want to be the very best shepherd of this flock as possible. I cannot do it without your prayers and your help!

Our study on sexuality in the Bible has concluded. It was a great experience for all who attended. We are now looking at salvation, judgement, Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven on Monday nights. We had one class and will not meet on July 2. We will meet July 9 and 16. I will be away on the July 23, taking a course on stewardship at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. Class will resume July 30, and may end then or go to the first week in August. I'm open to leading a study about anything involving our faith. If you have a suggestion, please speak to me.

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.

Non-Profit Org.
U S Postage
PAID
Permit # 446
Hagerstown, MD
21740

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Those who **hope** in the **LORD**
will **renew** their **strength**.
They will soar on wings like eagles.

ISAIAH 40:31, NIV