

The Rev. Bettye Wolinski, Pastor

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Pastor's Ponderings

Pastor Bettye Wolinski

**"The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight."**

On Christmas Eve in 1865, Phillips Brooks (1835-1893), a young American Episcopalian, rode the perilous journey from Jerusalem to Bethlehem to assist at the midnight service in the Church of the Nativity. Two years later, back in Massachusetts, he was inspired by the experience to write this carol for his Sunday school.

What does this have to do with our New Year of 2017? Everything!

Americans have a habit of creating moments in time when they can "start over," and the month of January is one of those times. Colleges and universities have semesters that begin in the New Year, people set goals and resolutions for this time of the year, stores have incredible sales as they take a final look at their inventory and move on into the new year of merchandizing, and church councils say good-bye to the folks whose time on the council is completed and say hello to the very nervous and excited new Council leaders whom the congregation has called to serve and thus support.

So let us say a fond and "thank-filled" farewell to the folks who have served prayerfully and dutifully on Trinity's Council over the past one to three years:

Ken Fehlauer
Ed Drawbaugh
Ginny Doarnberger
Mary Ann Harne

Their *hopes and dreams* for the church we call Trinity abounded over the past few years, and we live in a more ordered, adjusted, and spiritually filled state because of the gifts they have shared with the people of God. As a church in transition, from what has been to what God is calling us to be, these have been the warriors on the front line to God's glory.

We now have newly elected Council members who have yet to realize their *hopes and dreams* for the church we call Trinity for the coming year. Their excitement and commitment to pray their way along with the community of leadership we call Church Council is heartwarming and "hope-filled." Through the combined efforts of the present and new Council members, we enter into the New Year



with combined *hopes and dreams* for continued order, adjustment, and a strong appreciation for what it means to be a church community accountable to God, each other, and the community around us.

Our new Council members are as follows:

Junior Michael
Watson Rasey
June Habeck
Barb Winebrenner

The Council's *hopes and dreams* are met in you this year as partners ready to participate in worship, work, and the wonders of what a community on faith can do together, led by the Spirit of God to praise the God of all creation in this place, for such a time as this.

We are a long way from the Bethlehem story, but we are joined as Christians to the hopes and dreams brought to us by the Christ of Christmas as well as the Christ of the cross. May God guide each of us on this journey to new *hopes and dreams* together.

Serving in Joy!
Pastor Bettye

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January News from Christian Education and Family Ministry

Stephanie Angles

PRAYER BLANKETS

The Christian Education Committee will continue to support prayer blanket sponsorships throughout 2017. Blankets can be sponsored in several ways; a monetary donation (at full retail price, it takes approximately \$25.00 to make one blanket), a gift card to JoAnn Fabrics or Walmart, or two matching pieces of fleece fabric (48" x 60" or 60" x 72"—usually one print piece of fabric and one solid piece of fabric).

Please see or email Stephanie Angles (sangles@tlchag.org) with any questions regarding the prayer blankets. To date, we have donated four prayers blankets to Safe Place and 45 prayer blankets to homeless students in Washington County Public Schools.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Thank you to those who participated in the annual Christmas Caroling on December 11. It was a very rewarding experience for all who were involved this year. We traveled by bus to the home of nine Trinity members this year.

Initially I felt frustrated that one of the two buses reserved for Christmas Caroling wasn't needed. But my feelings changed as soon as we entered the first home and sang to a sweet lady who was confined to a hospital bed with her loving husband by her side. His obvious devotion and love for his wife was heartwarming. As he thanked us for coming by, with tears streaming down his face, I was confident that we, a tiny group of carolers from Trinity, were right where God wanted us to be. We were welcomed and very well received at each of the nine homes.

We took requests for favorite carols and many folks joined in on the singing. We enjoyed fellowship with the families and received many handshakes and hugs of appreciation.

I plan to continue this ministry in coming years and hope that you will prayerfully consider spending a Sunday afternoon next December spreading Christmas cheer with our fellow Trinity families.

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO DONATED GLOVES AND HATS!!

Head Start greatly appreciates your generosity in helping to keep their young students warm this winter! The hats and gloves will keep many youngsters warm as we enter the bitterly cold winter months.

REVERSE ADVENT PROJECT

We will begin a reverse advent project in February to collect necessary items for those in need. Stay tuned for more information coming next month about this project.



Our Thanks!

The Wolinski Family received many lovely cards and gifts this past Christmas season to which we say a heartfelt "thank you"! Our New Year's card to you comes in the following manner. The words come from an unknown author and are Celtic in origin, our ancestral homeland.

May the blessing of light be on you—light without and light within.

May the blessed sunlight shine on you like a great peat fire, so that stranger and friend may come and warm himself at it.

And may light shine out of the two eyes of you, like a candle set in the window of a house, bidding the wanderer come in out of the storm.

And may the blessing of the rain be on you, may it beat upon your Spirit and wash it fair and clean, and leave there a shining pool where the blue of Heaven shines, and sometimes a star.

And may the blessing of the earth be on you, soft under your feet as you pass along the roads, soft under you as you lie out on it, tired at the end of day; and may it rest easy over you when, at last, you lie out under it.

May it rest so lightly over you that your soul may be out from under it quickly; up and off and on its way to God.

And now may the Lord bless you, and bless you kindly. Amen.

From the Organ Bench

Pastor Greg Shook

Dear Flock,

I couldn't help but notice that just before Christmas that the stores were already into Valentine's Day, and some even had items out for spring. I guess that some of our celebrations, for whatever reasons, have become just a routine. It seems that they come, they go, they come again, and repeat . . . repeat. . .

Maybe it's my "mature" time in life, maybe it's because I am blessed with a new and wonderful relationship this year, perhaps it's reconnecting with a family member after many years, or maybe it's realizing the value of community in my life . . . who knows. My first choral professor, Jay Stenger, spoke of "savoring" music. I want to do that now, especially with significant things.

Advent and Christmas should be a significant time in our lives. The time of preparing, watching, and waiting, the celebration of Christ's birth, God's gift for us, and the very essence of good will we should have in our lives, it's all significant. This significance should become a way of life, not just one day or one time of the year. Being kind-hearted, welcoming, and hospitable to one another should become a way of life every day. We need to be God's people of peace and joy in a needy world.

I've used this little writing before. Pastor Dean Miller shared it with me years ago, and I cannot go through a Christmas without reading it and sharing it. I encourage you to read it, ponder it, and live it for the new year.

THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among brothers,
To make music in the heart.

Written by Howard Thurman (1899-1981), from *The Mood of Christmas* (Richmond, Ind.: Friends United Press, 1973).

Here is to a blessed new year for us all!
Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Greg



The Trinity Lutheran Church Council

INSTALLATION OF CHURCH COUNCIL

Members of the Trinity Church Council will be installed at both Sunday morning services on January 8.

At the 8:45 a.m. service, Church Council members will be installed at the last part of the service before the sending.

At the 11 a.m. service, Church Council members will be installed during first part of the service after the gathering hymn.

ELECTION OF CHURCH COUNCIL EXECUTIVE TEAM

Members of the Council will meet at 10 a.m. Sunday, January 8 in Memorial Hall to select members of the Council Executive Team.

Church Council Retreat, "Responsibility and Accountability in Today's Church"

The Church Council 2017 Retreat, "Responsibility and Accountability in Today's Church," will take place Friday and Saturday, January 13 and January 14.

RETREAT DINNER

A dinner for Council members will be begin at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, January 13, at Pastor Bettye's home, at 11029 Baldwin Drive, in Hagerstown.

RETREAT PLANNING DAY

A Retreat Planning Day for Council members and team chairpersons will be held Saturday, January 14, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the church. Food will be provided by the Fellowship and Parish Life team. **Thank you to the Fellowship and Parish Life Team for providing food and drink for the Retreat Planning Day!**



Resolved: To Love as God Loves Us

June Habeck



New Year's resolutions. A tradition we face at the beginning of January because we feel we are starting a fresh new year and believe we can improve our lives . . . lose weight, go to the gym, give up sugar or tobacco, eat healthily, visit friends or family more often, or pray and meditate routinely—and we generally hope to accomplish whatever vision or dream we have for ourselves.

Those of us blessed with bountiful lives target resolutions that can be realized, given enough inspiration and discipline.

What we probably don't hope for is enough food for our families each night; enough money to keep the electricity on; money to pay the rent; to help to overcome addiction; to break the family cycle of abuse; a warm winter coat; a job; a car; shelter.

For those without the basic necessities, hope unrealized new year after new year can become despair, bitterness, anger. This can be witnessed from some people who come to our Food Pantry and Clothing Bank weekly. It can be misconstrued as ingratitude or as a feeling of entitlement, but ask yourself: how can hopelessness be conveyed?

We have also witnessed some of these same people become chatty, humorous, and appreciative when met week after week, with the best understanding and unconditional love we can muster when serving them. When this happens, it is, of course, not our doing, since our own human response is one of flabbergasted disgust that those in need would dare to act rudely when someone is reaching out to help. But God's spirit will fill a willing and open heart.

We hand out food and clothing at Trinity Lutheran Church, which our neighbors need. Let us not forget the needs of their hearts as well, and be messengers of the Good News: the spirit of the Child born in a manger lives in us and through the love and compassion we provide when they come into God's house.

Senior Ministry

Karen Spessard

Coming soon in the main sanctuary a limited number of individual pew cushions for your comfort.

More details will follow in the coming weeks.

Social Ministry

Carole Brashears

Thank you, thank you, for your generous support of our Veterans Christmas Gift card project.

We were able to purchase 25 Walmart gift cards with a value of \$50 to give to the veterans at North Point Veteran's Home.

The veterans were overjoyed to receive these gifts. Your generosity helped to brighten their Christmas!

Thanks again.



Advent Nativity Tea

Carole Brashears

Thanks to all who came to the Advent Nativity Tea. The room was adorned with beautiful Nativity sets.

Thanks to all who shared their meaningful and heartwarming stories. The food was delicious and the room beautifully decorated, thanks to members of the Social Ministry and Parish Life team members.

We hope this will become an annual event. We know that many have Nativity sets they would like to share. As you put away your Christmas items away this year, please put them away in such a way to be easily accessed for our tea next year. All Nativity sets are special and have meaning.

Thanks again to all who participated.



BIRTHDAYS

* Under 10. ** Over 75.

- 1 Trudy Fox**
- 2 Julie Hammond
Andrew Higgins
- 3 Cinda Toms
- 4 Helen Ridenour**
Jeanne Riley
- 5 Bob Winebrenner
- 7 Inge Dudda**
Hunt Hardinge, III
- 8 Ken Fehlauer**
Frederick Kreiger, III
Madysen Staley
- 9 T. Edwin Benchoff**
- 10 Scott Minnich, Sr.
Avis Serafini**
Brian Shrader
- 13 John Mills
- 15 Kevin Brashears
Mike Markle
- 17 Donald Dayhoff**
- 18 Carol Brashears
- 19 Curt Dudda**
Deborah Kelso
- 21 Michael Conrad
- 23 Karen McCarthy
Kaylee Kline*
- 24 Virginia Martin
Laura Reed
- 25 Dan Dopson
Richard Newman
- 26 George Lemen**
- 27 Dalton Condo
- 28 Cheryl Hershey
- 29 Karen Spessard
- 31 Cheyenne Little
Barbara Smith**

ANNIVERSARIES

6 Chad & Carrie Brashears

**PLEASE KEEP THE
MEMBERS OF CHURCH
COUNCIL IN PRAYER
AS THEY BEGIN
THEIR WORK**

January 8:

Members of the Trinity Church Council installed at both Sunday morning services.

Council will meet at 10 a.m. in Memorial Hall to select members of the Council Executive Team.

January 13:

Council Retreat, "Responsibility and Accountability in Today's Church." Dinner for Council at 5:30 p.m. at Pastor Bettye's home, 11029 Baldwin Drive, Hagerstown.

January 14:

Retreat Planning Day for Council members and team chairpersons, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the church. Food will be provided by the Fellowship and Parish Life team.

Please remember to thank the Fellowship and Parish Life Team for food and drink for provided on the Retreat planning day.

Many thanks to everyone who delivered Christmas poinsettias to Trinity members.

The plants were greatly enjoyed and appreciated by all who received them.

Karen Spessard,
Senior Ministry

Dear friends,

I would not have expected an all white bouquet to be so lovely (altar flowers given to me for my birthday), but, in a pitcher on my dining room table, they are magnificent!

Thank you,

Helen Ludwig

Thank you for the beautiful poinsettia brought to me on Sunday!

Helen Ridenour

Thank you for the lovely poinsettia and a special thank you to Linda Tantillo for delivering it.

I also want the carolers to know how much I enjoyed the carols and their visit.

Sincerely,
Hazel Eichelberger

Thank you for the beautiful poinsettia. Also, thank you to Karen Spessard for delivering it—it was so very nice of you.

It brightened the day of my wife and I tremendously. Thank you!

Bob Ziegler

Trinity Lutheran Church

15 Randolph Avenue
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

Phone: (301)733-2878 www.tlchag.org

Sunday Worship at 9 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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