

Pastor's Ponderings

Pastor David Eisenhuth



I would like to use my column this month to talk about two things which have become the focus of discussion in our congregation, both relating to issues of human sexuality. The first is something I said at the very end of our Bible study, *Lust in the Dust, a Biblical Perspective of Human Sexuality*. The second is our participation in the *Reconciling in Christ* program.

I had a great time leading the Bible study. We looked at all aspects of human sexuality as it appears in both Hebrew Scripture and the New Testament and its interpretation in theology and practical ethics. We discovered how in Genesis intimacy was meant as a perfect gift from God, intended to be used by humans as a true expression of love. We saw how sex was then distorted by sin. The Holiness Codes of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, written for the people of God on their sojourn from slavery in Egypt to the freedom of the Promised Land, gave order to those people under very challenging circumstances. We tried to find in them meaning for us today. We looked at the Church's view of sexuality and how, especially in the writings of St. Augustine, it became something dirty and left undiscussed in polite company. What I thought was going to be a four week study turned into something like 12 sessions. The last thing we talked about was Jesus' own sexuality.

In one of the last sessions we talked about the fact that the Church emphasizes that Jesus was both fully divine and fully human. I offered that if this is the case, Jesus experienced the fullness of what it means to us to be human and that he had to have sexual feelings. I believe this is true, but as is the case with us and the choices we make with regards to our sexuality, what did Jesus do with those feelings? We don't know. I offered that, given the silence of the Gospels on this subject, people have tried to read their own interpretation in Jesus's sexuality. For example, the Early Church was so concerned about Jesus' close relationship with Mary Magdalene that it turned her into a prostitute—something clearly not supported by the New Testament writing. How then could Jesus the divine have expressed intimacy with

someone very far out of the social norms? The Early Church was also so concerned about the human bodily functions of our Lord that one writer said that the very first time Jesus had to urinate he crawled out of the crèche and went outside to the back of the stable. This sounds funny to us, but the combining of human and divine presents certain problems.

Some on the far side of the spectrum have read into Jesus's lifestyle homosexuality. They propose that a rabbi would have had no credibility without being married, and that spending time with the disciples, camping out for three years, seems to proffer the possibility that they were sexually intimate. Who was the "disciple whom Jesus loved"? Was does this mean? *How* did Jesus love this man? Ah, those who hijack these things say that Jesus was gay.

It has come back to me that I said that Jesus was gay. No, I did not. I said that it was one interpretation placed on Jesus's

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Trinity's 150th Anniversary— Celebrating Our Past, Embracing Our Future

Anniversary Updates

Carol Brashears

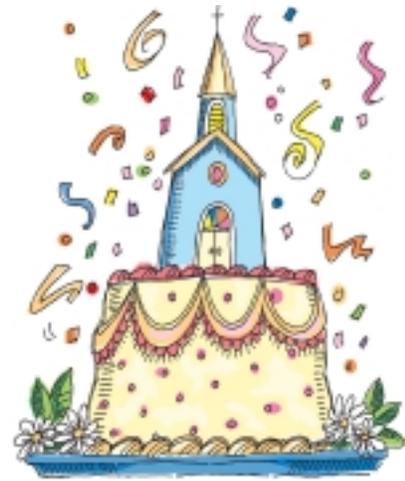
The 150th Anniversary of Trinity will begin with a Unity Service of Celebration on Sunday, October 14. We chose this date because it is close to the actual groundbreaking for the original church on Franklin Street that took place in October 1868.

We will symbolically commemorate the groundbreaking by breaking the ground in the front of Trinity and planting a dogwood tree. Each person present will participate in this planting by putting soil on the roots of the new tree.

We will have a brunch in Fellowship Hall following the service and tree planting. Tickets may be purchased after Sunday services. A video of memories will be shown as part of the brunch. We are in the process of gathering your memories. This will be ongoing through the year as we add to the video. A memory basket will be placed in the narthex as well as in Fellowship Hall. Please write your memory to share. Our history is made of your memories. All thoughts you would like to share are welcome.

The Anniversary Committee meets the second Tuesday of the month in Memorial Hall at 7 p.m. Come join us! The next meeting is Tuesday, October 9.

For more information, contact Carol Brashears at (301) 992-5016 or brash115@aol.com.



150 Years of Great Recipes!

Judy Melby-Robinson

This month's recipe comes from the 2013 *Trinity Tasters Cookbook*, which was dedicated to our Trinity Tasters Dinner Club, a program initiated by former Pastor Eric Norgard and his wife, Lisa. This recipe is from Doris Fryer, a long time member who taught children's Sunday School from the 1950s to the 1970s. It makes a good fall recipe using the zucchini from our gardens!

EASY ZUCCHINI QUICHE

- 4 c. thinly sliced zucchini
- 1 c. chopped onion
- ½ c. butter or margarine
- ½ c. chopped parsley
- ½ tsp. salt/pepper
- ¼ tsp. garlic powder
- ¼ tsp. basil, ¼ tsp. oregano
- 2 eggs, well beaten
- 2 c. grated mozzarella cheese
- 1 8oz. pkg. crescent dinner rolls
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard

Sauté the zucchini and onion in butter for 10 minutes. Combine the parsley and seasonings and add to the zucchini mixture. Blend the eggs with the cheese in bowl. Spread the rolled dough in a quiche pan or in a 7 x 11-inch baking dish. Spread the mustard over the dough. Spoon the zucchini mixture into the dish. Pour the egg mixture over all. Bake @ 375 degrees for 20 minutes. Serves six to eight.

Unity Service & Brunch

Carol Brashears

A Unity Service and Brunch will kick off Trinity's 150th Anniversary Celebration on October 14. A Unity Service will be celebrated in the Sanctuary at 10 a.m., followed by a brunch in Fellowship Hall. The sign up and sale of tickets for the brunch continues through October 14.

The brunch menu will include a "Make Your Own Waffle Bar," baked oatmeal, egg casseroles, hot apples, fruit and yogurt, and baked items.

Tickets for the brunch are \$7 for adults; \$6 for children ages six to 12; children five years and under are free.

From the Organ Bench

Pastor Greg Shook

Dear Flock,

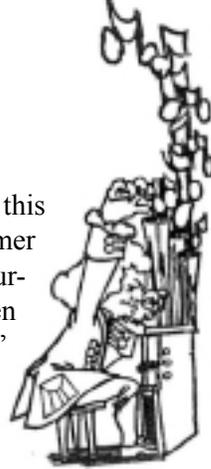
As I write this the first day of fall begins this weekend. I don't need to ask where my summer went. It was spent in recovery from shoulder surgery. The question that I've heard, at least a dozen times, is "Where did the summer go?" Ecclesiastes 3 talks about a time for all things, and there's even a list!

Part of my fall preparation was to register for a class at United Theological Seminary at Gettysburg. I've been in a class called Lutheran Foundations and the text, a mere thousand pages, is the *Book of Concord*. I mentioned that to someone who asked me "What in the world is that?" Well, it provides the doctrinal standard for teaching in the Lutheran church. Let me define it another way by telling you what the book is *not*. It is not a dry bones artifact of history, something nonliving written by old dead guys. It is not just a history, past or present, and something that all Lutheran seminary students need to know. What it *is* is a provider that is to be used in thinking and speaking. It is a framework, full of concepts, and contains a vocabulary for Lutheran thinking and speaking about faith in the triune God revealed in Jesus Christ. It speaks to our deepest needs and guides us in building trust in a God that cares for us. If you're looking for an "easy read," it is not. If you're looking for something to help define you as a Lutheran, a disciple of Christ, and some good discussion, then it's worth some perusing.

The class is full of a lot of new material for me. Yes, I learned some of this from world history classes and some of this from seminary classes. However, this class gets into the nitty-gritty of these many writings and responses to people seeking a new direction in faith. Last year we celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and now are into the next 500 years!

In October, Trinity will kick off its celebration of *our* 150th anniversary, and that's something to celebrate! Is Trinity Lutheran Church simply an artifact of old teachings and dry bones by leaders who have come and gone? If you think that, I would like to offer you a challenge. As Trinity looks ahead to a future filled with ministry and outreach, what will that look like? Hopefully you're not going to sit idle and wait for someone to answer that.

Ponder the question, be challenged to be part of the mapping out of Trinity's future. Yes, we would like to see a packed church, but if the church is packed by indifferent, grumbling souls, then we are no further ahead. We need to work toward



the quality of community and our ministry needs to be selfless and focused outward. We can do this.

We have started Jazz Vespers, and if you missed the first one, catch the next one at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, October 4. If you can't make that one, at 7:30 p.m. the Wednesday night before Thanksgiving, there will be another one. Jazz Vespers is the traditional evening prayer service set to jazz. I'm sure Luther would approve!

Our next adventure is the Community Children's Choir program, Joyful Noise. We've had some meetings and are excited about trying another new program. Flyers will go out, publicity will be shared, and we're excited.

Fall is more than being left with stick-figure trees and cooler temperatures. Fall brings the last of the harvest and an amazing colorful splendor. We believe and trust that as fall leads us to the fallow way of winter, that surely the spring will bring new life and growth and give way to the warmth of summer. It's about time, and transition, and trust, and patience for new things to happen. Just as we trust in the seasons to transform, we must trust (as did the crafters of our Lutheran faith) that God has a plan. The plan includes all of us to work together, offering the world a place of community, hospitality, and new life in Christ.

—Soli Deo Gloria!
Pastor Greg

Bingo Night!

Kay Spessard

There will be Bingo for all ages of the congregation on Thursday, October 18, in Fellowship Hall. A light supper will be served at 6 p.m. with Bingo following at 6:45 p.m. Everyone is invited.

Please bring an item for the prize table. We will be collecting for the Trinity Food Pantry that evening.

This event is sponsored by the Senior Ministry Team. Please RSVP by adding your name to the signup sheet available at both services or by calling the church office.

If you need transportation, this can be arranged by calling Karen Spessard at (301) 791-1532.

Trinity's Micah's Backpack Ministry

Carol Brashears



Micah's Backpack Updates

Thanks to all who gave of their time and finances to the Micah's Backpack Ministry. Collectively, we packed and delivered approximately 2,720 bags this year. That translates into more than \$30,000 in food. It works because of you!

Washington County Schools surveyed children, families, and teachers on the success of Micah's Backpack in the county, and the 2017 survey results are included in this month's newsletter on page 5. We are making an impact and serving the poorest of the poor in our community.

You may have seen two articles in the newspaper this past spring that included the following information:

1. The Micah's Backpack program serves more than 1,000 children in Washington County each week. Trinity was mentioned for bringing the program to Washington County. Thanks be to God for moving the hearts of so many churches to embrace this ministry.

2. Citi Corporation sponsored 2,000 bags this summer to be handed out through the Meal Machine, a van that delivers food to children. Many of the children in the Micah's Backpack program continued to get a bag of food each Friday because of this effort. Thanks be to God.

If you are willing to participate in this ministry by packing or delivering to Washington County schools, please contact Carol Brashears at (301)992-5016 or brash115@aol.com.

Packing takes place on Sundays or during the week. Some teams pack between the two church services on Sunday morning. Other teams pack on Monday afternoons around 4:30 p.m. Delivery takes place during the week. Teams are asked to deliver the bags they have packed on Wednesdays or Thursdays to the schools for the children to take home on Fridays. We would love for you to help!

Rotary Dinner & Auction Benefit TLC's Micah's Backpack

Our Micah's Backpack program has an exciting new opportunity for funding. Micah's Backpack, county-wide, has been chosen to be receive funds from the Annual Sunrise Rotary Auction. The Sun Rises Over Rotary Dinner and Auction will be held from 4 to 9 p.m. on Sunday, October 28, at the Elks Lodge, Robinwood Drive, Hagerstown.

It is an honor for the Micah's Backpack project to have been chosen by Sunrise Rotary. Our ministry at Trinity will be directly benefitted, as we will receive grant money for food for each child we sponsor. At this time, Trinity serves the largest number of children in the Micah's Backpack program in Washington County by a single church.

Please support the Rotary Auction by

- Going to the event: \$40 per person
- Buying a raffle ticket: \$5 each or \$20 for five tickets
- Donating an item for the auction.

It would be great to have a table of 10 from Trinity attend this event. Please contact Carol Brashears for further information about how you can support this unique opportunity to fund our Micah's Backpack program.



Social Ministry Sunday— "Blessed by Serving"

On Sunday, October 7, Trinity will acknowledge our members who give their time to our various outreach ministries. Each will receive a button and ribbon representing where they serve. This will take place at both services, with a coffee hour following each service.

That Sunday we will kick off for our Thanksgiving Food Basket Drive. Envelopes will be available for your contribution. Each food basket is \$10. Food baskets are given Thanksgiving week to our Micah's Backpack families and our Food Pantry guests. This is TLC's largest food drive of the year. Thanksgiving basket contributions will be accepted through Thanksgiving. Thank you for your generosity!

Micah's Backpack Survey



During the spring of 2018, Washington County Public Schools conducted a survey of all of the recipients of the Micah's Backpack program, their parents, and teachers who are involved in the distribution of the program. The survey resulted in 200 returned student responses, 106 returned parent responses, and 78 returned teacher responses.

STUDENTS' RESPONSES

Of the students who responded to the survey, 69 percent indicated they were less hungry as a result of receiving a weekly backpack, 90 percent indicated that they shared the contents of the backpack with their family, and 56 percent said there are still times when they are hungry and have nothing to eat. Additionally, 70 percent indicated that they were better able to pay attention in school, 29 percent stated that sometimes they come to school just to get food, and 54 percent responded that their family needed still more food. Nearly 85 percent of the students felt better in school when they were not hungry.

When asked what they didn't like about Micah's Backpack, two students responded that some of the food was expired, five said the bags are too heavy or didn't fit in their backpack or locker, three students said they don't like vegetables and fruits, eight students responded they didn't like milk, and one student didn't like the cans. Another student said the lid sometimes comes off of the applesauce.

When responding about the items that students liked about the program, the following quotes were received:

- We can get food we do not have the money for.
- You get to have food that is good and healthy.
- It gives me food for over the weekend.
- It helps families with their food problems.
- They give you treats.
- That the food gives my family food to eat.
- I like how they give you food for free, if you can't afford it.
- It makes me kinda learn more better, get good grades and feel confident.
- What I like about it is I can share with my family members.

Lastly, in response to concerns about bullying, 88 percent of students indicated that they do not get picked on for receiving a backpack.

PARENTS' RESPONSES

Of the responses from parents, 85 percent indicated that their child is doing better in school since receiving the backpack, and 79 percent felt that the portions in the backpack were "just right." 54 percent of parents felt their child was sick less often since getting extra food. 68 percent responded that they have other children at home who could benefit from having more food. 76 percent felt that they were more engaged with their child's school since receiving the backpack. Lastly, 74 percent indicated that the food in the backpack allows them to be able to pay other bills.

When responding about the items the parents do not like, there were not clear concerns other than a few comments relating to the cans (weight), not liking canned meals, and pasta, peas,

and raisins. Predominately the remarks were positive.

When responding about what they liked about the backpacks the following statements were made:

- The fact my child receives healthy snacks.
- The extra food helps my kids.
- The variety of items that helps for breakfast snacks and dinner even with the canned vegetables.
- Love it, helps a lot.
- Very generous and highly appreciated.
- Helps us and other people out.
- They give you the food you need.
- Provides a variety of foods we may not have at home.
- It helps over the weekend when we may be short on groceries.

TEACHERS' RESPONSES

Of the teacher responses, 68 percent indicated that the students are absent less, which is up from last year at 62 percent. Additionally, 78 percent responded that the students are better behaved, 75 percent believe the students are more engaged in learning, and 93 percent believe the program has fostered a more positive relationship between the students and the teacher. 53 percent believe that the students complain of fewer health issues. In reference to family dynamics, only 26 percent of the teachers indicated more parental engagement at school, up from 20 percent last year. 60 percent stated that the students who received the backpacks indicated that other members of their family are food insecure.

When asked for additional feedback, there were not many negative comments. Most teachers commented the program is great and doing well. The most negative feedback was the heaviness of the bags. Lastly, all teachers responded that they have never witnessed bullying in relation to this program. One respondent stated that, if anything, other children wanted backpacks too.

See related articles on page 4.

Making a Joyful Noise

Jazz Vespers Returns!

Our first service was a huge success and very well received by the community, with 127 in attendance. On Thursday, October 4, at 7:30 p.m., we will share our second service of Jazz Vespers. The combo from Baltimore will return to lead us in the wonderful service of Evening Prayer with light jazz music.

Invite your friends and neighbors to join you in this wonderful way to gear down from the “busyness” of life. A reception will follow the performance. If you would like to help with the service, the reception, or publicity, please let us know.

TLC Parish Choir

Rehearsals have started for Parish Choir. We meet on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. in the “upper room” for rehearsals. If you can join for a short time, a season, or the whole year, we would enjoy having you. There’s no audition, your materials, including your uniform, are furnished, and you have a seat on the 50-yard line! We have a great time singing and being together. Come and join us!



Joyful Noise Choir

We are excited and busy preparing for Joyful Noise, a community children’s choir that will meet weekly and occasionally sing at 11 a.m. worship. The group will target young persons in grade three within a several block radius of Trinity. The schedule: 6-6:15 p.m. snack time, 6:15-6:45 rehearsal, and a story time, 6:45-7 p.m. Flyers are being designed, mailings will go out, worker bees are being recruited, and we are planning for a start date of Wednesday, November 7.

Realizing that a project like this will take time to nurture and develop, our hope is that the group will be able to sing during worship on the first Sunday of Advent, December 2. Your assistance will always be welcome, but don’t discount dedicating some prayer time toward this effort!

Hagerstown Choral Arts

Trinity Members Kelley Anthony, Rick Anthony, Addie Bloomfield, Therese Ramey, Pastor Greg Shook
Saturday, December 8 Messiah Sing, Trinity Lutheran Church, 4 p.m

Prophets of the Abstract Truth

Trinity Member Carl Disque

Sunday, October 21	Beans in the Belfry, Brunswick, Md.	11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. and 12:45 to 4 p.m.
Sunday, November 18	Big Cork Vinyards, Rohrsville, Md.	1 to 4 p.m.
Saturday, November 24	B Street 104, Greencastle, Pa.	7 to 10 p.m.
Sunday, November 25	Beans in the Belfry, Brunswick, Md.	11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. and 12:45 to 4 p.m.
Sunday, December 16	Beans in the Belfry, Brunswick, Md.	11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. and 12:45 to 4 p.m.

Staff Infection

Trinity Member Andy Wallace

Friday, October 12	Knob Hall Winery, Clear Spring, Md.	7 to 9:45 p.m.
Saturday, October 13	Dawghouse, Waynesboro, Pa.	8 to 10:30 p.m.
Friday, October 26	Benny’s Pub, Hagerstown, Md.	9 to 12 p.m.
Saturday, October 27	John Allison Public House, Greencastle, Pa.	9 to 12 p.m.
Friday, December 7	John Allison Public House, Greencastle, Pa.	9 to 12 p.m.
Saturday, December 8	Benny’s Pub, Hagerstown, Md.	9 to 12 p.m.
Monday, December 31	Krumpe’s Donut Drop, Hagerstown, Md.	5 to 7:30 p.m.

Outreach Updates

June Habeck

Our Outreach Ministry continues serve more people (see graphic below). In recent months we have seen an increase in people coming for just clothing and not for food.

HOUSING

Housing in America is evolving. Special urban and rural planned communities are in place, and there are plans to create many more. These communities focus on shared living areas that provide opportunities for “intentional neighbor-ing.” The houses or apartment complexes are economy sized and less expensive, to assist those who struggle to live on their income. The housing focuses on providing essentials, rather than on possessions. Residents share a common area for recreation, meals, baby-sitting, companionship, and emotional support.

The 12 August 2018 issue of *Parade* magazine showed these reasonably priced, uniquely constructed living arrangements for the retired, veterans, single parents, special needs families, and older LGBTs (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual) and friends.

Some “pocket neighborhoods” share gardens, driveways, transportation to appointments, cooking duties, WiFi, house-keeping, linen services, laundry services, and gyms. The idea is to meet basic needs as a community. These homes provide privacy and opportunities to socialize. For veterans, social connections are key for building resilience, recovery, and re-integration.

To learn more, check out these resources: the Fellowship for Intentional Community (ic.org/); the Cohousing Association of the US (cohousing.org/), Generations of Hope (ghdc.generationsofhope.org/); a book by Ross Chapin, *Pocket Neighborhoods: Creating Small Scale Community in a Large Scale World*; and a book by Marianne Kilkenny, *Your Quest for a Home: A Guidebook to Find the Ideal Community for Your Later Years*.

Sounds like the shared values, group cohesion, and unified contributions of the 1970s, just the 21st century version, and it seems to be the future of housing.

HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS

We know there are more homeless children now attending public schools. The other end of the age spectrum has also shown an increase in poverty, due to millions of baby boomers going into retirement. Five million senior citizens are food insecure; this is 63 percent of retired households, according to feedingamerica.org

Trinity volunteers work hard, and members contribute generously to feed our neighborhoods. If you can’t do or give more, please pray for the 5.1 million veterans who receive food stamps, the 27 percent of American households that are food insecure, and the 5.4 million senior citizens who daily face food insecurity. Prayer opens our hearts. We never need ask, “What can I do?”

Let the children of God come to us for food and clothing, and let us pray for those we can’t reach, who each day struggle just to eat and clothe themselves.

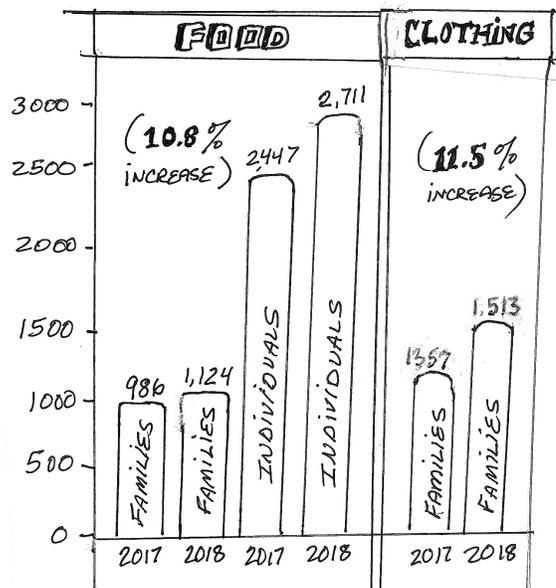
FRESH VEGGIES AND FRUIT NEEDED

For several years, Trinity’s Food Pantry received fresh vegetables and fruit from Food Lion. When Shop n Save took over Food Lion, we received boxed deserts and meats from them. Now that Shop n Save has closed, the Maryland Food Bank supplies us with some meat and canned foods.

The Maryland Food Bank currently feeds the hungry in our state, reporting 100+ staff, three branch locations, 1,250 distribution partners, 6,900 volunteers, and 32,000 donors. It provides more than 37 million meals annually.

Those wanting to donate to the Trinity Food Pantry can contribute garden vegetables (potatoes, carrots, onions, zucchinis, cucumbers, apples, peppers, tomatoes, lettuces). The pantry currently has no packaged desserts (cakes, pies, cookies, doughnuts—but no refrigerated products, please).

The Clothing Bank needs sanitary supplies and wigs (women who have had cancer treatments really appreciate wigs).



Welcome New Member Carolyn Carder

Our newest member, Carolyn Carder, was welcomed into our Trinity family on Easter Sunday. Carolyn and her late husband, Bob Carder, had visited Trinity several times in the past few years, and Carolyn decided to make it her new church home this year. Carolyn is the Patient Advocate for Meritus Medical Center. Although her time is somewhat limited, she looks forward to sharing and joining some fellowship activities at Trinity. Please introduce yourself to Carolyn if you haven't already met her!

Little Library News

Judy Melby-Robinson



Thanks to everyone who has dropped both adult and children's books off for the free library for our neighborhood and food and clothing bank clients! We maintain these "book boxes" inside the waiting room for clients, as well as the box outside Randolph Ave. entry. A lot of the recipients don't have access to library cards or the means to purchase books so they are grateful to have access to our books. Please continue your kind donations whenever possible!



OCTOBER



Reserved Seats and Parking for the Mummers Parade

Hopefully the rainy weather will be history when the 93rd Mummer's Parade takes place on October 27. Trinity's Boy Scouts of America Troop 10 will again be selling reserved seats in front of the church. Reserved seats in the front row are \$6 each; reserved seats in the back row are \$5 each. Reserved parking in Trinity's upper lot is \$5 per vehicle.

To reserve seats and parking, please contact Fritz Bowers at (704) 650-1594 (cell), (301)790-0980 (home), or fbowers@myactv.net.



Help Needed to Deliver Christmas Poinsettias

Would you be able to deliver one or two poinsettias to a Trinity member sometime during the week of December 9 through 15? The Senior Ministry Team coordinates the delivery of poinsettias to some members. The plants are available at church Sunday, December 9 and through that week so that people may pick them up to deliver at a time convenient to them. These plants are appreciated and bring the joy of the season and the love of Trinity to our members. If you can help please contact Karen Spessard at (301)791-1532.

Newsletter Deadlines

November Newsletter	Friday, October 19, noon
December Newsletter	Friday, November 23, noon
January Newsletter	Friday, December 14, noon
February Newsletter	Friday, January 18, noon
March Newsletter	Friday, February 15, noon

We make every effort to keep the deadline on the Friday after Church Council meetings. Due to holidays and sometimes how the Fridays fall during the month, this isn't always possible. We prefer the following formats: Word, Excel, jpeg. Please email items to: cgildee@tlchag.org.

Pastor's Ponderings, continued from page 1.

sexuality which, in the absence of anything definitive, could be true. But we don't know, and it is not a particularly important issue for me to spend much time thinking about. I believe that in the end, according to God's plan for the world, Jesus gave the fullest expression of love possible by offering himself on the cross for us. There is no greater intimacy than this! That's what I would like to focus on. Anyone who teaches, preaches, or talks in public is often misheard by others, who then place things into the mouth of the speaker. I just wanted to set the record straight (no pun intended) about what I had said in our Bible study, *Lust in the Dust*.

The second thing is our participation in the program *Reconciling in Christ*. As you know, this is a program which, after study and discussion, makes an intentional effort to present the congregation as accepting of and welcoming to people whose sexual orientation is other than heterosexual. It used to be pretty straight forward that the "other" meant gay, bisexual, or lesbian, but recently it has been expanded to include transgender people, people whose sexuality is fluid, and those whose sexuality does not fit into the other boxes. The acronym which seems best suited to express this is LGBT+.

When I arrived last December the study was already underway, with the logical conclusion of it being that Trinity would become a RIC congregation sometime during 2018. Pastors Bettye Wolinski and Torben Aarsand had discussed what this might mean to the congregation and how it would impact its ministry. Church Council gave its approval to assemble a working team. Shortly after I got here I joined the team. We have met eight or so times during the past year.

Every congregation says that it is "welcoming." But what does that really mean? Most would be well served to say something like: XXXXX is a welcoming church *if you look like us*. Martin Luther King, Jr., described 11 a.m. on Sunday as the most segregated time of the entire week. Indeed, it's natural for people to congregate with others with whom they are comfortable. Therefore, some congregations are white and others black. Some churches have lots of financially well-off members, others are known as being blue-collar. Etc., etc. But is that what Jesus wants? I don't think so. I believe we are called to speak to all people, and to indeed welcome everyone. The pews in the local church should, at the very least, reflect the community in which that church is located. At its very best, a congregation that truly is welcoming should have a touch of everything, and be the kind of place where people who look different, act different, love different, vote different, think different, all fit in and feel safe and secure. To be blunt, Trinity is a homogenous congregation of middle-class white people.

Now I'm not saying there is anything wrong with middle-class white people. I fit nicely into that category. However, I hear and believe that our members want to become more missionally oriented. That would involve speaking to people out there who don't go to church. We don't simply want to shuffle people around. That's what most churches do. You get mad at something here at Trinity, and you leave for the church that meets at the movie theater. Someone from there gets tired of a literal interpretation of scripture, and comes here. The true mark of a missional church is how many unchurched people it attracts and eventually integrates into the life of the congregation by Baptism.

Where do these people come from, you ask? Statistics tell us that 70 percent of people have no church affiliation. "None" is now the largest group, if that category was a denomination. Let's say there are 75,000 people in the Hagerstown area. So that means there are around 50,000 out there in our mission field. Hard to believe, but it's true. Rather than shuffle people around from church to church, I think we are primed and ready to look out to these people to share the Good News we know about Jesus.

That brings us back to what it means to be a welcoming church. The theory of RIC is that if the church can intentionally declare that it is welcoming of a group it has not only ignored but actively persecuted and vilified—the LGBT+ community, not only will *they* come but so will *others* who are disposed of the values the church expresses. For example, the Roman Catholic Church excludes from communion and confession people who are divorced. What if they see that Trinity is welcoming of this other normally excluded community? Maybe someone will think he or she is welcome at Trinity too! How about those who have been sent to Hell more often than they can count by fundamentalists? What a novel idea to find all-encompassing grace in a church that indeed welcomes people unlike themselves.

I am not sure I am totally convinced by this theory. In our marketing of ourselves I think I would be *explicit* but *more inclusive*. That is to say, I would target not only the LGBT+ community but also disenfranchised Roman Catholics, people whose experience in the church has been very negative because of judgment and guilt, and a host of others. *Specific but inclusive*.

I am writing this—and I thank you for reading this far—because the RIC program has become a distraction for us. I have found the team to be extremely transparent about its work. Yet I hear it frequently said that it is working in secret like some kind of dark web. The team has no power to make any decisions such as making us an RIC congregation. Yet it has been said directly to me that RIC is being pushed down peoples' throats.

We are at a critical junction in the life of our beloved parish. We need to take immediate action to turn things around

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Pastor's Ponderings, *continued from page 1.*

or we will die on the vine like a plant deprived of water. We have begun a new vision with our Joyful Noise youth program and Jazz Vespers. We are reinvigorating our prayer life. There is more to come. I'm trying to get people to open up the purse strings to spend money on marketing ourselves. This is a concept completely foreign to 99 percent of congregations. All of this takes energy, and I fear the RIC program is sapping some of our enthusiasm and focus. To this end, a decision has been made to back off from the RIC program for a couple of months so we can focus on the other things that are happening. I hope by February of next year we might restart and reconstitute the program, but for now we need to join together to acknowledge our 150 years of ministry at the same time looking forward to a future you might not have imagined a couple of months ago.

This, however, is not letting our members off the hook of taking a long and deep look at what it means to be a welcoming congregation. If our outreach to the community includes that phrase, then it had better be true, or else it's false advertising! We need to discover why RIC has met with some resistance. We will be tested if people from the immediate neighborhood come to join us and we suddenly become a biracial congregation. We will be pushed to reshape our image from being the "rich church on the hill" (yes, I hear that too) to being a servant church offering an image of God's love. Now that's a challenge! God help us. And he will!

Our new program, *Joyful Noise*, is moving beyond the planning stage to actual life. In late September, a targeted mailing to more than 2,000 homes will invite third graders to join a new program focused on music here at Trinity. We are hoping for a start group of 20 to 25 young people. The group will meet each Wednesday at 6 p.m., starting with a snack. Music practice will be from 6:15 to 6:45. The evening will close with a Bible story or a look at something interesting like our altar or windows. It is anticipated that the group will sing once a month, after which each young person will receive a small stipend like a \$10 gift card.

If we are successful, we will touch the lives of young people and their parents/guardians. An adult must remain here for the entire hour. I hope the adults can eventually be coaxed into a Bible study or discussion group focusing on current issues. We may want to eventually involve our Food Pantry and Clothing Bank in the program. The Literacy Council of Washington County is also interested in helping, as is the outreach arm of the Maryland Symphony. The possibilities here are endless. Surely some people will start coming to church. Maybe we can revitalize our Sunday School. How about a youth group?

The following year the first choir group will move up to be fourth graders, and we will look for a new group of third

graders. The following year we would do the same, and then have a full complement of young people in our target group of grades three, four, and five.

Of course this takes money. The Church Council will present a budget that shifts some of Pastor Greg's time and recompense to support the program. Other funds will be found in our Paddock Youth Endowment. We will also need your help in staffing the evening event, with people to provide and serve snacks, help maintain order during practice, and teach both young people and the adults. At the very least, pray every day for the success of this new mission and ministry. That is really important.

On September 6, we had our first Jazz Vespers. A quartet from my days at Holy Comforter came over the mountains to lead worship. Rhonda Robinson, vocalist; Seth Kibel, sax; Todd Simon, pianist; and Bob Abbott, bass, did a wonderful job leading this traditional service of Evening Prayer with jazz accompaniment. Some thought it would be a success if 50 people came. Others put it at 75. I was at 100. Guess what? **127 people** came out. A wine and cheese reception followed. It was a wonderful night. Feedback was exceptional.

The group from Baltimore will return on Thursday, October 4 for a repeat. Please plan to come. If you can help as an usher or as the lector, please speak up. We also need contributions of cheese and snacks.

We have a lot of homegrown talent both in the congregation and in the community. Carl Disque is working on assembling a group to play at a special Thanksgiving edition of Jazz Vespers to be held on Wednesday, November 21—Thanksgiving Eve. This service has some elements of traditional Evening Vespers, but includes more secular music and readings. How about "Over the Hills and Through the Woods"? The service will be at 7:30 p.m., but will be preceded at 7 p.m. with dessert and coffee. Plan to come! Bring your friends!

Two Baptisms in September

Frederick Donald Kreiger, IV, was baptized September 16. He is the child of Frederick Donald Kreiger, III, and Samantha Taylor Kreiger. He was born January 27, 2018. His father gave personal testimony about Freddie's birth at the baptism: he was born two months early and spent his first 27 days in the hospital. He is a little miracle, delivered into our hands for care and nurture of his faith.

Sofia Sage Fisher-Howell was baptized September 23. She was born August 3. Her parents are Ron Fisher and Tony Howell. Her sponsors are Jason and Kari Fisher.

Please pray for Frederick Donald and Sofia Sage in their new, spirit-filled life.

“Thank You!”

Friends at Trinity,

Thanks for the lovely flowers I found at my door, and also thanks to the person who brought them for my birthday.

—Judy Wood

Thank you very much for the beautiful flowers for my birthday.

—Phyllis



Prayers: Conversations with God

Inge Dudda

God wants to have a relationship with each one of us. A big part of having such a relationship is getting to know the God we meet in Jesus. And what better way to know God than to spend time talking to Him, and also listening to Him in silence.

Several opportunities to nurture a closer relationship with God through prayer are being planned, with one already happening on Tuesday morning, after the 10 a.m. Bible Study. You are invited to stay after Bible Study for prayer and meditation in the Chapel. We will have prayer cards available in the narthex and in the church office for your petitions to be given to the Tuesday team.

Other opportunities in the planning stages are a telephone prayer chain, and a healing service once a month.

We will keep you informed in the *Messenger*, *Mini-Messenger*, *E-Letter*, and on the Trinity website about our emerging prayer ministry. Please speak to Pastor Eisenhuth, Pastor Chris, or Inge Dudda (Order of Saint Stephen Deacon Candidate) for more details.

Here is a prayer for the “prayer warriors” in the congregation, the “Prayer For Those Unheard,” by Irene Sharp:

Lord, bless me with a listening mind.
Attune me to the smaller sounds,
The whispered plea of loneliness,
The whimper of an unloved child.
The sad, the sick, the lost.
All these ignored, unheard by passersby.
And use me, Lord, to meet their needs
That I may, in a Christ-like way,
Reflect Thy love for them each day. Amen.



* Indicates 75 and over

** Indicates under 10

- 2 Katherine Wilson
- 5 Kate Brashears**
Jena Staley
- 6 Natalie Allen
Kevin Dagliano
- 7 Abigail Angles
- 8 Lindsay Williams
- 9 Gary Carter
Watson Rasey*
- 12 Betsy Norgard
- 13 Sarah Wright
- 15 Tony Howell
- 18 Alexandra Paddack
- 22 Catherine Melby
- 23 Adam Griemsmann
Diana Prior
- 25 Richard Melby
- 26 Sue Fiedler*
Kyler Whitmore
Yazmin Williams**
- 27 Matthew Gorsuch
- 28 Eddie Morris
- 30 Dolores Shaw*



* Indicates 40 years or more

- 1 Michael and Lisa Conrad
- 4 Hunt and Peggy Hardinge
- 7 Fred and Phyllis Garrett*
- 15 Norman and Pamela Bradford
- 25 Thomas and Katherine Wilson*

Trinity Lutheran Church
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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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