

TRINITY CHIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE TRINITY REFORMED CHURCH

MARCH 2009

the holy catholic Church

“But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus *you are all children of God* through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are *one* in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise.”

-Galatians 3:25-29 (emphasis added)

Church is hard work.

Oh, I know I need to be careful putting work and church too closely. Our Protestant ethos informs us that even the Church is a gift from God. We don’t work for gifts. “Saved by grace through faith” and all that. “Not a result of works, so that no person may boast.” Etc. Nonetheless, Church *is* hard work.

And let me be clear. I’m not talking about church as Sunday morning worship, as in “we go to church.” We don’t *go* to church. We *go* to worship. Or we *go* to meeting. Nor do I mean the building that we spend much of our time and energy on, beautiful and important as it may be. The Trinity Reformed Church is not a building. Our habit of directly connoting church with building or with ceremony or ritual is a terrible inaccuracy that contributes to a weakened version of us living out our faith. Church is not somewhere we go, it is something we are. The Church is not a place; it is a people. You are church. I am church.

Church is the gathered community, called from every people, every tribe and nation, across all time (universal, the little “c” in catholic church means universal), to be a family—the family of God. Paul’s language in explaining the church to the Galatians is not simply metaphorical or figurative. He really means it. Paul’s “you are all children of God” message to the Galatians is just as relevant for us. We are all God’s children too. And as such, if children, then offspring and heirs according to the promise to Abraham; but implicitly just as important, sisters and brothers one to another. We are sisters

and brothers! The church is one family. And this oneness, this unity of faith far surpasses all the considerable differences that are present. Therefore Paul says, “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are *one* in Christ Jesus.” Here Paul uses a little hyperbole—a bit of exaggeration—to get across the reality that our unity in Christ far outweighs our very real differences. For obviously, gender still exists. There are still women and there are still men. Ethnic identity still exists. There are still Jews and there are still Gentiles. But the unity that they share as one family is so much more.

But to return to my original statement, Church is hard work. It is hard work because family is hard work. Unity is hard work. Many of you have experienced a very good family life. But many others, perhaps most of us, have experienced family life where brokenness is present—broken marriages and relationships, sibling rivalries, the list can go on. Our Church family is no different. Brokenness exists there as well. And brokenness exists in each of us as individuals too.

Church is hard work. But it is the work to which we are called. Work to love where there is hate; work to heal where there is brokenness; work to bring justice where there is wrong; work to bring peace where there is chaos. This is the work of Christ. We are children of God, after all, doing God’s work.

During the month of March we will be in the season of Lent, traditionally a time of personal prayer and fasting, a time of preparation as we journey with Jesus on his way to the cross and ultimately, the resurrection of Easter. I invite you during this season of Lent to faithfully do the work of Church. Perhaps you’d like to join with other brothers and sisters on Wednesday evenings for a time of prayer, study, and fellowship. Perhaps you’d be able to join with the wider church in our community on Tuesday, March 3rd for an ecumenical worship service of prayer at Our Lady of Miraculous Medal. Perhaps you’d be interested in working at the new soup kitchen down the road at the United

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Our vision is to help people find New Life in Jesus Christ!

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Presbyterian Church. While I certainly encourage you to practice a personal observance of Lent—be that in committing to a special time of prayer or fasting and giving up something—I hope you will also observe Lent as part of the church family. It may be hard work. But it is good work, God’s work.

In Christ’s Grace and Peace,

Pastor Tom

Keep the Conversation Going

Pastor Tom has started a blog related to life and faith. If you would like to participate, please go to:

<http://tomgoodhart.wordpress.com>

LEBEN UND DENKEN von Albert Schweitzer.

“Mein Grossvater Schillinger (evangelischer Pfarrer) war ein Eiferer fuer Aufklaerung gewesen. Er hatte noch ganz den Geist des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts an sich. Nach der Kirche teilte er den Leuten, die ihn auf der Strasse erwarteten, die politischen Nachrichten mit and machte sie auch mit den neuesten Entdeckungen des Menschengestes bekannt. War etwas am Himmel zu sehen, so stellte er abends vor seinem Haus das Fernrohr auf und liess jedermann hineinschauen.

Da der katholische Pfarrer auch noch von dem Geiste des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts beherrscht war, lebten die beiden Geistlichen in den nachbarlichen Pfarrhausern in bruederlicher Eintracht zusammen. Hatte der eine mehr Besuch als er logieren konnte, so brachte er ihn im anderen Pfarrhaus unter. Ging einer auf Reisen, so kam es vor, dass der andere auch die Kranken der anderen Konfession besuchte, damit sie nicht ohne geistlichen Zuspruch blieben. Wenn am Ostermorgen der katholische Pfarrer aus der Messe kam und zum Osterschmaus eilte, oeffnete mein Grossvater das Fenster und rief ihm seinen Glueckwunsch zum Ende der Fastenzeit zu.”

Installation Service

The Classis of Queens, Reformed Church in America, will officially install Rev. Thomas C. Goodhart as the pastor of Trinity Reformed Church at a special worship service on Sunday March 15, 2009 at 4:00 p.m. Please plan on joining us for this wonderful occasion in the life of our church family. A time of fellowship will follow after the installation service.

Music Program

The Ridgewood Glendale Sunday School Association is sponsoring a music program on Sunday March 22 at 2:30 p.m. at Ridgewood Presbyterian Church located at 5914 70th Ave. The church is behind the bank on Forest Ave. near Myrtle. There will be praise songs, individual instrumental selections, “Name That Hymn,” and an old time hymn sing. Refreshments will be served afterwards.

Come and join us for an enjoyable and entertaining time.

Church Treasurer

After many years of faithful service, Peter Trautmann has retired as our church treasurer. We thank him for all the work he has done making sure that our church staff and bills got paid on time and that reports were prepared for Consistory and the annual congregational meeting. Fortunately he will remain as a member of our Finance Committee.

We also want to thank Maureen Carvin who has volunteered to be our new treasurer. Her banking experience will serve her well and we appreciate her willingness to help out.

New Members Class

We are considering offering a new member’s class for anyone who might be interested in becoming a member of Trinity Reformed Church. If you are interested in joining Trinity or have any questions about what is involved, please speak with Pastor Tom.

Lenten Weekday Program

On Wednesday evenings during Lent (March 4, 11, 18, 25, and April 1) we will have a time of reflection and fellowship starting at 7:30 p.m. Please join us.

Soup Kitchen

Deacon Sands from St. Matthias Church recently spoke to our congregation about St. Matthias' food pantry and soup kitchen which provide food for the homeless and hungry in this neighborhood. They are planning on expanding their program to the United Presbyterian Church on 60th Place near Metropolitan Ave. where they will serve evening meals to the homeless several times each week.

Our Consistory has been considering the possibility of Trinity participating in this project by volunteering to serve two nights each month at the United Presbyterian Church to prepare a meal, serve it, and clean up afterwards.

If this sounds like a ministry that you would like to get involved with, please speak with Pastor Tom.

Community Ecumenical Lenten Evening of Prayer

Tuesday, March 3rd, 7:30 P.M. at Our Lady of Miraculous Medal (62-81 60th Place). "Arabian Nights: Saint Paul and the Holy Spirit" will be a meditative worship service inviting us at the beginning of our Lenten Journey to accompany Paul to Arabia where he reflected on his new-found faith in Jesus. All are invited and welcome!

Worship Schedule for March

March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 —Regular Worship Schedule
10:00 a.m.

Wednesday Service— March 4, 11, 18, 25 at 7:30 p.m.

Installation of Rev. Thomas C. Goodhart
Sunday March 15 at 4:00 p.m.

- * Communion will be celebrated on March 1
- * Prayer Meeting each Sunday at 9:00 am
- * Junior Church each Sunday at 10:00 am