
HOLY TRINITY LAMPLIGHTER

Newsletter

February, 2006

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From the Pastor:

Dear Holy Trinity family and friends,

February is the month when hearts and flowers abound. Love is in the air and on school bulletin boards and in greeting card racks everywhere. Why not send a prayer Valentine to God this year??

“Jesus, name above all names, merciful Savior, glorious Lord....” These are the words we sang to welcome the Gospel every weekend in Advent. On January 1st we celebrated “The Name of Jesus,” and listened to the story of Jesus’ naming in the temple eight days after His birth. “Jesus, name above all names....” That is the name on the Valentine God sent us over two thousand years ago.

In the ancient world and in the Bible, the ability to name was equated with the ability to control. (Do you remember God’s invitation to Adam to name the animals in Genesis 2?) Our calling upon the name of Jesus in prayer certainly doesn’t give us **control** over our Lord, but it does give us **access** to the Holy One. In my New Year’s Day sermon I quoted the saint who long ago said,

Jesus is honey to the mouth, music to the ear, and a shout of gladness in the heart.

Many of us feel inadequate in prayer. We worry we don’t know the right words to create a decent prayer.... It’s as if we envision God as an English teacher with a red pen who is going to correct our grammar! We don’t even tiptoe into prayer because we feel clueless as to how to go about it. We forget that:

[T]he Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. (Romans 8.26)

We also find it hard to remember that the most profound prayer is listening rather than speaking. Silence rather than a symphony becomes the best setting for receptive prayer. A man of faith, Albert S. Rossi, reflects:

Silence, at its best, is God-awareness. We quiet down our outer and inner lives, and listen to God speak. Someone said that when God speaks, His words are like the sound of a flutter of a bird’s wings. We need to be attentive to hear anything. (from *Saying the Jesus Prayer*, published on the website of St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary)

When we repeat the name of Jesus over and over, we are centering ourselves in the love and presence of the Savior. We are setting aside the worries, sorrows, hurts, even the joys which distract us from simply being with Him and listening for the still, small voice of God. We are acknowledging that He is the Spring from which our life flows....

Sometimes we mistakenly believe that repetition is meaningless babble. This is not true when whatever we repeat is meaning-full for us. When a single word or phrase helps us to center in the divine Presence, it becomes a mantra. Phrases from Scripture can be the most beautiful and powerful mantras of all. "Peace, be still!" (Mark 4.39) is one I return to time and again when I am anxious or fearful. Jesus' word to Mary Magdalene in the garden on Easter morning, "Mary!" (John 20.16) is another precious word I hold close to my heart. "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46.10) helps me enter personal prayer space. What are your favorites??

The traditional Jesus Prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on me, a sinner," is rooted in the cry of the blind man from Jericho who pleaded with Jesus to open his eyes.... "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Luke 8.38) That prayer can be shortened to the single word, that name above all names, "Jesus." Try it when you are on the train, in the line at the grocery store, waiting for a basketball game to begin, longing to fall asleep at night, slow to get out of bed in the morning. "Jesus." "Jesus." "Jesus."

That name on our lips is a Valentine that can be sent without a stamp. To whisper the name of the Beloved Son in the Father's ear is an act of love acknowledged, love returned. Honey to the mouth, music to the ear, a shout of gladness in the heart!

In Jesus' name,

Pastor Mary Virginia Olson

CHRISTMAS THANK YOU!

Dear Holy Trinity Family,

Thank you for the wonderful gifts of phone cards, cookies and candy, presents and pastor's purse showered upon Kristiane and me at Christmas time! We are blessed beyond words with your prayers year 'round, your love, support and endless stream of kindnesses. If everyone had as many reminders as Krisitane and I do that we are loved and befriended, how different the world would be . . .

Part of our faith family's mission is to remind others, too, that they are cherished. Those reminders take the form of both words and deeds! In gratitude for your generosity of heart, we are tithing your monetary gift and sending further assistance to our cousins near New Orleans who are rebuilding their homes in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. In this way our faith family blesses the rest of our family, and a beautiful circle of care is formed.

*Thank you, as always, for helping us remember that everything we have to **give** we once **received** from other hands, both human and divine. May this year of our Lord 2006 bring the blessings you pray for and also those you least expect . . . Above all, may the months to come bring you opportunities to become a blessing to others, an answer to somebody else's prayers.*

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Holy Trinity whose name we bear.

Pastor Mary and Kristiane

PASTA AND PIZZA POSTSCRIPT

A tremendous attendance and generous outpouring of support marked our first-ever thank you dinners for Holy Trinity's ushers and assisting ministers.

On Saturday, January 7th and Sunday, January 8th, the crowd grew and grew to over 60 attendees, and the results were better than anything we could have anticipated. Thank you to all who attended. To all who could not attend, worry not. The event was so successful we have decided to make it annual.

Perhaps the greatest blessing of the meals was that it enhanced communication between the pastors and the lay leaders in worship. We heard questions, comments, and suggestions covering a broad range of topics which can only improve how we work and worship together. Even now we are using that input to address the big and little things worship leaders encounter in the course of a liturgy. Assisting ministers and ushers can anticipate receiving a more detailed summary of these improvements in the near future. If you were not able to be with us and are on-line, please route your e-mail address to heather@holytrinity-nj.org to be included on our e-mail update list.

HOLY TRINITY VISIONING DAY

Our faith family will gather to pray and talk about how God is transforming us and what direction is God leading us, on the afternoon of Sunday, March 12th (12:30 - 4:30 p.m.). Pastor Bruce Ewen, assistant to the bishop, will lead us in prayer and conversation as we look at Scripture and at our lives together, identifying the incredible gifts given to us and visioning how God intends us to use those gifts for the sake of the Kingdom and world.

All Holy Trinity members are invited and encouraged to participate in our visioning! Your sharing of insights, experiences, concerns and hopes will enrich our conversation and inform our decision-making. We will provide lunch and childcare, and simply ask that you let us know you will be attending by singing up in Fellowship Hall. Thank you for investing the precious gift of time in our congregation's future.

THE WOMEN PROUDLY RETREAT AGAIN!

Calling all women longing to retreat! Save the dates of Friday, September 29th through Sunday, October 1st, for our next weekend women's retreat at St. Marguerite's Retreat House in Mendham. Our retreat leader will be Heidi Hangstrom, a Lutheran laywoman, certified spiritual director, and Director of the ELCA Youth Gathering. Pastor Mary attended a "Habits of the Heart" workshop led by Heidi at a conference and was impressed by her warmth, sense of spirituality and engaging, powerful presentation.

Stay tuned for more details in upcoming Lamplighters and bulletins about our theme and the exact cost of the weekend (approximately \$235). If you want to be part of the Holy Trinity planning group working with Heidi, please let Pastor Mary know. If you would like to reserve a space for yourself on the weekend, please route your name and a \$25.00 non-refundable deposit to the church office. (Checks should be made out to Holy Trinity with "women's retreat deposit" on the memo line.)

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

ANNUAL BREAKFAST CLUB ZITI DINNER EXTRAVAGANZA

It's coming. Sunday, February 26, 4:30-6:30. The famous "Ziti Dinner Extravaganza 2006" sponsored by the Breakfast Club. There's the delicious Italian salad, the phenomenal baked ziti, the fresh bread, the mouth watering desserts and the thirst quenching beverages. Plus: many gift baskets (any and all new donations are greatly appreciated). Please contact Teri Ruggie at 732-681-3496 **no later than February 22nd**. Tickets are \$7/adult and \$4/children under ten. Tickets will be available after the 5:00 p.m. service on Saturdays, after the 8:45 a.m. service on Sunday during coffee hour and before the 11:15 a.m. service in Fellowship Hall. No tickets will be available at the door. Think of the fun and fellowship with your faith family and friends. Priceless! All are welcome.

Again, as in the past, 10% (tithe) will be donated to a local charity chosen by the youth and the balance will go toward the cost of sending our 22 Breakfast Clubbers to the Youth Gathering in San Antonio on July 5-9, 2006.

Denise & Jeff Clayton

LIBRARY

"A snowflake is a bit of beauty dropped from the sky that, if lost at that moment, is lost forever to the world."

W. A. Bentley

There once lived a boy who loved snow more than anything else in the world. His name was Wilson A. Bentley and he grew up on a farm in Jericho, Vermont. When Willie was still very young, his

mother gave him a microscope. Willie made a tray lined with black velvet to catch snowflakes, or ice crystals, and tried to draw them before they melted under his microscope.

On his seventeenth birthday his parents gave him a camera that worked with a microscope, and Willie taught himself how to photograph snow crystals. He was the first person to photograph a snowflake. During his lifetime, he photographed 5,381 snowflakes! Twenty-five hundred of these appear in his book, Snow Crystals, published in 1931 when he was sixty-six years old. Bentley wanted to show others the beautiful geometrical perfection he found in every snowflake. His photographs revealed that no two snowflakes are alike; each snowflake is unique in its complexity.

Born on February 9, 1865, Wilson Bentley died on December 23, 1931, less than two months after his book was published. You can learn more about Bentley in My Brother Loved Snowflakes, by Mary Bahr, and Snowflake Bentley, by Jacqueline Briggs Martin. Both books can be found in our Sunday School library in the Picture Book section.

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

The four keys to nurturing faith in the home are *caring conversation, devotions, service, rituals and tradition*. In the past year, I talked about the four keys and how they can apply to your family life. Of course, you could use your own imagination for what works in your family situation.

In the month of February, we celebrate St. Valentine's Day and prepare ourselves for a new life in Jesus (Lent). On Valentine's Day we buy cards to give out to friends and loved ones. God gave us his unconditional love (Agape) and Jesus took the love he has for us to the cross. Let's share this love through *caring conversation* with loved ones and friends. Share the scriptures or *devotions*

with others. Some examples of scripture you might want to read and to share are:

- John 3:16 is a famous verse in the Bible. “For God so loved the world he gave his one and only Son that who ever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal Life.”
- John 15:12 tell us about Christ’s Love. “My command is this: *Love each other as I have loved you.*”
- Hebrews 13:1 is abounding love. “Keep on loving each other as brothers.”
- Deuteronomy 10:19 is impartial love. “ And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourself were aliens in Egypt.”

These are just a few of the numerous scriptures you could use for devotions.

Have you ever thought about sending a Valentine Card to someone you don’t know, who is lonely, lives by themselves or in a different country that is filled with hurt, death or violence? I remember as a single parent raising four children, that in the midst of my hectic life, someone sent me a valentine card signed “Love Jesus.” I never knew who this person was but all I knew was that it gave me a renewal in my life, because someone cared for me and brought me lots of joy. Let’s spread the “Good News of Jesus”, the love that he has given us through his death and resurrection. Through our *service* to others we bring joy and love into their hearts. Maybe even write “Jesus Loves You!” in a valentine card. And what is our *ritual and tradition*? It is the celebration of St. Valentine’s Day through giving cards.

What ideas do you have for using the four keys? How do you use the four keys in your family? Let’s share with each other. Send your ideas or story to Lamplighter.

Servant in Christ,

Karen Astrom

LUTHERMANIA

Luthermania is open to all 4th, 5th and 6th graders and their friends. We will be meeting at Sea Girt Lanes in Wall, on Sunday, February 26th, at 3:45 p.m. for Laserlight Bowling, pizza and soda. The cost of \$8.00 per person includes bowling shoes. Please sign up on Christian Education bulletin board and return your permission slip along with \$8.00 no later than February 19th. Any questions? Please contact Karen Astrom at KRA728@optonline.net or leave a message on 732-223-9862.

Luthermania will be meeting on Sunday, January 29th, after the 11:15 a.m. worship service, to make Valentine cards. Lunch will be provided. See sign-up sheet on Christian Ed bulletin board. Should you have any questions, please contact Karen Astrom.

Among the Wolves, L.B.I. Retreat 2005 “Feed Those Sheep”

OW, OW OUUUUUU! The one and a half hour ride to Long Beach Island was well worth it. Whether we were with only the other confirmands from Holy Trinity, or a small group with a few people from other churches, or with tons of people from churches all over New Jersey, we were having fun! There was a singer who went by the name of Smallfish, who was absolutely hilarious! The entire time, he was singing about the Lord and had volunteers come up to the stage to do hand motions along with the songs. This was when we were in the large groups. As well as singing, we had discussions, mainly on the topic of “Feed Those Sheep” – John 21:17. Then, we would split into small groups of about five or six kids and a group

leader. Here we played games and discussed what we talked about in the large groups. Another part of our day was “family time”. During this time, the members of Holy Trinity met and talked for a while. We learned a lot about our new Assistant Pastor, Timothy Leitzke. My favorite part was the service projects. We made bracelets to serve as a beacon of hope for children in Louisiana who were victims of Hurricane Katrina. We also made cheerful banners for the people volunteering there. For the Faith Kitchen, a soup kitchen, we made placements and put together peanut butter and jelly sandwiches as well as other foods. The other activities scheduled throughout the day were free time, where we could play ping-pong, or a number of other things, breakfast, lunch, and dinner, where the food was exceptional, and lights out. The accommodations were very nice and cozy. Overall, there was always something to do and we had fun doing it. The retreat to Long Beach Island was a wonderful experience, and I can’t wait to go again next year!

Mariah McKevitt

W.E.L.C.A.

CIRCLE OF HOPE will meet on Saturday, February 11th, at 9 a.m. at church. They will discuss supporting our troops in Iraq. Come help with their projects and make some new friends. Baby sitting may be available. For information call Nancy Smarr (732-681-3369), Karen Jeffray (732-223-8255) or Kathy Nicholas (732-988-5355)..

ELISABETH CIRCLE will meet on Monday, February 13th at 9:30 a.m. at church. They will be planning a W.E.L.C.A. General Meeting for some time in February. New members and guests are

welcome at all meetings. Call Louise Moenke (732-528-7695) for details.

LOUISE CIRCLE will meet on Monday, February 13th, at 7:30 p.m. at church. Please consider joining them as they plan for General Meetin in February and other activities for 2006. Call Ruth Walsh (732-528-7695) for details.

W.E.L.C.A. EXECUTIVE BOARD will meet on Friday, February 24th, at 10:00 a.m., at church.

TRINITY CRAFTERS are still on “Winter Vacation”. Please watch the church bulletins for dates and times when they will start “crafting” again. They are presently gathering ideas for new projects for Bazaar 2006. If you have any ideas or questions, call Ronnie Reed at 7320701-1160.

TRINITY BLANKETEERS will **NOT** meet in February.

CHURCH FAMILY CHRISTMAS CARD

The response to this year’s card was wonderful always. Did you get to read the Christmas messages to you from your friends at Holy Trinity?

The village of colorful houses kept growing and your donations to Habitat for Humanity will help grow a village for victims of Hurricane Katrina. You generosity totaled \$800.00!!!!

W.E.L.C.A. THANKS YOU AGAIN FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

BLANKET SUNDAYS

Each year, the month of February gives us another opportunity to reach out to those in need. The extreme weather around the world this past year makes us realize how vulnerable we all are. A warm, cozy blanket can be such a comfort when faced with disaster; and tools to rebuild can give hope in times of loss. Holy Trinity W.E.L.C.A. will

be sponsoring the “Blanket Project and Tools of Hope” for Church World service on two weekends this month. Our members will distribute flyers and envelopes at all of the services on February 4th and 5th and 11th and 12th.

THANK YOU FOR CARING.
HOLY TRINITY W.E.L.C.A.

took a tag off the “Giving Tree”. Thanks to everyone who shopped and who donated money for the extras and thanks to our “elves” who helped wrap all the gifts. Christmas morning was made **extra** special for our families because of the generosity of our family of faith.

LOOKING AHEAD

- Reflect, Meditate, Pray –

JOIN US AT

AT A SPIRITUAL GATHERING

Of Region 7 Women of the ELCA

April 21-23, 2006

At Mount St. Alphonsus Retreat Center

Esopus, New York

Registration date deadline is February 28, 2006

**SEE W.E.L.C.A. BULLETIN BOARD FOR
DETAILS AND FORMS OR SPEAK TO ANY
OF THE CIRCLE LEADERS (PREVIOUSLY
MENTIONED) FOR INFORMATION.**

FAITH & FILM

The film, “Sideways” is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Friday, February 24th. Ira Wallace will be the moderator so consider coming and joining us for fellowship and a lively discussion period. Bring your friends. All are welcome. Please sign up on the sheet posted in the Fellowship Hall.

SAVE THE DATE!

Sunday, March 5th at 3 p.m., is Cindy Markus’ fundraiser at the Spring Lake Theater for her upcoming mission trip to Namibia! You won’t want to miss this! Keep your eyes and ears open for more information. Check out the posters and read your weekly bulletins!

SOCIAL MINISTRY

Please accept Social Ministry’s heartfelt thanks to everyone who helped make Christmas extra special for our families this year. Thanks to everyone who

THANK YOU

Our warmest thanks go out to all the Church . . . with our sincere best wishes for a glorious Holiday Season.

Joan and I want to take this belated opportunity to thank Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church and its fine members for their outpouring of support and concern during my recent hospitalization. I for one was overwhelmed by the number of cards, phone calls and good wishes that came my way. They were a tremendous morale boost during the recuperative process and certainly helped speed the recovery.

Joan and Ira Wallace



Sincere thanks from Barbara Tillson for messages of sympathy to her and her family on the loss of her mother, Edna Daley.



Special thanks to Pastor Mary for her visit.

Tyler John Criscuolo Jan, 8, 2006

SPECIAL MONTHLY LAMPLIGHTER MAILINGS NOTICE

Per our discussion at the Annual Meeting on January 22, 2006, the Lamplighter will be placed on the stage in Fellowship Hall and **no longer mailed** as of March 2006. If you would still like to have your Lamplighter mailed, please check the appropriate box below. **Please note that if you do not return this notice to the church office by February 15th, your Lamplighter will not be mailed. Copies will be available on the stage in Fellowship Hall. Any questions? Please call the church office @ 732-223-0533. Thank you.**

Name: _____

Address: _____

___ Yes, I would like Lamplighter mailed to me.

___ I will pick up Lamplighter at church.

___ I will visit the church website (www.holytrinity-nj.org)