

PASTOR'S PEN

Dear Holy Trinity Family and Friends,

Out shopping the other day, I saw a giant display of flower bulbs: tulips, daffodils, snowdrops, crocuses, in all the shades of the rainbow and more. They seemed out of place during this season of Jack o' lanterns and blazing maple leaves. They reminded me, though (good marketing!), that this is exactly the right time to prepare for a colorful spring.

We're doing that budget-wise, too. In the autumn we "build" a budget for the coming year; we plant the seeds of ministry which will blossom in the future. The estimates of giving for '07, offered at the end of October, let us know what we will have to work with financially. God gives the harvest, but we purchase much of the seed with our offerings.

Jesus commended the little lady who put a couple pennies into the temple treasury ("the widow's mite"). "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on" (Luke 21.3-4). What God asks of us is to give in proportion to what we have received. God doesn't compare my offering to anyone else's. God simply sees what I give in comparison to what I have received. When I look at my own life, what do I see? Are my hands as sticky as fly paper or as no-stick as Teflon? Is my bank account like the Dead Sea, with a personal inlet but no charitable outlet, or is it a river with money flowing both in **and** out, meeting my own needs but **also** helping to meet others'? The witness of the written Gospels is that Jesus peeked into people's pocketbooks as a window into their hearts. He felt their wallets spoke more eloquently than their words. As with the famed widow, though, it wasn't the amount they placed in the treasury but the wholeheartedness with which they placed it there that counted.

We heard a powerful and devastating Gospel on the second weekend in October, in which Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10.25) I've heard that in the past and convinced myself it didn't apply to me because I'm not Bill Gates or Oprah Winfrey. Now I realize I am rich indeed: rich with God's blessings, with food in my fridge, a roof over my head, a meaningful vocation, the ability to read, a family to love and be loved by (including you!).... In a world in which so many lack food, faith, hope and freedom, we are indeed wealthy. Therefore, many of the blessings we have received from God's hand are earmarked for others.

I pray that each of us grows to the point of feeling holy satisfaction in the time, talent and treasure we give to our faith family and its Gospel ministry. Have we committed to a healthy, helpful pattern of giving regularly because the work of the Church goes on 365 days a year, whether or not we happen to be present on a given weekend, whether or not we have a child in Sunday School, whether or not we are involved in church extra-curriculars? Do we realize that the visible community is **here** for those who are **not yet** here? That it is **our** responsibility to communicate with folks who haven't yet heard Good News? That our church membership isn't simply the comfort and convenience of having a church home for family baptisms, weddings and funerals? That daily discipleship means more to Jesus than membership?

Thank you for prayerfully considering an estimate of giving commitment to our Holy Trinity family, if you haven't yet done so. Even and especially if you have never made that written commitment before, please take the leap of faith. Next year's staffing and the extent of our various ministries are riding on your ability and willingness to do so.

Mother Teresa is known for never asking people for money, but simply saying, "I'm giving you the opportunity to do something beautiful for God." Ditto!

In Christ, who became poor to make us rich,

Pastor Mary Virginia Farnham

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Library

Children's Book Week begins on Monday, Nov. 13. This national celebration was first observed Nov. 10 through 15, 1919, and came about through the combined efforts of Franklin K. Mathews, then chief librarian for the Boy Scouts of America, book editor Frederick G. Melcher, and Anne Carroll Moore, first superintendent of work with children for The New York Public Library. These three, dynamic leaders recognized the importance of introducing children to the pleasure of books and the parents' role in encouraging reading.

Reading to children does make a difference! Studies show that at age 6 a child who has been read to from birth has an average vocabulary of 20,000 words. By contrast, the six-year-old who has had little experience with books in early childhood has an average vocabulary of 3,000 words.

Each year, the Children's Book Council, an association of children's book publishers, commissions a different artist to design a poster. The theme of the 2006 poster, designed by Jules Feiffer, is "More books, please!"

Be sure to visit our library kiosk in Fellowship Hall. There you will find books for adult reading, including *Uplifting Christ Through Autumn: Sermons for the Fall Season*, by Pastor Michael D. Wuchter, as well as a sampling of children's books from the Sunday School library. Enjoy!

~~ Ellin Greene

The Prison Angel

A book review by Pastor Mary

The Prison Angel: Mother Antonia's Life of Service in a Mexican Jail is a wonderful and inspiring read! Available in paperback and just 229 pages in length, it takes only a modest investment of time and money to "meet" the

woman called the Mother Teresa of Tijuana. We Lutherans believe that each of us is both saint and sinner at the same time. We know what "living saint" means, though, and Mother Antonia surely qualifies. The fact that she's still alive, grew up near Hollywood, married and divorced twice and has seven children makes her more "like us" than any other friend of Jesus I've read about in a long time.

Part of this book's appeal is that it is well written. The husband and wife authors, Mary Jordan and Kevin Sullivan, are Pulitzer Prize winning journalists. Their style is crisp, their word choice is simple but evocative, and their pace is rapid. I never wished they'd cut to the chase because I was getting bored. I finished the book in record time, mostly because I couldn't put it down!

Mother Antonia (Mary Clarke) is one of the most likable people you'll ever meet in the pages of a book ☺. Hers is the story of miracles: the miracle of her overwhelming compassion, boundless energy, inextinguishable hope and transforming faith, and the miracle of the Roman Catholic Church's acceptance and affirmation of a twice-divorced American who is now the foundress of an order called "The Sisters of the Eleventh Hour."

After reading this book you'll feel like you've personally walked the corridors, flinched at the smells and sights inside La Mesa Prison in Tijuana. Over the last 30 years Mother Antonia has shone with Christ-light in that place, dispelling some of its darkness and heartening many of its inhabitants, prisoners and guards alike. At the risk of her own life, she has stepped in when jailers abused prisoners and when prisoners started uprisings. She has slept in the same abysmal conditions as the residents, with raw sewage running directly beneath the floor of her cell. She brought in an orthodontist to create smiles and a plastic surgeon to correct cleft palates. She helped to shepherd some institutional reforms. Most importantly, she has brought faith, hope and love to people sorely in need of it.

If the topic of forgiveness interests you, you'll find Mother Antonia's take on the subject thought-provoking, since it's vintage Jesus. Along the way she's visited assassins, the leaders of drug cartels, and other denizens at

the bottom of the ethical food chain. Offended to hear that she was offering pastoral care to these people, one official challenged her, "Mother, is Christ a drug trafficker?" She answered, "Yes, and he is a *federale* [federal law enforcement agent] too." Mother Antonia has comforted the families and attended the funerals of innocent victims of the drug wars. She has also gone to the morgue to bless the bodies of murderers. She recognizes all as the beloved children of God for whom Christ died.

Amazed at the comfortable life she left behind in California for a cold water cell in Mexico, someone commended Mother Antonia's altruism. She brushes away such compliments: "I don't think of it as a sacrifice. It's only a sacrifice when you do something you don't want to." She is an incredibly good-humored, joyful Christian who explains, "I think prison freed me."

If you'd like to "check out" Mother Antonia both figuratively and literally, we have a copy of this book in our church library! It's also a great gift for anyone who enjoys biography, current events, criminal justice, and/or inspirational reading.

To learn more about Mother Antonia before you read the whole book, check out Pastor Mary's September 24 sermon on our website!

EVANGELISM AND STEWARDSHIP

Mission Interpretation How Money Becomes Ministry:

Finding Community and Friendship through Lutheran Campus Center

"Every day, Emily Long would sit at the same table in our coffeehouse, her laptop computer ready, a book open and off to one side. But she would seldom actually work on anything. Most of that time she simply stared out the window – for hours on end.

"It wasn't like I was a "super pastor," with extra-sensory vision into the heart or anything like that. Depressed college students are common enough. But they often hide,

seemingly ashamed, and rarely actually seek help.

"Yet, this one was hard to miss. She had bright red, curly hair with pretty eyes that seemed to have no sparkle. Occasionally she would look up, smile weakly, and then stare out the window some more. Over several days, with a gentle approach, we eventually were able to converse. Of course, she was depressed, but she finally decided that we might actually be able to talk about it.

"She was lonely (summer school is terrible that way), grieving the death of a loved one, and wondering if God hated her or forgot her or something like that. After many chats, referrals to a counselor and a doctor, she started to get involved in some projects we happened to be doing at the time. From that, she became interested in our ministry.

"Once school started, she found real, intimate community and friendships at the Lutheran Campus Center at Winona State University, Winona, Minnesota. She still comes to study, but what a change! There is fire in her eyes to match her flamboyant curls! She is a leader and reliable worker in this part of God's vineyard. Her faith is renewed. Clearly, the Holy Spirit has worked another quiet miracle."

This story appeared in "Making Christ Known," a publication of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The magazine highlights some of the many ministries sponsored solely by the ELCA or in partnership with other organizations. From Sunday school teachers traveling by canoe to remote villages on the Amazon to inner city food programs to campus ministries, we as individuals and as a congregation can help Make Christ Known. Let us keep all students and children in our prayers, especially those most in need of Christ's love.

Holy Trinity gives 15 percent of offerings to the New Jersey Synod. Fifty percent of that is sent to ELCA, which partners with many others to accomplish ministries in the U. S. and abroad. In the coming months, I will highlight more of the programs that you support.

-- Carla Conaty

The Retreat Was a Victory!

Learning the basics of Tai Chi Chih was a new experience for most of the 23 Holy Trinity women and their friends who retreated to Mendham Sept. 29 through Oct. 1. Retreat leader Sr. Gerri Contento is a certified spiritual director and Tai Chi Chih instructor, as well as head of the Office of Faith Formation at St. Mary of the Lake Roman Catholic Church in Lakewood. Sr. Gerri helped us to center ourselves through guided meditation, music, and prayerful movement/reflection on God's love of us. She fit right in ☺, enjoyed our fellowship, depth of sharing, worship style and sense of fun. We especially appreciated Sr. Gerri's gentle and welcoming ways, her sense of humor, engaging teaching style and quiet yet strong faith.

This annual women's retreat is a wonderful chance for women to meet new friends, connect with "old" ones, step aside from the usual responsibilities and time pressures of our lives, and be refreshed by Sabbath time away. We eat meals family style, and are treated to a constant supply of cookies and fruit! Each of us has our own bedroom, small but cozy. The grounds are beautiful, and weather-permitting we take long walks together or alone, and prayerfully walk the labyrinth, set into the lawn. The sisters of the Community of St. John Baptist, our hosts, invite us to evening prayer in their chapel, and we celebrate Holy Communion in the retreat house chapel on Sunday morning, extending the geographic reach of our faith family!

Pastor Mary is in the process of booking the retreat house for the last weekend in September of '07. All women of the community and their female family and friends are welcomed to join us. Stay tuned for more details.

SOCIAL MINISTRY

A Tree Grows in Fellowship Hall

A Christmas Giving Tree will be on display in Fellowship Hall the first weekend in December. Choose an ornament from the tree and purchase a gift according to the directions written on the tag. Unwrapped gifts, with the tag attached,

should be dropped off in the church office by Dec. 17. Thank you!

Giving Thanks

Please help us fill baskets with turkeys and trimmings for needy families' Thanksgiving tables.

Donations (food and monetary) will be accepted from Oct. 30 through Nov. 19. Place turkeys in the freezer in the boiler room downstairs. Monetary donations will be used to purchase items such as pie, butter, etc. (Please write a check made payable to Holy Trinity, with "Social Ministry" on the memo line.)

WORSHIP AND MUSIC

NU Cranberries for Lent

An update on

Evangelical Lutheran Worship

Augsburg Fortress, the ELCA's publishing house, has already started the *third* printing of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, the new primary worship resource for the ELCA. That's how high demand has been. Holy Trinity has been a part of that.

On Sept. 26 Holy Trinity ordered 175 copies of the *ELW* (which comes to 210, since every five orders earned one free copy) to fill the pews in our sanctuary. Demand has been so high, however, that the delivery date has been set for the middle of January!

Obviously, this puts a damper on our plan to inaugurate the new books for Advent.

Worship & Music has set the start date for the new books as Feb. 21, 2007 (Ash Wednesday). The old *LBW* will be retired on Transfiguration Sunday. (As previously planned, those who donated the *LBW* will have the opportunity to collect the copy or copies they donated in the following days.) On Ash

Wednesday the *ELW* will be used both for liturgy and hymns.

Starting with the First Sunday in Lent we will use the *ELW* for liturgy and hymns at both the 8:45 and 11:15 a.m. Holy Communion services. There will be no worship booklets for these services. *Now the Feast* will continue to be the liturgical setting for the Saturday 5 p.m. Holy Communion, and those booklets, newly reproduced, will continue to be the Saturday evening liturgical resource.

Holy Trinity still welcomes donations of the "Nu Cranberry Book." As this Lamplighter goes to press, Holy Trinity members and friends have purchased 184 copies. Our ultimate goal is to obtain 300 pew editions for the sanctuary, choir loft, choir room and overflow crowds on Christmas Eve, Easter Sunday (and the occasional blockbuster wedding!) The price remains \$20.

On Sunday, Nov. 12 Worship & Music is hosting a special coffee hour and adult forum at which we hope to have available advance copies of the *ELW* for you to see and some of the liturgical music for you to hear. All of the money received for that coffee hour will go toward the purchase of new books.

-- *Pastor Leitzke*

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

Soup's (almost) On!

Dinner, devotion and worship will be on the menu when Advent Soup Suppers are served Wednesday, Dec. 6, 13 and 20.

Please join us! Volunteer to set up, clean up, or bring a salad, meat or vegetable on the sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall.

Devotions will be based on "Circle of Love" by Caroline Pignat. The circle consists of faith, hope, joy, peace and love, symbolized in various ways for the Advent season.

The Bible tells us in Jeremiah 17:7-8, "Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose trust is in the Lord. They shall be like a tree planted by water, sending out its root by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does not cease to bear fruit."

One of the signs of hope and promise we see is the evergreen tree. Even in the middle of winter, snow covered, the green tree gives us promise that spring will come soon. Jesus' birth on the first Christmas was a sign of the promise of new life. The evergreen tree is a symbol of God's eternal love.

-- *Karen Astrom*

Let's Party!

We're planning a party to celebrate Martin Luther's birthday from 6 to 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 10 in Fellowship. All are welcome! Sign up on the Youth and Family Ministry bulletin board in Fellowship Hall.

Veteran's Day

On Veteran's Day we honor men and women who served or are currently serving in the armed forces. These put their lives on the line so we can enjoy our freedoms. Sometimes we take our freedoms for granted.

Thinking about Pearl Harbor and September 11, 2001 often helps people feel grateful.

The Bible tells us in Galatians 5:1, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then and do not let yourselves be burdened again by the yolk of slavery."

Just as Jesus sets us free spiritually, our military maintains our civil freedoms for us.

Some members and friends of our congregation are serving our country in the military. A card or letter can remind them that we are here for them. Please keep in touch from time-to-time.

Their names and addresses are:

Lieutenant Richard Johnston
(Navy Chaplain)
14E Keklico Court
Goose Creek, S. C. 29445

Chaplain (LTC) Mark Farnham
5 Osborn Ave.
Manasquan, NJ 08736

Midn. 3/C Joshua Foxtan
P. O. Box 12396
Annapolis, MD 21412-2396

Midn. 1/C Samantha Foxtan
P. O. Box 13853
Annapolis, MD 21412-3853

We are also proud to say Samantha Wilson and Sean Wilson are in the military. If anyone can supply their contact information, please forward it to the office.

Are we missing someone? Please let us know!

Please keep the men and women in the armed forces in your prayers, especially on Veteran's Day, Nov. 12.

~~ Karen Astrom

Memories to Treasure

The Luthermania "Pirate Adventure" trip to Treasure Island on Oct. 13 was " ... a big hit," said coordinator Allison Morgan.

Twenty-seven Holy Trinity youth and four chaperones were ferried to their destination by water taxi. On the island, the group was given treasure maps and eye patches. The 'pirates' dug for treasure on the beach, hiked and enjoyed goodies.

"A great time was had by all!" said Allison.

Many thanks to Allison for her loving labors and joyful enthusiasm, serving our youth and our Lord ?

W. E. L. C. A.

Our Circles were busy in October preparing for the November Christmas Bazaar. Check with the Circle Leader about November meeting dates. All women are welcome to join us!

Elisabeth Circle meets Monday at 9:30 a. m. For more information, call Louise Moenke, (732) 899-6846.

Circle of Hope meets Saturday at 9 a.m. For more information, call Nancy Smarr, (732) 681-3369, or Karen Jeffray, (732) 223-8355

Louise Circle will meet at 7:30 p.m. Nov. 13 in the room behind the kitchen in Fellowship Hall.

All women are welcome to join in fellowship and service. For more information, call Ruth Walsh, (732) 528-7695.

Trinity Crafters meet at 10 a.m. every Tuesday in the room behind the kitchen in Fellowship Hall. For more information, call Ronnie Reed, (732) 701-1160.

Blanket Statements

During the month of October, the Trinity Blanketeers delivered 81 blankets to Project Linus.

Thank you to all who contributed their time and talents making afghans and quilts that will provide comfort to fragile children.

Please join us in our mission! We meet once a month in the room behind the kitchen in Fellowship Hall. The date and time will be posted in the bulletin, or can be obtained by calling Gloria Smith, (732) 449-1942.

~~ Gloria Smith and Emma Olsen

Women to Women

Join us for a women's community Christmas Worship Service at 11:30 a.m. Dec. 5 at St. Andrew's Church, Spring Lake. An ecumenical luncheon will follow. For more information, please call Gail Rizzo, (732) 528-7819.

MAIL BAG

A heartfelt thank you to the Property Committee and Nearly-New Clothing Sale helpers who worked so hard to transform Fellowship Hall into a "reception hall" for our 25th Anniversary celebration.

We are very grateful to our Church Family for their prayers, moral support (cooking and clean-up) and good wishes given to us every day and especially at our Vow Renewal Celebration on Oct. 7.

God bless you,
Kerry and Bob Hudson

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(Cindy Markus shares this poem, written by Romanus Eiman, Grade 9, Otjiwarongo High School, Namibia, Africa. Cindy and her team visited the school this summer, the high school, met with teachers and observed the students as they took their exams).

I Am A Street Kid

Yes, I have seen you laughing at me
As I ate food from the dustbin.
I have seen your look of disgust
And even heard you say yuck.

To you, I am like litter thrown to the dustbin.
But have you thought about why I live on the street?

Why the street is my classroom?
Think about it, I survive on begging, waving motorists into parking areas, washing cars.
Once upon a time I had a name, my own one
Now me and my friends have the same name,
"Street kid."

I was abused by parents and relatives.
HIV/Aids left me an orphan, defenseless
against the world.
Poverty, drought, floods, neglect led me to the streets.

Life has left me nowhere else to go.

I have friends on the street.
We have lots of things we share:
Hunger, fear, lack of shelter,
Sleeping in cardboard boxes.
I long for a warm, clean bed, warm food, love
of my own name.

I long for you to laugh with me, not at me.
But who will lift me off the streets?
Remember, I am tomorrow's leader,
I, who have learned about life from the streets
and having become streetwise.

Please patronize the
W. E. L. C. A. Christmas Shoppe
9 a.m. TO 3 p.m.
Saturday, Nov. 4 in Fellowship Hall

Fill your shopping bag with crafts, jewelry,
baked goods, toys, Christmas
decorations...

Fill your belly with our delicious food, soup
and desserts ...

ALL proceeds will be
donated to local charities!!

Volunteers needed to set up, decorate,
and work the day of the sale.

To sign up and for more information call
Ruth Walsh, Ronnie Reed, Nancy Smarr
and/or Louise Moenke

Holiday Happenings

The next issue of The Lamplighter will be published December 9.

Yes, sadly, that is two whole weeks later than you would expect to pick up your Lamplighter but the good news is that we expect the December Lamplighter to be packed with news about events taking place at Holy Trinity during the Christmas season.

Please submit your Lamplighter contributions to Diane by e-mail (diane@holytrinity-nj.org) or drop them off in the church office. The deadline is Nov. 10.

Thank you!

