

Trinity Messenger

Monthly Newsletter of Trinity Lutheran Church

August 2019

Pastor's Ponderings

Be Careful What You Wish For!

Table of Contents

Page 2

Pastor's Ponderings
Community Outreach

Page 3

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Page 4

Vocations in the Church

Page 5

Thanks
Rally Day

Page 6

Canoeing the Mountains

Page 7

Prayers
150th Anniversary

Page 8

Joyful Noise
Operation Christmas Child

Page 9

Calendar

I usually do not write out my sermons. But the one I preached on Sunday, July 21st seemed especially meaning to the many people who commented on it. Since it dealt with the on-going process of discernment and was heard by a smaller group than usual (it was the day with 100-degree heat), I thought I would reproduce it here as my article for August. If you heard it that Sunday, you might notice some differences. Here we go.

Most of us have at one time or another used the phrase, "You better watch what you wish for." There are many variations of this saying. What I just quoted actually comes from a short story written by William Jacobs in 1902. It tells the story of a mummified monkey's paw which conveys to the owner three wishes. Unfortunately, each wish brings tragic outcomes because the thing is cursed. Sargent-Major Morris returns to England from army duty in India with the paw. He is with his good friends Mr. And Mrs. White. He tells them about the paw and the horrific consequences his wishes brought about as punishment for tampering with fate. He tosses into the fireplace. However, Mr. White retrieves it. Before leaving, Morris warns him that if he uses the paw, it will be on his own head.

The White's son, Herbert, flippantly suggests his father wish for 200 pounds sterling. That would be the equivalent of 24,000 pounds in today's world. This money would pay off their mortgage. The next day Herbert is killed in an industrial accident where he works. The company offers a settlement of 200 pounds, exactly what Mr. White wished for but at the expense of his son's life.

Totally bereaved, Mrs. White takes the monkey's paw and wishes that Herbert be raised from the death. A short time later, there is knocking on the door. Screams and clawing suggest that the boy has indeed there, but in a changed form. Upon discovering what his wife has done, Mr. White grabs the paw and makes a wish. The knocking, clawing, and screaming stop. He made a wish that Herbert be dead again.

All of us at Trinity wish for something for the congregation. But what it

Continued on page 2...

Article Continued ...

is? The “default mode” in a congregation like Trinity challenged by declining attendance and the remembrance of the good-old days is *survival*. How that would play out would be increased membership which would mean more butts in the pews and an increase in the offering. The church would be able to survive.

While the survival mode is perfectly understandable, I wonder if that is God’s intention for us? I think not. You better watch for you wish for. I think our wishes for Trinity should be much broader than survival. I think we should be praying for the Holy Spirit to aid us in the process of discernment, so we come to know what our mission is.

Some twenty people gather regularly to talk about the book, Canoeing the Mountains. This group is learning about what the church might be in a post-Christendom age. That means while the church was at the center of life in the 1950-60s, that is no longer true and we are just another institution in culture suffering through apathy on the part of the secular culture. I’m proud of these people. However, they represent just 1/10th of our active membership. Moreover, I’ve heard it said (I’m usually the last to know) that many think this group is operating in secret and these people are making decisions which will impact the congregation without the input or consent of the wider membership.

While this is a familiar complaint spoken about just about any group in the church (it’s said of the Tuesday Bible study group, the Friday morning breakfast “clique,” church council, etc.) this is totally unfair with Canoeing. I personally wrote to every member of the church offering an invitation to each person to join the group. Opportunity was given for people who could not attend the study to get the book (free of charge if necessary) and read it at home. The group has made a pointed effort to write articles about its work. I find it difficult to believe anyone can say he/she was excluded from the work of discernment taking form there.

The book makes it perfectly clear that discernment will lead to a new vision for the congregation. This vision must be based on a renewed sense of mission. The fact that a church has stood on a street corner for 100 years isn’t a reason for it to be there a day longer. Maintaining the building, noble as it is in the case of a beautiful sanctuary such as we have, is also not mission in the Biblical sense of the word. What is mission? It is Christ’s command to make God’s love known in the world. How do we do that? That’s what we are

Continued on page 3...

Community Outreach

WHAT’S HAPPENING

Our Clothing Bank has extended its SPACE yet again to allow patrons to move around the new area with greater ease (especially when accompanied by several children) and to give volunteers a better monitoring perspective. Many thanks to Jane and Ed Drawbaugh and Kathy King for their days of toil to transfer a packed supply closet to another area, freeing up the one in the clothing area space.

We have secured another local GROCERY STORE provider for fresh fruits, vegetables, bread and a multitude of packaged foods. The Martins store in the north end is now replacing what Food Lion and Sav-a-Lot supplied weekly. Praise God!

NARCAN TRAINING by the Washington County Health Dept. will be held a second time this month in the evening for those who work. This is training for the use of the spray Naloxone to restore breathing to someone who has overdosed with opioids. It will not harm a person who is unconscious without using drugs and is safe for children and pregnant women. Volunteers working in our Outreach programs are encouraged to use it. Anyone is welcome to attend. No cost. Monday, August 19th at 6:30 pm in the fellowship hall for about an hour.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

CLOTHING BANK: All sizes of bed sheets, towels

FOOD PANTRY: Boxed mixes for cakes, brownies and cookies.

PONDER THIS

“As long as there is poverty in this world, no man can be totally rich even if he has a billion dollars.” Martin Luther

-June Habeck



Article Continued ...

trying to come to understand.

Andy Wallace, the Director of our Praise Worship, spoke to me the other day about his hopes for the 7PM Family Service on Christmas Eve. Both of us felt less than enthusiastic about what we did last year. Andy said he thinks we should have a party complete with food and beverage and then worship. At the end he thought Santa should appear and tell us all the meaning of giving. This event should be advertised as a community event. I whole heartedly agree. But again, you better watch what you hope for.

Those of you who were here at the community cookout a few weeks ago will remember an interesting crowd. African American people came from the neighborhood. Many obviously were economically challenged. Some were probably high. But there was a wonderful spirit. These people received hospitality at our hands as well as some good food. Now imagine that same group at our Christmas service with our own members mixing with them. You get the point.

I'm not saying we are going to limit ourselves to be a community church. As I have said, there are probably 30,000 people in Hagerstown who don't know Jesus Christ as a Lord and Savior. Black and white, rich and poor, gay+ and straight, everyone is welcome here. Really? Better watch what you wish for. If we succeed in becoming a mission church, watch out.

Maggie Stone likes to use the metaphor of what is happening right now as preparation for a trip. We are packing our clothes, gassing up the car, getting the GPS programmed and off we go. We hope everyone will be in the car but some have expressed hesitation about the trip itself. This is natural because the unknown can make us afraid. That's also something which happened at the study on Thursday, July 18th. Two members were especially vocal in saying they had moved beyond fear to embracing the Holy Spirit's work in our midst. Wow! I have to say I approach these things with a concealed level of anxiety, but it is there. This testimony really helped me. If they can approach this being confident in faith, so can I. So can you. So can everyone.

The next step in this process may be another book which offers some concrete ideas as to how to make the church a 21st century entity. Canoeing offers a lot of theoretical points to explain why the church is no longer fully engaged with the world in the US. But beyond this will come a new mission/vision statement. We expect to get input at a session or two during worship when our community is present. Even the lure of Crispy Cream donuts is usually not enough to get people to come to a Saturday meeting. It's much to do it as part of worship—and appropriate too as we think about what God is calling us to do as a community of faith. So, let's hope, pray, discern, and wish for a renewed sense of mission. According to scripture, we will get what we ask for. Unlike the monkey's paw, our wishes will not be cursed but blessed in the most abundant sense of the word!

-Pr. David Eisenhuth



August 1	Dana Kreichbaum
August 2	Lisa Kelly Beverly Longanecker Bill Munz
August 4	Emily Kelso Doris Teter
August 5	Ryan Angles Cole Conrad
August 6	Wilma Condo
August 7	Brenda Martin
August 9	Ann Kline Reaghan Whitmore
August 10	Elizabeth Dagliano
August 14	Caroline Bradford Courtney Clark
August 16	Edward Drawbaugh
August 17	Norman Bradford
August 19	Dorinda Roof
August 21	Michael Conrad
August 22	Madison Hammond Judith Wood
August 24	Joan Heil
August 25	Kathy Griemsmann Barbara Pottorff
August 29	Patty Enders



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

Vocations in the Church

Last October Bishop Gohl hosted a leadership conference for rostered clergy and lay leaders as well as deacons of the Order of St. Stephen. One of the presenters was Louise Johnson, president of Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. Wartburg is one of eight seminaries in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, our parent denomination. The others are: Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota; Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago; Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary Program in Columbia, South Carolina; Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, California; Trinity in Columbus, Ohio; and United, the merged Gettysburg and Philadelphia seminaries. Trinity in Columbus is now owned by Capital University and the Southern Program was a seminary which had to merge with a university because it could not make it on its own anymore. As an aside, the ELCA does not need eight seminaries. Several are in difficult financial straits and might well disappear in the next few years.

President Johnson shared with us some eye-opening statistics. All the seven seminaries together were expected to graduate in May or June of 2019, 314 candidates for the Ministry of Word and Sacraments. These people would receive Master of Divinity degrees. This is the first professional degree which, like the M.D. degree which gets one into the medical profession, gets one into ELCA ministry of Word and Sacrament (pastors). Each recipient, however, must first receive a call to ministry. Such calls could be to congregations or special ministry like military or institutional chaplaincy.

Now 314 doesn't sound too bad, doesn't it? However, consider the fact that out of nearly 9,000 congregations in the ELCA at that moment 3,000 had pastoral vacancies. That means 30% of all congregations were vacant. Realistically, only 1,000 were viable, financially stable enough to sustain full-time ministry. Even at that, one-in-three congregations seeking to call pastors would actually get one! The situation will get worse as old white geezers retire. It's estimated 30% of our clergy will retire in 10 years.

Things in our denomination are not as bad as in other church bodies. The situation in the Roman Catholic Church is far more desperate, but we are not far behind. Why is this? To be honest, admission to the ordained ministry has traditionally required three full years of

academic work in residence at seminary and a year of internship. This after four years of college. People today look at that commitment and decide the time involved could better be spent in medical or law school. One could get a master's in business administration in less time. Moreover, the residency is not attractive to candidates with families, especially those with spouses who might have good-paying jobs somewhere other than Gettysburg or Dubuque. The seminaries themselves, synods, and congregations have been hard-pressed to offer scholarships to seminarians such that graduates come out with student debt and first calls are notorious for paying low salaries.

Several seminaries have received huge gifts which now cover tuition and expenses such as housing. This will certainly attract a larger pool of people who might otherwise not been able to afford seminary. Quite a few seminaries are offering distance programs where M.Div. students can take courses online and appear on campus one or two weeks at a time per semester. This is very attractive to women and men who have full-time jobs and families and cannot just move somewhere for three years and move again for an internship. There are also several programs wherein a congregation will put forth someone of good character who is then educated by taking several courses and individual reading and is ordained for service in that specific congregation. While Lutherans have always valued an educated clergy, this is a solution which works in many settings but person so ordained must be supervised by a regularly trained pastor.

The ability of an individual congregation to support a full-time pastor is also challenging. Health insurance, pension contributions, and other ELCA mandated benefits typically adds 30-40% on top of salary and housing. The ELCA is not sure how to address this in a time of declining membership.

Each congregation must encourage sons and daughters to consider a call to ministry. That can be ordained Ministry of Word and Sacrament (ordained pastors) or Ministry of Word and Service (Christian Education, youth ministry, etc.). We are blessed to have two people who are in the process of discerning calls to ordained ministry. They are Alex Knepper and Maggie Stone. Here is how the process unfolds.

Someone interested in ministry talks first to his or her pastor. The pastor explores the call and if the pastor feels it's a valid call from God, the pastor takes this to church council. The council endorses the person and he or she becomes a ward of the synod's candidacy committee.

Continued on next page...

That committee is composed of people who are entrusted as gatekeepers of ministry. In the Delaware-Maryland Synod the members of the committee take this very seriously. The committee shepherds the candidate through seminary and internship continuing the discernment process via retreats, individual meetings, visits to the seminary where the candidate is enrolled, discussion/evaluation of the student with seminary leaders, essays, and psychological counselling. At any time, the committee can withdraw its endorsement and candidacy ends for that person. This may seem cruel, but it is better for a candidate to realize his or her call is not to ministry but some other vocation. Otherwise the person and quite possibly a congregational ministry setting will be very unhappy and unfulfilled in the course of a person's call there.

Alex has begun the process as an entrant into candidacy. He was encouraged to apply to United Seminary and hopes to start there at the Gettysburg Campus this September. However, the candidacy process described above is just starting for Alex. He needs our prayers as this process is difficult.

Maggie is still completing her work for a bachelor's degree which is a prerequisite for entrance into seminary. She should be awarded this degree in the next few months and she, too, can enroll in seminary. Because of special circumstances in her life she has chosen to become a distance-learner in one of the fine programs offered by several seminaries. She is leaning toward Luther in St. Paul, Minnesota, or Wartburg in Dubuque. She is already an entrant in the candidacy process and can take the candidacy road more slowly than Alex. She, too, needs our prayers.

Apart from prayers, our congregation needs to offer financial support to these two fine young people. While both will benefit from the scholarships mentioned above and have free tuition, etc. there are many other expenses associated with seminary. We are not sure what they are at this point, but it is council's hope that neither Alex nor Maggie be forced to borrow money to complete their seminary training. You should consider it a joy and great privilege to offer two people from Trinity to future service in the ELCA. We should consider it a joy and privilege to offer our financial support to these two young people so they can prepare for this ministry without worrying about student debt.

-Pr. David Eisenhuth

Letters of Thanks

I am thankful to God for His mercy and to Jesus for being with me during my recent surgery – and always. I am so thankful for my family and for my Trinity Lutheran family. I was blessed with prayers, Holy Communion, visits, cards, and two bouquets of beautiful flowers. I received the best of care at the hospital and at Coffman's. It truly means so much to know that others care.

God's blessings always.

Love, Donna Alexander

Pastor David & Trinity Members,

Thank you so much for all the kindness you have shown my family during this sad time. We lost a wonderful family member that made us laugh every time we were together. But you also lost a "family member." Chris spoke highly of you all – he loved his Trinity family.

Hugs, Robin & family

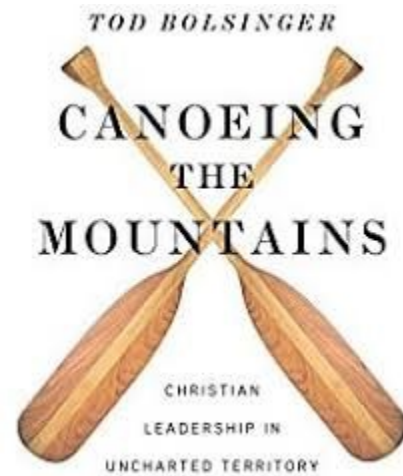
Annual Rally Day Picnic

The annual Rally Day picnic will be held on Sunday, September 8th at Washington County Regional Park. There will be a unity church service beginning at 10 am and the picnic will follow. All events will take place at the park. Bingo and other games will be held after meal. Please plan to come to this important event in the life of the church.

Exploring *Canoeing the Mountains*

This is a summarized account of what 20 members in the TLC “Corps of Discovery” have been discussing so far in this book about the challenges of the 21st century church.

- The church’s mission field in the 2000s is America - across our land and in our neighborhoods.
- Religious denominations and the churches generally exclusive focus on the needs of the faithful are losing impact and effect.
- Each church will need to decide what mission God has for us, as Jesus gave his disciples missions of going into the world, crossing boundaries, teaching, healing, loving, serving and extending the reign of God.
- What we value is shown in what we do as Christians, and what we don’t do.
- Undertaking the unknown will require a process of discerning what we are really called to do.
- We will have to trust that the Holy Spirit is guiding us and one another.
- Discerning will mean becoming adaptive to new ideas and behaviors, weathering the resistance we all have to changes, and openness to being transformed.
- The process of writing a new Mission Statement for Trinity will be undertaken which will focus our every idea, decision and action undertaken by the church.
- We then determine what aspects of life at Trinity are essential to our mission or core commission: this is our “DNA”- not those values to which we aspire, but what is truly sacred as shown in our behavior.



- Once we determine Trinity’s DNA, we can build upon these values, using resources and energy freed from practices that have outlived their usefulness (while celebrating their treasured, personal impact in the past).
- This is the Adaptive Capacity that will enable us to prayerfully try new ideas that align with our mission, then reflect on the experience and move on with our experimental innovations.
- As we continue reframing our strategy for the our mission and learning as we go, there will be stressors.
- Trinity has already experienced a loss in numbers; this reflects the profound changes and new needs in our society that our mission focus will address.
- With this process of transformation there will be losses as well; we will need to tend to each other’s grief and anxiety and focus on the opportunity God is giving us.
- God’s church must function on not how we feel, but what we are called to do. Pray together through these moments for peace, clarity, wisdom and perspective.

Trinity’s success is up to an energized community of people who exist to accomplish our shared mission.

-June Habeck

And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

– Romans 8:30

Prayers

Conversations with God

Dear Trinity Friends,

On Tuesday mornings, after Bible study, we pray for one or more congregations picked randomly from the list of ELCA congregations. In previous months we prayed for all of the 65 ELCA synods. I want to share with you the following note dated July 11, 2019:

"To Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church:

Thanks for praying for our Synod and Staff and congregations. The Lord has been using our congregations of the ELCA to be our partners for Lutheran Disaster Response and our congregations. Without your prayers and help we could not have done all the recovery from Hurricane Maria.

Every day in my prayers I give thanks to God for being part of this Lutheran Church since I was a little baby girl. My prayers will be with you. The Lord bless you all.

Rev. Idalia Negron, Bishop of the Caribbean Synod"

The petitions in the ELCA Prayer Ventures for August give us an opportunity every day to ask God's blessings and guidance on the leaders and fellow members of the Church. You will find copies on the tables in the narthex and outside fellowship hall and links in the Friday enews and on the website.

As plans are being made for fall activities, please keep the Trinity staff, church council members, and all volunteer workers in your loving prayers.

Regarding planning, instead of a two-day prayer retreat on September 13 and 14, we are now looking at dates in October or later in the fall. Information will follow in the Messenger and MiniMessenger.

-Inge Dudda, OSSD



150th Anniversary

Sunday, August 25th @ 10am

SUNDAY, AUGUST 25TH WE WELCOME PASTOR DAVID BUCHENROTH TO BE OUR GUEST PREACHER AS WE CELEBRATE ANNIVERSARY SUNDAY! We will have one service at 10 am in the Sanctuary with a potluck lunch following in Fellowship Hall. Fried chicken will be provided by the committee. This is celebrated on the Sunday closest to the actual signing of the charter on August 26, 1869. Our emphasis that day will be Christian Ministry through the years! There will be lots of pictures and surprises! Spread the word about this celebration! All are welcome!

-Carol Brashears

Operation Christmas Child



Shoeboxes available in Fellowship Hall and the extended Narthex

Deadline for Return: Sunday, September 15

Packing Party: Saturday, October 12, 10 am, Location TBA

Our anniversary celebration continues with the Operation Christmas Child project of 150 shoeboxes for 150 years. Currently 95 of our 150 shoeboxes have gone out with members to be filled and seven have come back overflowing with toys, games, school supplies, clothing, water bottles, backpacks, personal care items and so much more. Thank you to all who have stepped up and taken and filled boxes!

There's still plenty of time and plenty of boxes left, so be sure you are part of the celebration and get your box/boxes whenever you are at the church. Boxes can be found in the extended Narthex and Fellowship Hall. Just sign the boxes out and back in when you return them and place the full box in a bag with any extra supplies or things that don't fit well in the box under the tables. Extra supplies will be re-allocated to other boxes or to fill boxes that do not get taken by congregational members. Detailed instructions and lists of suggested items and age groups/gender labels as well as an envelope for shipping money (\$9.00 per box) is inside each box. If you don't want to shop, we suggest a donation of \$25.00 and we will purchase things to fill the box! Checks should be made to Trinity Lutheran Church.

Joyful Noise Singers

Our Summer program with the Boys and Girls Club of Washington County is almost over. From a first week of thirteen children we have grown to a group of thirty plus depending upon the day! We are pleased with the progress of the children although our meeting time and location have not been ideal. Try working with 30 elementary-age kids at 2 pm on Friday afternoon (the last session of the week) in a room with minimal working air conditioning and audio visual equipment from the 90's. But we have had FUN getting to know the kids and dealing with their varied family backgrounds and abilities. Each week in addition to singing we have made a craft or done a worksheet pertaining to music or one of the songs we are learning.

All that said, we look forward to showcasing a song or two during the closing day of the summer camp program on Friday, August 9, 2019. Trinity members are invited to the club at Pennsylvania Avenue for the program. At this publishing we do not have an exact time from the Boys and Girls Club, but please check the Mini-Messenger and email blasts for the final details. Come see the first fruits of our new outreach adventure!

AUG2019

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				01 6:30 Study, Canoeing the Mountain	02 5pm Worship Service	03
04 8:45am Praise Worship Service 11:00am Traditional Service	05 1pm Parish Life 7pm Boy Scouts	06 10am Bible Study 1:30pm Sr. Ministry 7pm Property	07 10am Social Ministry 6pm Crochet Group	08 5:30pm Exec Team	09 10am Worship and Music 5pm Worship Service	10
11 8:45am Praise Worship Service 11:00am Traditional Service	12 5:30pm Civilian 7pm Boy Scouts 7pm Bible Study, the Passion of John Team	13 10am Bible Study 6:30pm Mutual Mm 6:30pm Personnel 7pm Anniversary Team	14 5:30 Civilian Karaoke 6:30pm Christian Ed	15	16	17 5pm Worship Service
18 8:45am Praise Worship Service w/Stevie Prather 11:00am Traditional Service	19 6:30pm Narcan Training 7pm Boy Scouts 7pm Bible Study, the Passion of John	20 10am Bible Study 6:30pm Council	21 6pm Crochet Group	22 Newsletter Articles Due	23 5pm Worship Service	24
25 10am Unity Service 11:30am Coffee Hour Reception	26 7pm Boy Scouts 7pm Bible Study, the Passion of John	27 10am Bible Study	28	29	30 5pm Worship Service	31

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

15 RANDOLPH AVENUE

HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND 21740

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office@tlchag.org www.tlchag.org

Sunday Worship at 8:45 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Sunday School for all ages at 9:55 a.m.

Food and Clothing Bank 301-733-5651

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 11:00 a.m.-1:45 p.m.

Washington County Literacy Council 301-739-4208

Tuesday & Thursday 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

