

PASTOR'S PEN

Dear Friends of Christ,

It was a cold, rainy spring morning in my second year of seminary and I was walking along Seminary Ridge from the Chapel to my afternoon class. All of us were nervous; our internship assignments were being determined. Three professors were playing a matching game with 27 students and 32 congregations, trying to match each student to a congregation, knowing that some "ideal" matches might not enable everyone to have a match. I asked a classmate of mine how she was handling the wait.

She said, "At times like this, you just have to say, 'Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit'; but if you *really* loved me..."

It's all that any of us could do. We'd been taught it for 3 ½ semesters, and now we got to live it. Recently, you and I have gotten to do the same thing. Emily is, for now, assigned to the Delaware-Maryland Synod. None of us are sure what is going to happen. I've spent 1 ¾ years preaching that we need to trust God, and now I get to live it with the rest of you. My prayers have gotten pretty darn close to that of my classmate four years ago, "Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit"; but if you *really* loved me..."

Why does God want us to pray? What's the point? I can pray for God to do one thing and God can have something else entirely in mind. God's response to me might be a complete refusal to do any of what I asked. So why does God want me to ask in the first place?

It's all about trust. Trust, in this case, is not the trust that God will do what I want God to do. I trust that when I turn the steering wheel to the right the car's wheels will turn to the right. If they don't, I lose trust in the car. That is a trust in the certainty of a desired outcome. God does not offer the certainty that what we want will be ours. God offers to know what God is doing. When I trust in God, I trust that God knows what God is doing, and that if things go contrary to what I desire God is still in command, God is still with me, and that God is going to remember me even when things go badly...even when I am dead and gone.

God wants us to ask God for everything so that we will trust that God is in control. Any prayer is valid. The lack of the desired outcome does not constitute a lack of an answer. The point is that we trust that God knows what God is doing. I can pray for a brand new yacht. God will answer that prayer. Just don't expect to see me driving a brand new yacht any time soon! In the praying to God I come to understand that God is in control, and I come to trust that God knows what God is doing. That has a profound effect upon me. My prayers continue, but the result is almost always peace. God will do what God will do. For now, I am a baptized Christian living in this time and place and I have a Christian vocation that I am called to do.

All of my classmates got assigned that spring four years ago. Not all of them got to go where they wanted to go. A couple of them did not come back. All of us wound up where the Holy Spirit could work with us. I know I certainly did. The Holy Spirit gets the job done. Eventually, every prayer boils down to "'Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit'; but if you *really* loved me..."

In + Christ,

Pastor Timothy A Leitzke

☞ COUNCIL CORNER ☞

Members Reflect on the Conference on Congregational Ministries

Four Holy Trinity members attended the New Jersey Synod's Conference on Congregational Ministries on March 24. The theme-of-the-day was "Grow the Church" and the Rev. Brent Dahlseng from Illinois delivered the keynote address focusing on Costly Discipleship. Pastor Dahlseng preached that we are not just church members with privileges, like weekly absolution. Instead we're transformed followers of the living Christ. We're the hands and feet of Jesus in the world today.

Over 80 hour-long workshops in areas like Prayer, Education, Giving and Worship addressed practical problems, shared best practices, and promoted current initiatives in the New Jersey Synod. The session entitled "Red Flags in the Church Budget" identified typical problem areas and suggested straightforward, Scripture-based solutions.

Watch as we use these ideas to improve Holy Trinity's ministries this year. Speak to Cindy Markus, Council President, or Pastor Mary if you would like to attend the next conference in 2008. As an added incentive to any hardcore Lutherans, there is coffee, tea and a bag lunch at the conference.

~~ Dennis Blazak,
Council Corporate Secretary &
Stewardship Co-chair

I had the opportunity to attend the 2007 Conference on Congregational Ministries as a representative of the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Our table was filled with information about our services, outreach work and activities. During this sharing we were able to employ a new Deaconess to lead our teen workshop at

our state annual convention. The Lord does provide! A great day for learning and networking. Thank you!

~~ Diane Guarini,
Social Ministries Committee Co-chair

A special thank you to Dennis Blazak, Diane Guarini and Grace Walton, for joining me at this year's Conference on Congregational Ministries – an extremely well organized and attended Conference. We had a chance to see Lutheran friends from area Churches, hear an upbeat and fun Christian band (and sing along!), participate in a wide variety of workshops, browse the array of informational booths and enjoy a "sweet" breakfast as well as a filling lunch! I can't think of a better way to have spent a wintry Saturday!

I chose to attend a variety of workshops: "Need a Vision? – A Guide to Congregations;" "Establishing and Sustaining a Partnership with a Namibian Lutheran Congregation;" "New Jersey's 2006 Visit to Namibia" and "Fundamentals of Children's Ministry."

A wide spectrum of choices were available, wonderfully set-up to meet the needs and interest of all and to continue to help us grow individually and as a Church.

Consider joining us next year!

~~ Cindy Markus, Council President

Join the Crew!

The Property Committee crews are hard at work!

The committee meets at 7 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month to work around the Church. When daylight permits we try to work outside: trimming, cleaning, painting and/or repairing. During the winter months we will do our inside work. It usually only involves a few hours to accomplish something useful and also enjoy some fellowship!

I encourage you join to us in what I believe is an enjoyable and rewarding ministry.

~~ Buzz Goode
Property Committee Co-chair

✧ CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ✧

Living Bread from Heaven

On April 21 and 22, we joyfully welcomed the following young people to the Lord's Supper for the first time:

Saturday, April 21

Cadan Edward Fox Claypoole
Tyler David Osborn
Gwendolyn Fall
Alexander Stupar
Victoria Lynn Galvan
Megan Ann Suchecki
Alexandra Gibson
Nicholas James Wagner
Jennifer Jean Wall

Sunday, April 22

Kirsten Elisabeth Barnes
Dane S. Brazinski
Christopher Centrella
Donald T. Corson III
Julianna Marie Fren
Katrina Margret Hand
Sara Elisabeth Hegna
Cameron Lawrence McIver
Madison Hope Newman
Nicole Jeannette Place
Paige Sydney Regan
Alexander Michael Restucci
Caitlyn Ryann Sutton
Phillip Lars Vorbach
Joseph Robert Waldeyer
Haley Jessica White

We proudly share their poems, written as part of their preparation to receive first Holy Communion and read aloud during worship:

The Five Ways We Sense Christ In Holy Communion

by Cadan, Gwendolyn, Victoria, Alexandra,
Tyler, Alexander, Megan, Nicholas & Jennifer

When I step into the sanctuary, I hear
the sound of Jesus talking -- in the
pastor's voice and when I pray and sing.

I see the candles burning bright:
the altar candles, the paschal candle,
the eternal light.

I smell the candles and the wine. They
smell so good.

I feel the bread of Christ and the cup of
Christ in my hand, and the blood of
Christ on my lips.

I taste the wine in my mouth.

When we eat the bread it tastes good.
Amen

Our First Holy Communion:

A Poem to the Lord

by Kirsten, Dane, Christopher, Sara,
Cameron, Paige, Alex and Donald

I see the Lord in heaven.

I hear the Lord, too. I see the cool,
colorful flowers.

They smell good. I hear music in my ear.

I see pretty dresses and colorful ties in
the pews. I smell the wine.

I like the smell but not the taste.
Sometimes I do drink the wine.
It's really different. I touch and taste the
bread and sometimes it's sweet.

I feel the wafer; it feels like paper.
I pray at the altar. I hear others pray.
Amen!

Holy Communion

By Julianna, Katrina, Madison,
Nicole, Caitlyn, Joe and Haley

We see people who have come to help
us celebrate Holy Communion, family
and friends.

There are also people we love but can't
see, who are with us in Spirit, looking
from heaven. When we kneel, we see
the cross. We smell the bread, wine and
grape juice.

We touch the bread and common cup.
We feel our hands pressed
together when we pray. We taste the
bread -- it's like a tiny cookie.

When we taste the bread and wine, we remember it's God's Body and Blood. We hear and say, 'Amen.' Amen!

Many thanks to those who participated in the children's preparation to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion, including Pastor Mary, Pastor Leitzke, Karen Astrom and Robin Baymore, who created certificates for the children. Our ongoing appreciation also goes to Terri Restucci and Tami Regan who teach the 3^d grade Sunday School class.

Musically Gifted

Veronica Colarusso and Richie Orozco are the proud recipients of the Schwarz Music Fund scholarship. They received their checks at the 5 p.m. service on May 5.

Veronica is currently studying piano and Richie's desire is to study piano. This gift will make the dreams of both of these children come true as they continue to share their talents with the Holy Trinity congregation and their friends and families. Congratulations to both of you from your Holy Trinity family. Heartfelt thanks to Arno and Jeanne Schwarz who established this fund for our youth.

Luthermania at Chuck E. Cheese

Join us from 3:45 to 7:30 p.m. Friday, May 18 for pizza, games and fun. Open to kids in the fourth, fifth and sixth grade and those who will be in the fourth grade in September. Admission: \$5.00 per child.

Please contact Allison Morgan @ 920-2345 to sign up. Permission slips required!!

LIBRARY

Many thanks to all who supported the Christian Education Adopt-a-Book Coffee Hour on April 15. Here are a few of the books that were "adopted": two beautiful art books, A Child's Book of Prayer in Art, by Sister Wendy Beckett and Mary, the story of the mother of

Jesus, written and illustrated by Demi; and The Forever Dog, by Bill Cochran – Mike and his dog Corky promise to be best friends forever, but what happens when Corky becomes very sick and dies. This is a warmhearted story for younger children about loss and a promise broken yet kept. Perhaps my favorite is A Mama for Owen, by Marion Dane Bauer, the true story of a baby hippo separated from his mother in the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Owen is rescued by the Kenya Wildlife Service and taken to Haller Park, a nature preserve outside of Mombasa. There Owen chooses Mzee, a 130-year-old male tortoise to be his mother. John Butler's endearing illustrations, rendered in acrylic paint and colored pencils, will touch your heart.

Please visit the Sunday School library, where you will find these and many other "good reads."

~~ Ellin Greene

☞ EVANGELISM & STEWARDSHIP ☜

We will be receiving new members on Saturday, June 9 and Sunday, June 10.

We are working to match prospective members with sponsors who will guide them into our congregation's fellowship. Please consider saying "yes" if a member of the Evangelism Committee asks you to be a sponsor.

Date to remember: May 20, "Meet and Greet" at 7 p.m.

2007 Church Photo Directory Update

The last portrait session, held on April 12, brought the total number of pictures to 117. We are on track for directory distribution by Pentecost. Remember that anyone who sat for a portrait is entitled to one photo directory. If you chose to have your portraits delivered to the church, they are available in the church office. Many thanks to everyone who came out for the photography sessions and to those who helped work on the project!

Women's Fall Retreat: On a Wing and a Prayer

The dates for our annual women's retreat are Friday, Sept. 14 (late afternoon/dinnertime) through lunch on Sunday, Sept. 16. Once again our location will be St. Marguerite's Retreat House in Mendham. The approximate cost is \$160. Financial assistance is available for those in need of it; just speak with Pastor Mary. A \$35 nonrefundable deposit is requested to reserve your space. Please make checks payable to Holy Trinity, with "women's retreat" on the memo line.

Seven women have signed up. Nineteen openings remain. Our theme will be prayer. We will walk the labyrinth on the retreat house grounds, embrace the psalms as the "prayer book of the Bible" and pray in community, solo, silently, aloud and through journaling. If you would like to serve on the retreat planning team, please let Pastor Mary know!

Hope for the Homeless

Recently our Holy Trinity college students received care packages from our congregation. What a rewarding thing for us to do and what an uplift for our youth. Some young people are not so fortunate. The following is from Making Christ Known, a publication of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

"Kimberly graduated from high school in the top 10 percent of her class. She went to an ELCA college in hopes of going on to seminary. Her plan was derailed when she was diagnosed with multiple mental health disorders and hospitalized 13 times while struggling with depression.

"Unable to enroll in seminary, Kimberly bounced between jobs. Kimberly began volunteering at Care Corps, Inc., in Fremont, Nebraska, and secured a part-time job. One day, upon returning home, her housemate had packed all of Kimberly's belongings and left them outside a locked door. With no family in Nebraska, she checked into the

homeless shelter at Care Corps, the place where she was volunteering.

"Gifts to our ELCA World Hunger Appeal fund domestic hunger-fighting programs and projects to help neighbors in need around the corner and throughout our church. In partnership with congregations, social ministry organizations, and other hunger ministries, our church's domestic hunger grants provide hope to those who hunger and a prophetic voice calling for justice for those living with poverty and despair.

"Your gifts to the World Hunger Appeal help fund hunger-related programs like Care Corps through the ELCA domestic hunger grants program. Each year Care Corps runs a shelter for over 600 children, women and men who are homeless. Life-skills classes, counseling, case management, and drug/alcohol assessments are additional services offered by Care Corps to help families find employment and affordable housing.

"In Nebraska, your gifts to ELCA World Hunger Appeal enabled Care Corps to help Kimberly turn her life around. In addition to providing emergency shelter, Care Corps counselors helped Kimberly set goals and develop a plan to reach them. With counseling and life-skills training, Kimberly was able to keep her part-time job and find an affordable apartment. Now, self-sufficient and once more living on her own, Kimberly has again returned to Care Corps as a volunteer, helping others as she was helped."

-- *Carla Conaty, Mission Interpretation*

✿ SOCIAL MINISTRY ✿

Love in Bloom

A live plant in a hand-painted flower pot is a beautiful way to say "Happy Mother's Day!" Designed and created by members of the Social Ministry Committee, the potted plants will be sold for \$8 apiece after services on May 5, 6, 12 and 13 in Fellowship Hall.

☞ **W.E.L.C.A.** ☞

WELCA would like thank everyone who helped with the Attic Treasures Sale May 4 & 5. Next month we will note the charities that received donations from the proceeds.

Elisabeth Circle will meet Monday, May 14 at 9:30 a. m. at church. Marjorie Delaney and Ruth Beers will hostess. Louise Moenke will do devotions. The Circle will continue collecting items for school kits for Church World Services. Please call Louise at (732) 899-6846.

Louise Circle will meet Monday, May 14 at 7:30 p. m. at church. The Circle will be collecting items for Health Kits. Please call Ruth Walsh (732) 528-7695 for details.

The Circle of Hope will meet Saturday May 5 to help with the Attic Treasures Sale. In June they will meet on the 2nd at 9 a. m. at church. Please call Nancy Smarr (732) 681-3369.

WELCA Executive Board will meet Friday, June 1 at 9:30 a. m. at church.

**ANNUAL
COMMUNION BREAKFAST**

Wednesday, May 23
9 a. m.

WELCA will sponsor the
Service
followed by
Brunch
in Fellowship Hall.

All Holy Trinity members
and their friends
are invited.

RSVP on the WELCA
Bulletin Board

☞ **CHILDREN OF GOD** ☞

Holy Trinity welcomed Chase Banas Ali into the Body of Christ through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism on Saturday, April 14. His sponsors were David and Victoria Petrie. Chase is the son of Ehab and Dawn Ali. His sister, Paige, is 3 years old. Chase was born on Aug. 3, 2006.

Jessica Rose Mackown was born on March 29, 2007 to Michael and Jennifer Mackown. Her grandparents are Nancy and Greg Hannah, and her uncle is Gregory Hannah.

Megan Elisabeth Liggett was born April 22, 2007 to Mark and Susan Liggett. Megan's brothers are Matthew, 5, and Daniel, 3. Holy Trinity member Helen Sproul is the Liggett children's maternal

grandmother. Their paternal grandparents are Barbara and Brad Liggett.

Janay Sharisse Jackson was born April 23, 2007 to Kathy Starke and Shareef Jackson. Former Holy Trinity members Paul and Rae Starke are Janay's grandparents.

✎ MAIL BAG ✎

Dear Pastor Mary and the Holy Trinity Church congregation:

Thank you for the privilege of using your church. Everyone was so kind, warm and inviting. You truly are walking expressions of God's love and grace.

*Thank you again,
The Tuesday Night
A. A. Big Book Study Group*

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The Breakfast Club thanks everyone who contributed loose change to Coins for the Kingdom. More than \$370 was raised. All profits will be donated to our sister congregation, the Uudhengelo Lutheran Parish in Namibia, Africa. Thanks, also, for your continued support for the Breakfast Club!

-- Kathy Lynch and Jeff Clayton

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Dear Holy Trinity,

Thank you for remembering me down here in good old Glassboro. All the food and goodies are greatly appreciated and were delicious. Thank you again for remembering me!

--Eric McLaughlin

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