



TRINITY TIMES

DECEMBER 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:
Tues.—Fri.
10 am –1 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

Lisa Brennan, *Bookkeeper*
Jeff Silvernale, *Grounds*
Junior Wright, *Sexton*
Alexis Dorf, *Trinity Times*

FROM THE VICAR'S DESK:



"The holy is first of all experienced as present. It is here and now, and this means it encounters us in a thing, in a person, in an event...No piece of reality is excluded from the possibility of becoming a bearer of the holy."- Paul Tillich

It took me a long time to finally articulate why I liked Christmas so much when I was a child. It wasn't because of the presents, although that certainly didn't hurt. Nor was it chiefly because of the family visits or the seasonal food or the vacation from school. The best part of Christmas was going to church. There was something I could not yet define in the music, the late liturgies, the children's choir and acolyte rehearsals. It was the one time of year where people seemed to be aware of what the blessings of the incarnation could mean for a community of worshippers.

There are certain vexing commonalities among congregations. I have never known one not to have a small representation of the parish serve as the leaders of most of the activities, which causes frustration on the part of the few and complaints from the many. I have never known parishioners not to have squabbles with one another, the parish staff, or the rector. It seems in every church there is at least one choir member making faces at the preacher's back during the sermon. Every congregation I have known, as either worshipper or pastor, carries with it the terrible burden of past disappointments: a change in liturgy, a change in music, a change in clergy, a change in the supplier of the poinsettias, the change in the light bulb used to illuminate the Christmas star on the Jesse tree, and other important moments such as these that warrant decades of grouching.

My home congregation was no different. Yet at Christmas all of that seemed forgotten in the midst of the busy-ness of preparing for the many liturgies that took place from the Fourth Sunday of Advent until Christmas morning, not to mention the decorating, caroling, hymn sings, and pageant. It was exhausting, I guess, but I don't ever remember being tired. Everyone seemed to have something to do, from the youngest member of the parish, who usually played the role of the infant Jesus in the pageant, to the eldest, who would ring the church bell at the conclusion of the "midnight mass". Because of that, no one had time to be disappointed or cynical or sour. Even as a child, I found it noticeable that the greatest gift of Christian community was having something to do and a place in which to do it.

Contrast that activity with what Christmas has become for many in our society who consider simple attendance at a concert or carol sing or performance of "A Christmas Carol" the summit of seasonal expression. As if seated, passive and inert, in a theater seat or church pew for an hour or so is an appropriate reaction to the great gift that we have received. No wonder the clinical and pharmacological address of seasonal unhappiness is a growth industry.

After generations of the prophets coming forward to present God's word to the people in all of their pungent and confrontational glory, the birth of Jesus was to be God's final prophetic intervention in human history. For all that had been shared and heard before, from Abraham and Moses to Isaiah and Elijah, all now reached its *denouement* in the birth of an infant: the perfect nexus of the divine and the human. Not only are we now able to have a shard of God in us as surely as we are in God, but so we are able to alter our labors from mere activity to that which is prayerful and uplifting and always reflective of divine favor. When that is our understanding, it is also our delight, as it liberates us from the common, the passive, the vindictive, and the worldly.

I would encourage the members of the parish to find involvement not only in Trinity

Church's Advent and Christmas activities, but also to find ways to transform daily labor and work into that which is a form of prayer. I would also, no matter the season, have you remember how much there is to do, or could be to do, at our parish, especially if we are to truly embrace the gift of Christmas and find for ourselves a role that responds to our world and grants us a security in the Kingdom.

Father Rob

CHRISTMAS AT TRINITY

Our four week season of preparation never seems to be quite enough! Here are some ways you can help...



If you wish to make a donation towards the Christmas flowers, please make out your check to Trinity with **Christmas flowers** on the memo line, thus insuring the crediting of your gift to the flower committee. If your gift is in memory of departed family or friends, please advise the office by leaving a note in the lucite box outside the office. Kindly **print** the name(s) of those whom you wish noted in the Book of Remembrance, along with your name.



The Greening of the Church will take place on Dec. 16 after the 10:30 service. This is a significant undertaking for Trinity and your help will be greatly appreciated. There are wreaths and candles and bows to be placed, and the Nativity scene to be arranged—please join us in decorating our church to welcome the Christ Child.



In the midst of all our busy-ness during Advent, it is appropriate to remember those whose Christmas gifts are minimal, if any. Outreach coordinator Cheryl Duntz has recommended neighbors in Falls Village as the recipients for our program this year. Small gifts for the elderly, such as toiletries, sta-

tionery and stamps, and jams and jellies are particularly appreciated Gifts should be wrapped and marked whether for a man or a woman. Cheryl will also have clothing sizes for children in families in need. **Please deliver all gifts to Trinity by Dec. 16**, when they will be blessed and then distributed. Thank you for remembering those who too often are forgotten at this time of year.



Christmas pageant rehearsals will begin on Saturday, Dec. 1 at 2 pm and continue each Saturday from 2-4 pm in the church. There is always room for more small animals, shepherds and townspeople! Please speak

to Geoff Brown (860-824-0640) or Denise Lancto (860-435-0716) if there is a young person in your household who would like to participate. The pageant will take place on Sunday, Dec. 23 at the 10:30 service. Please remind friends and family that the pageant takes place during a worship service and that flash photography is not appropriate at that time. "Photo ops" will be available before and after the service.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

**MONDAY, DEC 24
AT 5 PM AND 10 PM**

**TUESDAY, DEC. 25
AT 9 AM**

THANKS!

To Lynn Gaffney, AIA, for her 3 part presentation on being "green" both at home and in the greater community. Lynn was the first one in Trinity's Robertson Alford Memorial Lecture series, and she has set a high bar for those who will follow!

To all who participated in our "Feed a Family of Four for a Day" Thanksgiving program for

the OWLs Kitchen.

To John Lloyd and Jeff Silvernale, who installed our new sign on Dugway Road. The new design offers an opportunity to invite the community to our worship services as well as other activities.

ATTENTION COMMITTEE HEADS!



We would like to have the Annual Report available ahead of the Annual Meeting on Jan. 27. Please submit your report -by email, preferably—to the office before noon on Jan. 17. Thanks!

THOUGHTS FROM THE TRACTOR



"That's it. This has got to stop."

As I contemplated the huge pile of gifts beneath the tree in our living room last year, I was overwhelmed by the sheer volume of *stuff* for parents, children, grandchildren, in-laws, out-laws, siblings and friends. I thought about the hours and hours I had spent trying to find something new, something different, that would please people who already had just about everything anyone could ever want, much less need. Instead of welcoming Christmas, I had begun to dread it – all except the baking part, which has always been my favorite.

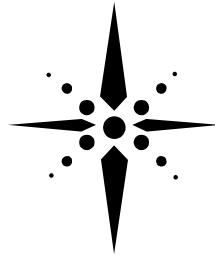
Thus it came to pass that in October of this year I sent out what my family calls an "urbi et orbi" email. I advised children, grandchildren, in-laws, etc. that this year each of them would receive a small stocking stuffer type gift and a contribution in their name(s) to the charitable organization of their choice.

I was amazed at the enthusiasm with which this idea was received. Our son, who has a child who was born with a cleft lip/cleft palate, asked for a contribution to Smile Train, which repairs facial deformities around the world. A city daughter requested a gift to City Harvest, which feeds the hungry in New York. A daughter with a baby requested a gift to a newborn intensive care unit. Another daugh-

dation, which repairs obstetric fistulas in young African women. There were requests for community foundations and for small rural community hospitals. Even our grandsons, age 6, were quite specific about the Heifer Fund! In turn, asked what my choice would be, I recommended the Women's Opportunity Fund, which makes micro-loans to women in third world countries so that they can start their own businesses.

We are all hugely relieved of the burden that Christmas giving was beginning to impose upon us, and pleased with the idea that others, who have nothing or next to nothing, will benefit from the blessings we have received. It is my prayer that the gift of the baby born in Bethlehem will be reflected in our giving this year.

-Alexis Dorf



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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484 LIME ROCK RD.
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