



TRINITY TIMES

MAY 2007

Trinity Episcopal Church

Trinity Episcopal Church
484 Lime Rock Rd.
Lakeville, CT 06039
Telephone: 860.435.2627
Fax: 860.435.4794
www.trinitylimerock.org
trinity@trinitylimerock.org

Office Hours:
12:00 noon - 4:00 PM

The Rev. Dr. Robert Clements
Vicar

Linda Lloyd
Senior Warden
Alexis Dorf
Junior Warden

Geoffrey Brown
Clerk
Martha Nesbitt
Treasurer

Al Dorf, Bob Reid
Assistant Treasurers

Christine Gevert
Organist/Choir Director

Denise Lancto
Sunday School

Danielle A .Gaherty, *Parish Administrator*
Lisa Brennan, *Bookkeeper*
Jeff Silvernale, *Grounds*
Junior Wright, *Sexton*

FROM THE VICAR'S DESK:



In the midst of the welcoming, the accommodation to new leadership and worship styles, the adjustment to having a part-time vicar as opposed to a full-time rector, there has been a lingering question. It is not an uncommon one. In fact, it is a question that is sprinkled throughout the New Testament. It is asked in the Acts of the Apostles, the first Epistle to the Corinthians, and the Gospels of John and Luke, especially in the physician's thirteenth chapter.

The question is, "What then must we do?"

It's certainly a question that a lot of Christians are asking these days, not only because of the national or world situation, but because to some it seems like the rudder on the vessel of mainstream Christianity has fallen off. Old forms are being surrendered, yet are not replaced with anything of similar or greater grace, verve, or joy. Certainly, the Episcopal Church has changed. There are the superficial changes wrought by updating worship materials, including the Book of Common Prayer, and by attempting to interlace secular ideologies into the Church's public witness, but there are also changes far less easy to identify. Or to address.

As is historically the case with junior clergy, when I was first ordained I was put in charge of various evangelism programs initiated by the national church to be implemented at a diocesan level. These were responsibilities that senior members of the clergy usually avoided, and for good reason as they were time consuming and unpopular. My experience was that most of the Episcopalians in my diocese found the term "evangelism" distasteful and equated it with Christians who were from the South, or who didn't worship with a well-phrased prayer book, or who weren't politically "evolved". Evangelism programs were treated with a wariness usually

reserved for stray radioactive waste.

At the time, in the 1980's, there were approximately 3 million practicing Episcopalians in the United States.

Some years later, in the early 1990's, I sat in the cafeteria of Berkshire Medical Center with the new evangelism officer of the national Episcopal Church, who was a seminary acquaintance visiting my wife while she recovered from neuro-surgery. As we sat over acrid cups of coffee, the evangelism officer spoke of her new job's potential and her excitement about it. The Church needed to be built up, we agreed, and the way to do that was through newer translations of scripture and prayer, new types of hymnals, new expressions of political ideology. In fact, so serious had we all become about the need for vivid witness, that the national Episcopal Church labeled the 1990's the "Decade of Evangelism".

By the end of 1999, there were 2.6 million worshipping Episcopalians in the United States.

In the autumn of 2006, I was at a diocesan headquarters for reasons I have forgotten. Someone in authority was talking generally about the imminent failure of so many small congregations in the Episcopal Church. Actually, this person was talking about some specific congregations, as well. There was no mention of aging demographics, "post-denominational" realities, or the lack of real interest on the part of diocesan leaders in the needs and desires of small congregations. There was blame, though, leveled at the small parish clergy and lay leaders. "They just don't respond to our evangelism programs", a diocesan official said.

In 2006, there were 2.3 million worshipping Episcopalians in the United States.

Now, I'm not one who relishes identifying shortcomings in others [or in me, come to think of it], but after twenty-five years of experiencing workshops, forums, conferences, focus groups, meetings, talks, discussions, consultations, deliberations, committees and task forces, all dedicated to parish growth, I

had become more convinced than ever that the best way for a small congregation to grow was to avoid generic, formalized programs designed by remote agencies and distant leaders. To quote my favorite college philosophy professor, sometimes "everything you know is wrong."

Of course, there was no way for me to test that theory. After all, I was an interim rector. My interest in parish growth was limited to blocks of twelve to eighteen months. Then, a week later, I received a call from the senior warden of Trinity Church....

Father Rob

Next Month: The second of three parts about our future, our growth potential, and a possible response to the question, "What then must we do?"

THANKS!



The day was cool and overcast, but the good humor and participation were high as we raked, swept, picked up debris and generally tidied up Trinity's grounds after the snows and winds of winter. We now have a bright and shiny face to welcome family and newcomers as they return or visit our parish.

Special thanks to those who prepared a delicious lunch of soup, sandwiches and pastry for hungry workers! We are thinking of changing our mission statement from "Offering Companionship on the Way" to "Offering Food for Body and Soul"!



We are most grateful to Steve Fitch who brought 4 1/2 yards of stone as well as his Bobcat and who did the work of ten (maybe 20?) workers with shovels in fixing the driveway after the depredations of the winter.

Finally, here's to Judy Brown, our buildings and grounds chairperson, who makes sure that everything runs as it should at Trinity!

We are often quick to notice a pothole or a burned out light bulb, but we aren't generally aware of everything that *does* work properly at Trinity. Judy is the one responsible for our smooth operations, with the assistance of sexton Junior Wright and grounds manager Jeff Silvernale. Thanks to all three of you!

SUNDAY SCHOOL



After an interval of several months, Sunday School has resumed under the direction of Denise Lancto. Denise is assisted by a rotation of parents, and welcomes anyone else who is interested in the religious education of our children! The children are learning the tenets of our faith along with enjoying crafts and activities which relate to the lessons of the day.

At the Peace, the children join the adults in church for the celebration of the Eucharist and the final hymn and prayers.

If you have a child or grandchild of Sunday School age, please speak to Denise or the Vicar about your young person's participation.

SUNDAY SOCCER



Trinity's third year of Summer Sunday Soccer will resume on June 10 under the leadership of coach Geoff Brown and his team of assistants.

After an opening prayer, the children practice soccer skills and form mixed age teams for scrimmage. They break in time for joining the rest of the congregation at Holy Eucharist.

We believe that it is important for our children to know that God is present on the soccer field (as well as every other part of our lives), and not only in the church building on Sunday. All Trinity children, their friends,

neighbors and visiting cousins are welcome to join the soccer players each week, weather permitting. Each participant will receive a t-shirt identifying him or her as a member of the Trinity program. To sign up or for further information, call Geoff at 860-824-0640.

SAVE THE DATE!



On Tuesday, May 22 at 7 pm we will host the American Boy Choir of Princeton, NJ. This is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy choral music at its best, right here in our own church! The boys will be joined by Chorus Angelicus of Torrington. Please plan to come and bring friends and neighbors as well.

Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$8 for children and students. The cost of bringing the choir to us has been underwritten by members of the Vestry, so all proceeds from the evening will be available to advance the ministry of Trinity Church.

Please contact event coordinator Tom Schindler to secure your place for this highlight of Trinity's spring musical season!

ANNUAL MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND TAG AND BAKE SALE RETURNS MAY 26!



Hallelujah! It's the annual tag sale, that glorious opportunity to get rid of (mmm...make that "offer others the chance to acquire") some of the stuff that has been accumulating around your house. Personally, I have a whole section of the basement devoted to gathering tag sale items all year!

Co-chairs Ginny Dildine and Trudy Washburn would love to have your used books, bric a brac, kitchen items, no longer wanted toys, gently used furniture, and costume jewelry. Please, no clothes, shoes

or purses! Tag sale items may be dropped off in Walker Hall at any time.

Remember too the tag sale theme "If it belongs at the dump, take it there!" What we cannot sell has to be loaded into cars and taken to the transfer station, so please help minimize that part of the sale!



Alice Tweed (860-435-2058) is heading the bake sale portion of the day. As Senior Warden Linda Lloyd has noted, it is better to tell Alice what you would like to bring than have Alice tell you what to bake! Cookies, pies, brownies, cupcakes, confectionary bars and sandwiches for bicyclists passing through are all popular.

We will also need folks to set up the week before the sale and to work during the day between 10 am and 2 pm. Please let Trudy (860-824-5894) or Ginny (860-824-7455) know what times you are available.



After the tag sale, we will re-assemble at Trinity at 6 pm for the Annual Memorial Day cookout and summer kickoff dinner! Al Dorf will be grilling steaks (if you'd rather have something else, he will gladly cook it for you) and participants are asked to provide all the potluck and side dishes. This is always a fun event—extended family and friends are welcome, of course!



THOUGHTS FROM THE TRACTOR

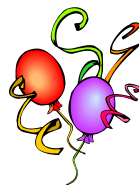
Having recently made some choices about potential new ministries in my life, I have been musing on the subject of choice in general. As a species, we have been making choices from Day One (or maybe Day Eight).

Eve chose to take a bite of the fruit offered her by a fast talking serpent. Adam chose to

share it. Noah chose to build an ark on dry land when the long range forecast was for sunny and hot. Abraham packed up his extended household, which was probably the size of a small village, and set out for an unknown land on the say so of God. Jesus chose to walk the walk to Calvary. Paul opted to follow the instructions given him in his vision on the road to Damascus rather than ask his doctor for some anti-hallucinatory medication.



I believe our interpretations of the parables that Jesus told are informed, to a great extent, by the current situations in which we find ourselves. I have always seen the story of the prodigal son as a story about a father's love and generosity. But I think it is also a story about choices. The younger son chose to go to "a far place", and his father chose to finance the undertaking. As part of the growing up process, we also may need to go to "a far place". It may be geographically distant or perhaps spiritually or emotionally distant, but we need to go there in order to begin to find out who we are. I think the father understood that.



The son seems to have lived the high life and after a while realized that his new "friends" hung around only so long as the money held out. He found that wine women and song (or whatever the first century equivalent was) were not what he really wanted or needed. The "more" he was seeking was not where or what he thought it was.

Our young man was now faced with a choice: stay where he was in a position with slim prospects for promotion (slopping pigs was sort of an end of the road job for a Jewish boy) or go home, embarrassed and ashamed, apologize and ask to be taken in. Somewhere along the line of our lives, I think we have all been there!

The son practiced his presentation as he trudged, defeated, along the road ...and

was met by a father who refused to hear it. Instead, his father chose to let his son skip that whole mortifying piece of the return and welcomed his child with open arms and a feast. The party the father gave was not a recognition of his son's accomplishments, achievements or return from a long trip (although in truth it was a long journey home), or anything tangible. It was simply a celebration of his son's return home at many levels.

In a mature parish, we "welcome home" everyone who comes in our doors (front or back!) There need be no explanation of where we have been or why we have decided to return; God's generosity and hospitality are there to greet us.

The "more" that we seek, we all come to find out sooner or later, is not in acquisition of material goods, status or worldly recognition, which can disappear as quickly as they are gained. Rather, that "more" is to be found in the recognition that we are God's

beloved children and thus brothers and sisters of one another, members of a community that accepts us for who and what we are, not what we have or don't have.

We celebrate that corporate life each week in both Eucharist and coffee hour. Do you know someone who wants to come home but doesn't quite know how? An invitation to join other members of God's family at Trinity may be just the grace that is needed.

Whoever you are, wherever you have been....welcome home!

Alexis Dorf



TRINITY TIMES
MAY 2007

address correction requested

TRINITY CHURCH
484 LIMEROCK RD
LAKEVILLE, CT 06039