

Temple Talk

Stories to Tell & Gifts to Share *Graceful Living*

October 11th and 12th, 2008

My Brothers and Sisters, we have so many stories to share this year. Pastor Arnie accepted our call and became ordained. Ned blessed us with glorious music and invigorated our worship. We saw baptisms, weddings, and funerals. Many projects were completed, but many more remain in progress.

Last week we heard from Catherine Schwier Mencer. She told us her story. Catherine was baptized, confirmed and married at Holy Trinity. Her children now attend Sunday School. Holy Trinity is part of her life and her life is part of Holy Trinity. Without this church Catherine would be a different person.

But it isn't just Catherine. We are *all* changed through this community of Faith. During services we hear the Good News that God forgives us and loves us despite our sinful nature. Through Christian Education, we study scripture to understand His Word revealed. With Faith *in* Our Savior, we walk together as a community *of* faith, sharing the Gospel beyond the walls of this sanctuary. Through Holy Trinity we change to world.

How do we do these things?

We do them through the ministries of this church. God showers us with gifts of grace that fill our lives. He gives us hope. In response, we can make the *choice* to joyfully share God's gifts and to act as the hands and feet of Jesus in this world. We can care for the sick. We can forgive the sinner. We can feed the hungry. The Holy Spirit calls us to this work not in some far off Never-Never Land but *right now* at *this* Feast of Thanksgiving.

Holy Trinity asks for your time, your talents, and your treasure. We need them all to continue the work begun two thousand years ago at Calvary. In a few minutes, the Offering will be collected. When we raise that offering before the Altar, we offer our small sacrifice in thanksgiving for all the gifts of God. This house of God needs each of our sacrifices.

Like every household, our church family has bills to pay. We keep the lights on, buy insurance, and maintain our buildings. We pay salaries. Escalating energy prices affect Holy Trinity just like it affects your own household budget.

But don't think about church expenses, think, *instead*, of the church's ministries. Your offering makes Holy Trinity possible. You bring the cherub choir to life. You comfort the sick and dying when the Pastors visit. You share the Good News through outreach to our community. You baptize the children. Without your gift, this piece of heaven would dry up and blow away like the autumn leaves.

Consider increasing your sacrifice this year. Some congregation members tithe or give even more than 10%. On behalf of Church Council, I personally thank you and acknowledge that without your sacrifice so many of Holy Trinity's ministries would cease.

Also remember that your pledges are between you and God. They are completely confidential. No one will ever approach you, saying you did or did not meet your pledge. Give a pledge in thanksgiving, knowing God blesses your whole life. If you have questions about the pledge process, ask me or any other member of Council.

I ask you all to pledge, because this will help our budget planning for next year. Without your pledge, we will plan to do less. Your pledge, no matter what it is, will make the Council's job *much* easier. Pledge not because you have to, but because God's overflowing blessing allow you to.

Pledge not because *I* ask you, but as *your* commitment to the Christ.

I give not to pay for *my sins*, but out of overwhelming gratitude that *He already paid* for my sins. Your pledge will expand the Ministries of Holy Trinity. Without your pledge, the Youth and Family Ministry director will remain just a plan and our current programs will be cut back. These candles will go out. That organ will go silent.

Jesus transforms us from the desperation of sin to the glory of life everlasting. We become His partner as we use our time, talents, and treasure

for His sake. Write your story of grace and faith with Holy Trinity in the coming year.

Consider the 116th Psalm,

What shall we render to the Lord for all his benefits to us? Let us take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord.

Stand firm with Holy Trinity this year. Live your life Grace-fully. March with this congregation, without doubt, without fear, certain that we are precious in the sight of the Lord and sure of His Plan for us all.