



TRINITY TIMES

JUNE 2007

Trinity Episcopal Church

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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

Lisa Brennan, *Bookkeeper*
Jeff Silvernale, *Grounds*
Junior Wright, *Sexton*

FROM THE VICAR'S DESK:

What Then Must We Do? Part II of III



"My diocese began a new evangelism program a few years ago. Every parish was supposed to increase its Sunday attendance by ten percent. Most of our congregations are in small towns where manufacturing was once a key industry. Those days are gone. Unemployment is high and the younger families are moving to other parts of the country. All I saw in the neighborhood [of the parish] were "For Sale" signs. No one was moving in and lots of people were moving out and I was supposed to increase membership by ten percent. [The clergy] were even asked to sign a pledge promising that we would. After a year, all of [the rectors] reported increases in attendance and membership."

I heard the tale above from an acquaintance in a diocese other than ours. When I asked him how all of the parishes in the diocese were able to increase their membership and attendance, despite job loss and decreases in population, he was wonderfully honest. Without a trace of guilt, he said, "We padded our records with extra numbers." As an aside, he added, "The diocese decided to discontinue that evangelism program the next year."

Evangelism is a troubling word for many, including members of the church establishment. In part, this is because few people know what it really means. This may explain why far too many evangelism programs seek only to boost attendance and membership numbers, as if the only way to recognize an increase in faith and spiritual confidence is quantitatively measured by numbers scribbled in a parish register. To build upon what I wrote last month, it seems the more often the

Episcopal Church, through its various programs and agencies, worked to increase numbers, the more often it failed. The "Decade of Evangelism" in the 1990's noted the loss of more than 200,000 members.

The word "evangelism" is, like many words in the English language, from the Greek. *Euangelion* [εὐαγγέλιον] originally referred to the reward that was given to a messenger when he brought good news. It is not difficult to see how the definition expanded once Christian theology was introduced through the Greek language, especially as the four titular men of the Gospels became commonly referred to as evangelists.

Since the 1st Century, the definition has continued to expand to include all those who proclaim the Good News and receive the reward of the messenger which, in the Christian context, is eternal reconciliation. As Jesus commands us in Mark 16:15: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation." Clearly, the duty of the messenger is one that is shared by all Christians as all of us are to be, in our own way and according to our own talents, evangelists.

Unfortunately, that scripture quotation doesn't give us a very specific formula for what we are to do, and it doesn't help when the church establishment seems a little confused by it all. Not only is evangelism usually, and incorrectly, identified as a measurable increase in numbers, but the word itself has become politically radioactive in its secular usage. When I said "evangelism" to some Episcopalians with whom I was speaking last year, they recoiled. "I always thought evangelists were the people who did this", said one, sticking his hands in the air, waving them about, and exclaiming "Waaaaaa!"

Then again, that approach could become the next official Church evangelism program.

As anyone who has worked with a growing congregation would know, before an increase in numbers there must be an increase in viable and creative programming.

Before programming may be effectively engaged, there needs to be a foundation of educated faith. After all, if we don't know why we do what we do, it is difficult to encourage people to be a part of it.

Next month's Trinity Times will offer the third and final of these meditations on Luke 3:10, as we consider how small parishes, such as our own, may offer the key to the Church's future.

Father Rob

FROM THE VESTRY

After lengthy consideration of Trinity's financial situation, the Vestry has decided to discontinue the position of temporary administrative assistant. We are grateful for Danielle Gaherty's faithfulness to this ministry, especially during a time of transition.

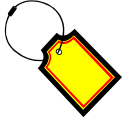
The administrative office will now become the finance office, and the volunteer room will continue to house *Crescendo!* and the various volunteer activities. Special thanks to Jane Lipton who has been reorganizing the volunteer room to better serve its new purposes.

WELCOME, AMANDA!

We are pleased to welcome Amanda Fleming, a rising sophomore at Hobart and William Smith college, as our summer intern. Amanda is Rob's niece, and will be helping out with various tasks at Trinity. So...if you see an unfamiliar young woman at church, take a moment to introduce yourself and welcome her to our community!

**TRUST
ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS
THEY ARE YOUR SOUL
CHANGING DIRECTION**

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL TAG SALE



Kudos to all those who brought, baked, ate, sold and supported our annual Memorial Tag and Bake sale. Under the leadership of Ginny Dildine, Trudy Washburn and Alice Tweed, we netted a little over \$2000.00. Bravo!

That evening we enjoyed the annual Memorial Day picnic, with steaks grilled by Al Dorf and John Lloyd and all the sides contributed by parishioners. When we say "hospitality" at Trinity, we mean it!

AN EVENING TO REMEMBER



The first visit of the American Boy Choir training choir to Trinity was a great success! The boys were joined by the girls' choirs of Chorus Angelicus in Torrington and together provided an evening of memorable music to all those who attended. Streaming video is available, courtesy of Webmaster Geoff Brown, through the Trinity website.

Thanks to all who hosted the boys Tuesday night and had them back at Trinity early Wednesday morning in time to leave for their next concert, and to the Vestry members who provided dinner for all the children. Special thanks to Tom and Susannah Schindler, who provided a whole flock of roast chickens for the meal!

Proceeds from the concert were about \$1600.00 after expenses, and will benefit Trinity's ministries in the Northwest Corner.



SUMMER SOCCER RETURNS!



Over 40 children and adult coaches have signed up for our third year of summer Sunday soccer. (You'll know them by their purple soccer t-shirts on Sundays....)

This important outreach and evangelism ministry provides an opportunity for our young people to know that God is in the community meeting on the field to play soccer as well as in the community meeting for liturgy Sunday morning. Too often we think that God is only to be found in a church building, when in truth God is everywhere, all the time, in God's creation.

Thanks to Geoff Brown for organizing the program, and to all the parents and adults who have offered their services as coaches!

NEW OFFICE HOURS



Please note Trinity's new office hours:
10 am to 1 pm, Tuesday-Friday

Monday the office will be closed.

Rob will be available by appointment anytime Wednesday through Sunday.

\$\$\$\$ KEEPING UP \$\$\$\$

While many of us will be away this summer enjoying vacations and visits to other places, Trinity will be open and needing to pay its bills!

Please make sure that you are current with your pledge before you leave. It would be wonderful as well if we could all remember to remit our payments before we depart!

INTERMISSION....

We are suspending our popular *Friday Night at the Movies* program during the summer months. With the long evenings of light in summer, we need to take advantage of the opportunities to enjoy outdoor activities!



Please be thinking about what films you would like to screen this fall, and let Linda or Alexis know your preferences. We will resume in September, so hang onto the popcorn 'til then.



**DON'T FORGET THE
ANNUAL INVITATIONAL
ART SHOW!**

OPENING RECEPTION AUGUST 25

OPEN EACH DAY 12-4

CLOSES SEPTEMBER 3

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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