

Trinity Times

A newsletter for the members and friends of Trinity Episcopal Church

Trinity Episcopal Church
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Athens, PA 18810
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Advent - Christmas - December - 2008

Greetings,

As we begin a new church year and Advent, I think of the verses in Matthew; "I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?...your heavenly Father knows you need all these things. But strive first for the Kingdom of God..."

And then we look at how we open our secular holiday season with something called "Black Friday." It seems every single day, the world presents us with new temptations to feed ourselves with the "things" in life we really don't need and forget about those who truly need to be fed.

On Thanksgiving, I saw a clip on a news program about a man who had been homeless and decided to recruit as many friends and volunteers as he could to feed the homeless on the street.

He recruited 200 volunteers to spend their holiday on the city streets feeding those who had no idea from where their next meal might come. They fed over 900 homeless individuals.

Is this man striving for Kingdom of God? He probably doesn't get up in the morning and say "OK, let's strive for the Kingdom of God". But in doing what he did for the least of God's people, he does for Christ.

This year we saw that consumerism can indeed be fatal as it was for a young man who was only trying to earn a paycheck to feed his family by working at Walmart, literally.

Advent is meant for us to slow down, give of ourselves, and meditate on the coming of the Christ child.

How many of us truly do this? If we spend most of our time shopping; does the activity of buying, buying, buying really fulfill something in us?

I love to give gifts. I get excited at the prospect of seeing the smile on the face of the receiver when the gift is opened. I'm not saying we should stop giving, in fact I'm saying we need to examine the way we give.

The problem is most of us have more than we need but we keep gathering "stuff" in our lives; "stuff" that distracts us from striving for the Kingdom of God. Most of have not experienced the desolation, fear, loneliness, hunger and pain of being homeless.

Considering how we bring balance into our lives and the love of Christ into the hearts of others is what Advent is all about.

As we enter the season of Advent, consider Henry Nouwen's words: "The careful balance between silence and words, withdrawal and involvement, distance and closeness, solitude and community forms the basis of the Christian life and should therefore be the subject of our most personal attention. Let us therefore look somewhat closer, first at our life in action, and at our life in solitude."

This year, let's slow down, spend some time in silence, consider where we can bring warmth to and feed the hearts of God's own.

In the solitude, let us consider what is truly important for us and for others. Let us find balance in our lives as Christians.

God's Peace,
Mother Trula

A Book Study begins in January

On January 11th, we will begin six weeks of a book study. The purpose of this study is two-fold. First, it provides an opportunity those who seek to better understand the experience of those friends and relatives who are gay or lesbian. Second, I hope to provide a "safe place" where those of us who have gone through the "coming out" experience can discuss how this has affected us and those who are close to us. The book is called "Coming Out; An Act of Love." It is an older book written when the AIDS epidemic was at its worst and made being honest about one's sexuality even more difficult. The author tries to demonstrate through the stories of those who bravely came out, that in doing so, broadened the beliefs of others.

Trinity has an opportunity to open our hearts to those who may not be accepted in some circles. It is clear to me, due to the loving and caring we are capable of demonstrating to others, that we are exactly the type of people to offer this experience.

The book study will kick off with a showing of the video, "For the Bible Tells Me So" which documents the experiences of five American Christian families handling the realization of having a gay child.

You will be seeing flyers in the area as well as ads in the paper offering this book study to the public. Please encourage anyone you know who may benefit from this experience to attend.

Mother Trula

The Life of the Rector

I feel it's important to keep you all apprised of anything going on that may affect Trinity. As most of you know, I was "raised up" by the congregation to be ordained as a non-stipendiary Priest when it was clear that Father Caum was going to be retiring. Since that time my secular employment has changed a couple of times. I bought a retail gift shop and due to the economy and other factors, it was clear I needed to close the business. This left me unemployed for the first time since I was a teenager. The

Pennsylvania Department of Aging, located in Harrisburg, had a few positions open, one of which I was very interested in and thus submitted an application for hire. I am happy to say that I was granted the position. The position will require that I be in or very near Harrisburg during the weekdays for at least the first six months. There is a very real likelihood that, after six months, I will be able to perform my job responsibilities from home. I tell you this because for the next six months, Father Caum and other clergy have offered to assist with Sunday service. I will continue to conduct services and provide sermons as much as possible but am fortunate for the support of Father Caum.

On that note, I would like to address something that has come up many times since I became your clergy person. Many of you have told me that you haven't tried to contact me because "I am so busy". One of the issues that I needed to consider before I was ordained is how everything could "get done". Things "get done" because God provides the time. God also provides many wonderful people, along with Father Caum, to support our church with their time and energy. Barbara is our Parish Administrator and is in contact with me several times a week, gets the bulletins done, the bills paid and much more. Father Ned and I communicate very well and try to see that the needs of the congregation are met. Most importantly, the people in the congregation have been ready and available to meet the needs of each other. Many of you have also served to assure that the altar is ready, the heat is turned up (Alan), coffee hour is organized and many other activities which support our weekly worship.

I want to thank you all for your contributions. Please be assured that during the next few months, as always, things will "get done". Do not hesitate to call me or Father Caum anytime. And just to be sure, here is our contact information; Father Caum: 888-0076, Mother Trula: 888-1491, my cell 607-425-1039 and the church office; 888-5715.

Mother Trula



Trinity Episcopal Church - December 2008

Advent
Christmas

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 St Andrew the Apostle	2	3	4 <i>Ed Gilbert</i>	5	6
7 2nd Sunday of Advent 9:00 Holy Eucharist II 10:00 Coffee Hour <i>Barbara Cole</i>	8 	9 <i>Heather Hunsinger Hazel Hunt, Fr. Ben Lentz Ian Bivins</i>	10 A Service of Lessons and Carols, St. Stephens, W-B, 6 p.m.	11 <i>Shelley Barry</i>	12	13
14 3rd Sunday of Advent 9:00 Holy Eucharist II 10:00 Coffee Hour Holiday Homes Tour	15 	16	17	18 Clergy Bible study 8, 7 p.m.	19	20
21 4th Sunday of Advent 9:00 Holy Eucharist II 10:00 Greening of the Church ----- Vestry Meets -----	22 St. Thomas the Apostle 		24 Christmas Eve 10:45 Carol Sing 11:00 Festival Eucharist <i>Hana Henty Kay Bennett</i>	25 Christmas Day 	26 St. Stephen, Deacon and Martyr	27 St. John, Apostle and Evangelist <i>Jason Barry</i>
28 Christmas I 9:00 Holy Eucharist 10:00 Coffee Hour	29 The Holy Innocents	30	31	Trinity Prayer Cycle 12/7 John, Barbara and Shelly Strange 12/14 Mary Tolbert 12/21 Jake and JoAnne Armstrong, Nicole and Greg 12/28 Kathy, Kevin, Alexandra and Jonathan Ayres		

Diocesan Prayer Cycle 12/7 St. Luke's, Scranton, the Rev. Peter D'Angio, rector; 12/14 St. James, Schuylkill Haven, the Rev. Dr. John Heffner, rector; 12/21 St. Martin in the Fields, Mountaintop, The Rev. Daniel V FitzSimmons, rector; 12/28 St. Margaret's, Emmaus, Canon Lexa H. Shallcross.

Kajo Keji, 12/7 Liri Secondary School, The Rev. Simon Peter Kenyi; 12/14 Lito'ba Parish, The Rev. John Liri Amuja; 12/21 Logili Parish, The Rev. Mary Basa; 12/28 Logu Parish, The Rev. Elisama Pitia

Anglicans Around the World 12/7 The Diocese of Kolhapur, United Church of North India; 12/14 The Diocese of Kumi, Church of Uganda; 12/21 The Province of agos, Church of Nigeria; 11/28 The Diocese of Bethlehem, TEC.

December Highlights

December 14 - Historic Homes Tour, 12 to 5. Trinity is on the tour this year

December 21 - Greening of the Church during coffee hour

Vestry meeting, tba

December 24 - Christmas Eve. Carol Sing at 10:45 p.m., Festival Eucharist at 11 p.m.

Would you like a visit or home communion? Our rector or one of our Eucharistic Visitors will be happy to call on you. Call the church office, 888-5715.

Volunteer to host a coffee hour! There is a signup sheet in the kitchen.

Advent Tree

The Advent Tree is becoming richly decorated with mittens, gloves, warm hats and socks. Keep them coming until it's time to decorate for Christmas, which will be December 21.

We'll be donating the warm clothing to Children and Youth Services.

Eucharistic Visitors

Eucharistic Visitors are trained by the rector and licensed by the Bishop to take communion to those who are ill or shut in. We are in need of additional people to help with this very special ministry of presence. Please prayerfully consider whether God may be calling you to be a Eucharistic Visitor. Talk to Mother Trula.

Holiday Homes Tour

Trinity will be open from noon to 5 on Sunday, December 14 for the Annual Holiday Homes Tour. We last took part in 1998. We will be updating our brochure and brief history of the church for the event.

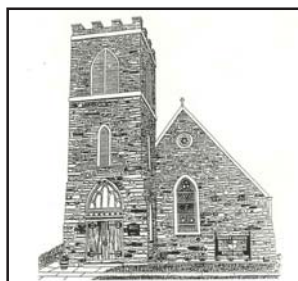
Volunteers are needed to host visitors. If you can give an hour or two it would be greatly appreciated. Talk to Barbara.

The Valley Food Pantry

The first Sunday of every month is Food Bank Sunday. This is a ministry that has been going on for a long, long time.

Let's be more intentional about our donations. Hunger is always present in all communities.

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December at Trinity

