

Dear Holy Trinity Family and Friends,

The Church is so much bigger than we are... At every prebaptismal session I emphasize to parents and godparents ("sponsors") that although the newly baptized become members of Holy Trinity by virtue of being baptized in our sanctuary, their most important identity is that of members of the Body of Christ, spanning both space and time.

How many times have you heard me say, "We're here for those who aren't here yet!"? **We're** blessed to have heard and believed the Good News. There are many others in this world who haven't been so fortunate. They don't know that "God so loved the world..." Some of them are convinced there is no God. Others only "know" a god who bears no resemblance to the God whom we know and love: the God whom we are convinced knows and loves us.

Our Holy Trinity family is one of 185 congregations that make up the New Jersey Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We're not very "Lutheran dense" in NJ, so our synod encompasses the entire Garden State. (Compare this to the twin cities of Minneapolis/St. Paul which touch upon three different synods!) The stereotype of Lutherans in this country is that we're all white folks of northern European descent. The reality is that the members of our Synod are culturally diverse, including many people whose roots are in places other than Europe, and some whose first language is other than English. Our synod is blessed to include congregations made up primarily of fellow Lutherans from South America (Brazil), Latin America, Africa, and Southern India. These are primarily urban congregations, made up of immigrants. Not surprisingly, financial support from the larger church is required for them to survive, at least initially. When we declare, "We're here for those who aren't here yet!" we don't just mean the unchurched people who moved in down the block, who look and sound like us. We also mean the brothers and sisters who live in Camden, Newark, Elizabeth and other places, who aren't visible on our radar screen, but who need Good News as much as anyone, and who wait for us to share and be Gospel.

Bishop E. Roy Riley, the shepherd of our NJ Synod, has announced a three year capital campaign nicknamed MOM ("Mission on the Move"). The **spiritual** goal is to "change and save lives" through the Gospel, requiring us to "change the culture" in our congregations so that we are turned outward in mission to the world, rather than being turned inward on ourselves (St. Augustine's definition of sin...). The **financial** goal is to raise \$2,700,000. That money will be used a) to help individual congregations (like us) fund new forms of outreach, inviting those on the outside to come inside; b) to provide support to congregations in transition and in need of redevelopment; c) to fund two new mission starts.

Our Holy Trinity faith family has been asked to contribute of our treasure to this effort. In August you will hear more specifics about MOM from our Stewardship team, including how you can help to "change and save lives" through the Gospel and specifically through this campaign. This synod initiative obviously doesn't replace our own stewardship campaign. Each one of us, however, is prayerfully invited to consider a sacrificial gift to reach those who don't yet know and love the triune God, the Holy Trinity, Whose name we bear.

In Christ, Whose poverty made us rich,

Pastor Mary Virginia Farnham

## ARNIE'S CORNER



I photographed this baptismal font when I was in England, in the Midlands, in the town of Stanton. The church dated back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the 1100s. I can assure you this font was well used. The floor was original; the stones covered the graves of the parish members. Footsteps had worn down the names until they were barely recognizable.

It was also obvious the font had been repaired to enable it to remain. It was located in the center of the Sanctuary. (The photo was taken as I looked towards the back of the church.) I was struck by the font's simplicity and its location. It was obvious to me that over the course of more than 900 years the Sacrament of Baptism was important to these people. It was obvious that the position of this font made a statement too. It said that Baptism was a central, singular and continuing event in their lives. Baptism wasn't given and then forgotten. Every Sunday, every time they entered the church this font stood as a reminder of the unfailing gift God gave them.

This is the same gift that you and I can continually return to and reclaim, yet doesn't need to be reenacted. The Baptismal event is the beginning of a

journey that embraces our entire life. It started when we were washed and continues through our nurturing as children, our growth both as individuals and as Christians through Confirmation, into our adult years by remembrance and ultimately, the completion of God's promise of the life to come.

The Holy Trinity family has welcomed and celebrated the ordination of a new pastor in their midst; what better way to continue the celebration than to continue to make Baptism and the means of Grace our central focus! Baptism clearly means turning away from opposing God and turning our allegiance to the Triune God. The threefold washing by water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is needed so that the gift of life may be received. The sign of the cross on the forehead indicates that the newly baptized has become united to the death and resurrection of Christ. Jesus Christ fully envelops each and everyone baptized. This is echoed at the end of life when the funeral pall is used to envelop the coffin of a Christian who has died.

Let us enjoy the prominence of the font; it contains water, water that represents the water of the Jordan River, where our Lord was baptized by John the Baptizer. You are all invited to remember your baptism by playing in this water and if you desire, trace the mark of the cross on your forehead remembering when you were claimed by God on baptism.

Much of this information is from the *Renewing Worship* series published by Augsburg Fortress. Shalom, ~~ *Arnie*

### **Weekend Worship Schedule Changes Next Weekend**

Many of us struggle on weekends to juggle our spiritual lives with other family and social responsibilities. With the hope of enabling more parents to worship, the Congregational Council recently approved a change to our Sunday worship schedule, which will go into effect next weekend (Sunday, July 6).

As usual, our Saturday worship service will be at 5 p.m. and the first worship

service on Sunday will at 8:45 a.m. The second service, however, will be at 10:30 a.m. and will continue to be at 10:30 a.m. through the upcoming school year.

## ☞ CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ☞

### Sunday Church School

#### **Calling All Christians**

The Christian Education Committee is looking for volunteers to work with our children.

Our fourth and fifth grade Sunday School classes each have two, experienced teachers who are returning in the fall, but we are in need of a third. A third teacher would share the joy of teaching and allow more flexibility to our teachers' schedules.

We would also appreciate having a few more people to call (occasionally) when a teacher will be absent.

If you are interested in teaching but not quite ready to commit, please think about adding your name to our substitute list.

Thank you for your prayerful consideration.

Please contact Sheila Wall or Cathy Taft to volunteer or inquire. Sheila's telephone number is (732) 223-6635. Cathy's phone number is (732) 223-5785.

### Library

#### **Grace Matters**

For over 20 years I have been a listener and supporter of Grace Matters (formally Lutheran Vespers), the radio ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It all began when I returned to Point Pleasant after living in New York City and the Chicago area for many years and was still looking for a home church. (I had yet to meet Pastor Mary☺). At the time Lutheran Vespers was broadcast Sunday morning on a local station. Richard Jensen was host (1982-1993), followed by Larry Getty (1993-1994), followed by Walter Wangerin (1994-2005). The current host is

Peter W. Marty, son of the distinguished Lutheran theologian, Martin E. Marty.

Each host has brought a unique approach to the program. Jensen often related scripture stories to contemporary literature and theater, an approach that had special appeal for me. Wangerin, who some of you have met at conferences or heard on Lutheran Vespers, was renowned for his dramatic style of presentation. When Lutheran Vespers announced Wangerin's retirement, I wondered how anyone could possibly reach the high standard his preaching had set and braced myself for disappointment. But Peter Marty was smart enough to not even try. Instead, Marty changed the format to a magazine-type program, interviewing fascinating persons from wide-spread fields who could talk about how faith matters in their life. Program guests are interviewed from Marty's home in Iowa where he is a parish pastor or in the Chicago studio where the production originates. At times he takes his digital recording equipment on the road. When asked the criteria for selecting interviewees, Marty replied, "We look for guests (a) who belong to some sort of faith community and who derive strength from that attachment, (b) who do something interesting with their life and their God-given gifts and (c) who speak articulately about what they do or how they see the world." His guests have ranged from Joe Ehrmann, Pastor of a 4,000 member congregation, high school football coach and subject of Jeffrey Marx's best selling book, *Season of Life: A Football Star, a Boy, a Journey to Manhood*, (Grace Matters 5/7/06) to Karen Gunderson, a harpist who ministers to hospice patients with her soothing music and great compassion (Grace Matters 8/27/06).

Because this radio ministry has been such a comfort and source of spiritual growth to me, and I believe it can be for others, I have donated a quantity of CD broadcasts to Holy Trinity Church Library. The CDs can be found in white binders located in the Library Kiosk in Fellowship Hall. Each binder contains 10-12 60 min. CDs, roughly arranged by the year in which they

were broadcast. They are great to listen to on the drive to and from work or in the evening when you are having trouble relaxing after a stressful day. You will be inspired by the wonderful people you meet on tape. Borrow them for yourself, share them with others, especially the homebound. And if, after listening, you are so inclined, send a tax deductible gift to Grace Matters, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago, IL. 60631-4101. Production and distribution of Grace Matters CDs and printed materials are entirely supported by its listeners.

### **Housekeeping Matters**

Spring inventory revealed over 30 books missing or overdue. Only a few have been returned since Sunday School closed in May. Please check your book shelves at home and return any library books you may have forgotten you borrowed.

Also, please do not drop off non-library books or pamphlets in the library or kiosk area. If you wish to give a book to the library, see me or leave a note with your name and phone number in my box outside the church office. Shelf space is limited. In building the collection I have followed Walter Wangerin's advice in Libraries Alive, publication of the Lutheran Church Library Association: "The best children's literature has the power to help young people deal safely with natural fears and eventual rites of passage. As a church librarian, don't feel limited to only those books with specifically Christian themes. Embrace good literature at large. Public libraries may also carry these titles, but they are not in relationship with young people in the way churches are. If children are welcomed into the library and immersed in good literature, these children will look to the church library, as they grow older, as a genuine and rich resource to be treasured." We have many wonderful books on our library shelves just waiting to be adopted, I would be happy to show them to you. ~- *Ellin Greene*

### **∞ EVANGELISM ∞**

The Evangelism Committee is preparing to welcome new members in the fall.

We have asked Council to approve monies from the Endowment Fund which we will use to purchase The Lutheran Handbook for each "new member family" beginning this fall.

In the fall at adult forum Pastor Arnie will lead a discussion about the Lutheran Handbook. All are encouraged to attend. (The date will be announced when it's firmed up.)

New member meetings are scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. Sept. 21. On that evening we will introduce ourselves and view the video "Luther in a Nutshell," which defines our Lutheran tradition.

The second meeting will be at 7 p.m. Oct. 5. Church Council members will introduce themselves and our various ministries to incoming members and their sponsors and refreshments will be served at the parsonage.

New members will be received by Affirmation of Baptism at the 5 p.m. service on Saturday Oct. 18 and during the 8:45 a.m. service on Sunday, Oct. 19. If you or anyone you know is interested in joining our family of faith, please see Pastor Mary or Pastor Arnie.

### **Looking Ahead to Retreat**

Our next women's retreat is scheduled to begin Friday evening, Sept. 26 and will continue through lunch time on Sunday, Sept. 28.

**Theme:** Opening the Book of Faith.

**Location:** St. Marguerite's Retreat House, Mendham, New Jersey.

**Cost:** \$162.99, which includes housing and the cost of the book "Opening the Book of Faith." (Three full scholarships are available.)

We ask that you make a \$25 non-refundable deposit to reserve your place. Please make your check payable to Holy Trinity and write "women's retreat" on the memo line. The balance is due by Sept. 14. Questions? See Pastor Mary!

## Project Linus

*"Under a blanket  
handmade with love,  
sleeps an angel."*

There is a great need for handmade blankets for sick and traumatized children. A blanket will comfort them and give them security. Can you help?

We also are asking for donations of new yarn, preferably 3-ply sport yarn. These need not be full skeins or the same color. Yarn and blankets can be left in the church office.

Our summer meetings will be at 1 p.m. on Mon., July 14 and Aug. 11 in the back *air conditioned* ☺ room. We welcome new members!

Please call Gloria Smith for more information: (732) 449-1942.

Thank you for your support!

## ☪ WOMEN OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN AMERICA (WELCA) ☪

Elisabeth Circle will not meet in July or August. Our next meeting will be at 10:30 a.m. Monday, Sept. 8. Gloria Smith will be our hostess and Ruth Beers will provide devotions.

We have collected more than 100 toiletry items for Seafarers International and will begin collecting items for health kits for Church World Services in the fall. All are welcome to join us.

On June 28 our church hosted the Executive Board meeting of the New Jersey Synodical Board of WELCA. Diane Guarini, Vice President was in charge of the arrangements. Our next state convention will be at Hope Lutheran Church, Freehold, on Sat., Sept. 27. Registrations are due by Sept. 15. Please take one posted on the WELCA bulletin board. We welcome all.

We have scheduled our annual picnic for Fri., Aug. 1 at the home of Diane Guarini, 1863 Cambridge Dr., Wall, starting at 6 p.m. This is open to all, not only circle members. Circle members: please call Ruth Walsh at (732) 528-7695; Nancy Smarr at

(732) 681-3369 or Louise Moenke at (732) 899-6846 and let us know what food you are contributing. Hot dogs and rolls will be provided. Others attending, please sign up on the picnic list posted on the WELCA bulletin board.

The Seventh Triennial Gathering of Women of the ELCA will be held in Salt Lake City, Utah, July 10 through 13. Holy Trinity attendees will be Diane Guarini, her daughter Cassie and Louise Moenke. We ask for your prayers for a safe journey for all and that all are strengthened and uplifted by this experience.

## Come & See What the WELCA Have to Offer

All women of Holy Trinity are invited to attend The New Jersey Synodical Women of the ELCA (WELCA) 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention Saturday, Sept. 27, 2008 at Hope Lutheran Church, Freehold.

The topic will be "Angels Among Us" Hebrews 12:2. The Rev. Mary Jane Hastings will be the chaplain and keynote speaker.

Please contact Laura Malta at (732) 267-1434 or [lbergenhead@access4less.net](mailto:lbergenhead@access4less.net) for additional information.

## ☪ WORSHIP AND MUSIC ☪

### Music Scholarship Opportunity

Each year Holy Trinity chooses one or more youth to receive a music scholarship endowed by Arno and Jeanne Schwarz. This year we have enough in our scholarship fund to award two \$500 scholarships. In order to be eligible to receive the Schwarz Music Scholarship, youth must be active participants in the music ministries of Holy Trinity.

Scholarships can be used for private lessons, music camps, workshops, or the purchase of instruments.

If you would like to be considered for the Schwarz Music Scholarship, please fill out the form below and return it to the church office no later than Friday, August 1. Scholarships will be awarded at the beginning of the program year in September.

(Please Detach and Return to the Church Office)

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parental Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Instrument/Voice  
Part (SATB): \_\_\_\_\_

I am an active member of:  
\_\_\_\_ The Holy Trinity Choristers  
\_\_\_\_ Joyful Noise  
\_\_\_\_ The Holy Trinity Choir

**A New Service Format and a New Vision  
for the Music Ministries of HTLC**

With the change in Sunday worship time comes a change in the structure of Holy Trinity's music ministries.

The 11:15 a.m. format utilized a cantor, or paid soloist, to lead the congregational singing. While this format works for many congregations without choirs, the focus of Holy Trinity is moving toward the use of choral ensembles to lead congregational singing at all services. This format involves people from all walks of life and has the potential to increase the overall participation in the music ministries of Holy Trinity.

Joyful Noise will continue to lead the singing on Saturdays and the Holy Trinity Choir will continue to sing at the 8:45 a.m. service on Sundays. The Cherubs, Choristers, and the Holy Trinity Choir will all rotate

through the 10:30 a.m. services each weekend.

You may be thinking, "But that's only three choirs, and there are four week ends in a month; sometimes five!"

That's exactly right! Here's where you, the person in the pew, get a chance to participate.

Have you always wanted to sing on Sundays but have no time during the week for rehearsals? Are your vocal recitals limited to the shower? Well, join the Sunday Singers, a new choir that will be starting in September.

We will meet at 10 a.m. each Sunday in the loft and rehearse the liturgical music and hymns for the service. Once we get that down, we will start building a repertoire of easy offertory anthems. The ensemble will be intergenerational.

Do you have a baby in the service? Hand him or her a rattle and bring them up to the loft.

You may ask, "What if I'm not a beginner or an expert?"

Well, if you listen closely on Sundays, there are no experts. We all have our - special moments ☺ (including me!). However, if you would like a challenge - a really fun and exciting challenge - I invite you to join the Holy Trinity Choir.

You may have noticed that I no longer refer to the Holy Trinity Choir as the "Adult Choir" or "Senior Choir." That's because the choir is no longer exclusively for adults. The Holy Trinity Choir is intergenerational. Our youngest members are in their early teens and our oldest members would hurt me if I gave out their birth dates! All ages from all walks of life come together each week to sing God's praises.

Please, come on out and join us. We would love to have additional members in all sections. We especially need altos (the ladies who sing harmony) and basses (the lowest male voice).

Speaking of basses, are you a guy who has thought about joining choir but always hesitated due to the lack of men in the loft? Well, take the plunge! Starting this fall we will have a bass section leader to

help you out. The role of the section leader is to be a vocal role model to the rest of the bass section. He will come to rehearsals fully prepared, knowing all the music in advance. He will help you learn the music quickly and give you pointers on how to hold your own in the choir. He will always be there. There will never be a Sunday where you're the only guy in choir!

(Wow, that was a ton of info!)

Yup! It all goes hand in hand with it being the end of the program year and having to relay a ton of information so we can start out strong in September.

Here are the basics:

- Holy Trinity has great musical potential and we need you!
- There are many ensembles for people of all ages to participate in.
- If you've never sung before, now is the time to start.
- If you sang a long time ago, now is the time to try it again.
- If you sing in the pew, then come sing in the loft.
- There are many dedicated people in every ensemble to show you the ropes and help you out.
- Every voice counts and comes together as an ensemble to sing God's praises.

So, while you're sitting on the beach this summer or enjoying a family vacation, don't forget about the upcoming program year and how you can help to make Holy Trinity's music ministries better than they've ever been.

In His Service,  
Ned Perwo,  
Director of Music

## Play Ball!

*Monday night, before a sell-out crowd at Beaver Dam Ballpark, the Trinity Troubles beat St. Paul's by a score of 6-2.*

*Whether you were there to see the game first-hand or not, we think you'll enjoy seeing the game from the perspective of Cyn "Nolan Ryan" Mussinan.*

Last week we had 15 hits in two games. Last night, we had 16 hits in one

game. Somehow, it still didn't feel like we were hitting. The defense, on the other hand, was stellar. In the first inning, the defense was Kaitlyn "The Rookie" McLaughlin, who figured in all three outs.

There were several strange things about last night's contest (how surprising!). First, was probably the attempt by Cyn "Nolan Ryan" Mussinan and Maggie "Spoke" Stulz, to be one player!! The idea was NRM would be the defense and Spoke the offense. That is to say that Spoke would be DH1[1]. This worked, in that it allowed us to play another player, but other than that, it didn't work out exactly as planned, i.e. Spoke was supposed to hit!! She had been hitting great. I guess this is what happens when you fall down and smash your entire side and then try to swing a bat!!

So, what else was unusual – hmmm ... How about Shirley AG "Amazing Grace" Hurley (the official scorekeeper and batters' best friend) studying nautical terms during the game? Wasn't that what they were doing? I heard AG say she had never heard the term "on deck" before or in the hold (maybe that was hole 2[2]).

Of course, we shouldn't forget Ney "The Say Hey Kid" Librizzi's attempt at evangelism. At least I think that's what it was. After bowling over the first baseman, she stopped to give her a big hug on her way to second. I'm not sure what she was doing – could have been apologizing or thanking her for the free pass to second!!

So, how did all of this happen? In the first inning, Kaitlyn was the defense. In the Troubles half of the inning, Joan PD Merritt led off with a single. After Kaitlyn lined out, JJ hit an RBI double to right. It's worthy of note that after this at bat, whenever JJ was up, the Methodists successfully applied the Carlos Delgado shift. 3[3]

Rachel "Fish Lady" Howell followed with an RBI single, and the Troubles were on top 2 -0. The Methodists failed to score in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>d</sup>. In the second inning, the

Troubles scored 2 runs with two outs. Susie "Lefty" Liggett singled to lead off and traded places with Spoke on a fielder's choice. Gail "The Soprano" Kave and PD followed with consecutive base hits to load the bases and set the stage for The Rookie's 2RBI single.

St. Paul's got their first run in the 4<sup>th</sup> on a booming fly ball that practically landed in the Idle Hour! JJ managed to hold her to a triple, but she later scored. The Troubles added runs in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, and the Methodists got their second run in the 6<sup>th</sup>, but went three up and three down in the 7<sup>th</sup> to end the game.

This really was a defensive gem by the Troubles. I can only recall one error. Also worthy of note is that "Dustbuster" may have set a record for laundry making. It seemed she slid into every base and dove for every ball; i.e., basically everything is back to normal!

Last night continued the Troubles' consecutive string of car trouble nights!! Last week PD/JJ/Mae's car failed to start until pushed by the opposing team. Last night this car again failed to start at the Idle Hour, but was again successfully push-started. Prior to that, Dustbuster had a flat tire!!

What's going on?

Next week will be a real test for the Troubles, as they will face Immanuel Bible at BDC ball park.

Come out and support your team!

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[1] DH or designated hitter is used in baseball in the American League. Typically this means that the pitcher pitches, but does not take a turn at bat.

[2] The "on deck" batter is the one up next. In the hole refers to the batter up after the on deck batter.

[3] Lots of footnotes here!!! Carlos Delgado is the NY Mets 1st baseman. Whenever he gets up to bat, the 3<sup>rd</sup> baseman plays short stop and all other infielders move to the right side of the field.

## ☪ CHILDREN OF GOD ☪

Holy Trinity recently welcomed the following children into the Body of Christ through the Sacrament of Holy Baptism:

**Names:** Noelle Marie and Grayce Nicole Washington

**Date of Baptism:** June 1

Noelle's and Grayce's parents are Bill and Lisa Washington. Noelle's sponsors are Kevin Kravantka and Linda Yarosh. Grayce's sponsors are Robert and Donna Kravantka.

†

**Name:** Jessica Breanne Mallue

**Date of Baptism:** June 14

Jessica's parents are Bob and Mary Mallue. Her sponsors are James and Caryn Carroll and Robin and Michael Murray.

†

**Name:** Dylan Thomas Heuer

**Date of Baptism:** June 22

Dylan's parents are Keith and Danielle Heuer. His sponsors are Brian and Leigh Heuer. He has a three-year-old sister, Emma, and a six-year-old brother, James.

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**Name:** Charlotte Emily Leonardi

**Date of Baptism:** June 22

Charlotte's parents are Andrew and Alison Leonardi. Her sponsors are Sean Rubino and Amiee Hamby.

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## ☪ REST IN PEACE ☪

Our prayers and thoughts are with the families who mourn the death of loved ones...

Edna F. Cuddy passed away on Tues., June 10, 2008. Pastor Arnie presided at Edna's memorial service in the Neary Quinn Funeral Home and interment at Atlantic View Cemetery on Sat., June 14.

Alice Conklin died on June 14. Pastor Mary presided at a memorial service for Alice on Sun., June 22 in the Pable/Evertz Funeral Home, Point Pleasant.

John Steele entered into Eternal Life on June 15. Pastor Mary presided at a

memorial service for John on Sat., June 28 in the Holy Trinity sanctuary.

### ☞ LOVE AND MARRIAGE ☞

Pastor Mary officiated at two weddings during the month of June. The happy couples are:

? Stacey A. Meredith and Scott Robinson.

Stacey and Scott were married on Friday, June 20. Stephen Robinson was the Best Man and Nancy Mallow was the Maid of Honor. Dot Meredith is the bride's grandmother.

? Laura J. Niclaus and Eugene Bradford Bejot.

Laura and Eugene were married on Saturday, June 21. Todd Bejot was the Best Man and Sandra Martinelli was the Matron of Honor.

### ☞ BEREAVEMENT MINISTRY ☞

On the first Sunday of each month, Holy Trinity offers bereavement support to those grieving a loss or a change of some kind. During July, August and September the group will meet from 8 to 8:45 a.m. Chris Ann Waters, author and nationally certified bereavement specialist, leads the discussion. Consecutive attendance is not required and people are welcome to attend as needed.

*Transitions* is a monthly devotional written by Chris Ann that addresses matters of grief and change. The June devotional was distributed as a worship bulletin insert earlier this month. It is printed below for the benefit of anyone who didn't have the opportunity to read it:

#### *Missed Calls*

*But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself; the Lord will hear when I call unto him. Psalm 4:3*

As Yankee Stadium nears its close at the end of this season, the nostalgia of the park seems all the more poignant. Earlier this year, I, along with a group of loved ones, enjoyed a tour of Yankee Stadium. The youngsters in our group could not wait to get there. For me (and the other adults)

the reactions of these young people were as interesting to observe as the highlights of the stadium. The boys were captivated by the locker room, press box, Monument Park, and especially the telephone in the dugout.

While all features of the park were interesting, for the young people there was a mystique to the telephone. They wanted to sit beside it and get their pictures taken, individually and as a group. It was fascinating for them to see the physical point of contact that made for changes on the field. It was comical to watch them role-play as though they were calling the shots! Captivated by the intrigue I witnessed in these young ones over the phone, I wondered if they would grow into the confidence that, as Christians, communication with God is faster and more profound than the kind that impresses them now.

Contact with God is constantly available. His heart is always open to listen. Anyone, at any time, can call on God to share a happy thought, release a burden, ask for guidance, call on Him in silence due to life's pains, or to say *I love you*. He hears. He answers. Nothing pleases God more than to be a part of the lives of those He created. He watches from a distance the details of each life, and welcomes the communications that make Him a part of the daily routine and extraordinary life events that transpire.

God knows that extraordinary life events that occur can be so paralyzing they prevent one from reaching out to Him, and disable one from inclining a spiritual ear to His voice. He understands. Changes and challenges that can make one feel burdened include the death of a spouse, parent or friend. The death of a child can leave one speechless for years. A divorce, an illness, a matter too complex to discuss as well as a myriad of other transitions and strange life-places that make God seem distant and one too weak to pray, are gripping realities. Loss of one's faith, voice, spirit, and hope often come as a result of such pain. God sees.

Even though life's pains are overwhelming, they need not be faced

alone. God is there. He wants to hear from us. At all times. He is waiting but we must initiate the call. Maybe all that one can muster is simply folded hands, kneeling quietly, making the sign of the cross or saying *God*. However small and simple the effort, God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, fills in what is transmitted. Trust that. The Holy Spirit is more powerful than is obvious. He is active in the unseen and unheard. He will fill in the gaps. But He needs the smallest seed of faith to initiate the call. Although seemingly weak, this little effort is a call placed to God. Without these starts, there are but missed calls; missed opportunities to bring God into fellowship and relationship in life's circumstances.

Leaving Yankee Stadium that day, I knew that from now on I would smile to watch the Yankees play and see *the telephone* on camera. I also knew it was—it is—my prayer that these boys would grow into men whose faith would absorb them rather than have the world and life absorb their faith. I prayed, as I pray for all, God would not suffer from their absence because of missed calls to Him; calls God waits to answer.

Lord, throughout the familiar and surreal experiences of life, You are there. Thank You for Your presence in our lives even when pains are difficult to bear and calls to You are not made. Holy Spirit, help the saints to include God in our daily thoughts and actions via prayers—slight or long. We call upon You, Holy Spirit, and trust You to gather the tiniest morsel of faith and grow it into a deeper and more meaningful bond with God. In Christ our Savior, Amen.

~~ *Chris Ann Waters*

## ✂ MAILBAG ✂

Peter was chained and imprisoned by Herod. While he was in prison the church prayed fervently to God for help.

While Joe and I were ill the church prayed fervently to God for help, and we received it abundantly.

Unfortunately, Peter did not receive the roast chicken dinners, pasta, salads, sandwiches, desserts and soups that we received from friends at Holy Trinity.

Lord, we give you thanks for the gift of Christian love and friends at Holy Trinity. May God continue to bless us all.

Forever grateful,  
Ruth and Joe Walsh

Dear Holy Trinity,

Thank you so much for the thoughtful care package. It came just as I was getting ready for finals and really put me in a great mood. I look forward to seeing you all this summer.

Thanks again,  
Patrick Davis  
Tulane University