

TRINITY CHIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE TRINITY REFORMED CHURCH

NOVEMBER 2011

Joe's Question

"Pastor, can I ask you a question?" Joe asked me less than five minutes before the worship service was about to begin."

"Umm, sure..." I rather hesitantly replied, choir members mulling about the narthex around us preparing to circle up shortly to pray prior to the organ prelude.

"Well, it's sort of involved." Joe responds (with respect to him, Joe is not his real name).

Jostled by one of the Sunday School teachers who has her own immediate concern to share with me I interject, "Perhaps it can wait till the end of worship?" to which Joe is completely satisfied.

The Sunday School concern dealt with, the organ prelude begins, I join hands with the choir members as one of our elders leads us in prayer, and the last few stragglers get to their seats before the service commences. But now, sort of overshadowing in my mind I wonder, "what is Joe's question and why is it so important?"

Maybe a little background would help. Joe is what I can only describe as a true man of God and a blessing! He is kind and generous and was a tremendous support to me, his pastor. Although technically, he was not an official member of my previous congregation. His wife was, but he had "theological differences" that in his mind, for the time being, precluded him from officially joining. But in practice—spiritual, financial, and physical—Joe is fully a part of our church. So much so, that he and I regularly met for breakfast at least once a month where we would share and pray for one another. It was during these times of sharing where we discovered, as much as we both love God and follow Jesus, Joe and I do not necessarily see eye to eye with one another. Joe is by his own account a fundamentalist in his Christianity, quite conservative, a devout evangelical with pretty solid Pentecostal beliefs. I on the other hand am not a fundamentalist but espouse a solidly mainline Protestant perspective. While I very much appreciate Pentecostalism and am glad for its contribution to Christianity and even in my

own faith formation, I'm firmly in the Reformed camp. Whereas we both are evangelicals, I am unabashedly a liberal evangelical. Therefore, Joe and I have a differing of perspectives. But for all that we disagree about, we have far greater agreement in what we hold in common—the firm conviction of the power of the Gospel, of the way of Christ, and the reality of God's grace and truth. And with the importance of the church living that grace and truth out!

Which brings me back to that Sunday morning worship service and Joe's question. The morning went rather "normally." Following the benediction I greeted folks as they left the sanctuary on their way to coffee fellowship and again met with Joe, having wondered in the back of my mind the entire time, "what is his inquiry?"

"So Joe, now that we have a little more time, what was your question?" I asked him.

He responded, "Oh, you already answered it!"

"Really?"

"Yes. During the children's message!"

The gospel lesson for the day had to do with the Great Commandment. You know: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And love your neighbor as yourself. In the gospel story according to Luke, reciting these commandments leads one of Jesus' audience members to ask a further question, "and who is my neighbor?" Jesus answers that by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan. That's the one about how some sad fellow finds himself robbed and beaten and left for dead on the side of the road. Fortunately, you might think, two devout religious types walk past where he lays. But in seeing him, they purposely keep on walking and ignore him. Now it should be pointed out that this fellow—as is Jesus, as are all the folks in Jesus' audience—is Jewish. This is important only in the severe contrast of the third person to walk past our poor beaten half-dead lying in a ditch guy. Because the third

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

person is a Samaritan—a people with similar religious and cultural background as Jesus and his people, yet generally despised by them. And yet it is the Samaritan who helps the poor beaten down Jewish fellow, going out of his way to provide assistance. And Jesus asks, who was a neighbor to the man who fell into harm.

The children's message that day included the parable of the Good Samaritan and it also included how we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, including and especially those "neighbors" who are not necessarily like us. Kids may not understand all the complexities of what a Samaritan is, but they certainly understand that sometimes one kid will pick-on another kid that is different or that sometimes some children are excluded. Sometimes even, they have been the one excluded. Sometimes even, they have been the one to pick-on the other.

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.
- Romans 15.7

Which brings me back to Joe. "What was your question, Joe?" I asked. He responded that his wife had a co-worker—let's call him "Brian." Brian had recently gone through some difficulties in his life. He had grown up in the church, but had not participated in organized religion for a number of years. And now at this point in his life, he felt he needed church again. The thing was, he had recently visited another local church where it was made very obvious that he was not welcomed there. Brian was gay. Joe and his wife believing that all people need God in their life, and that all people need God's people too, that is the church, they wanted to invite Brian to our church. But the question was, "Would Brian be welcomed here?"

In hearing the children's message, in hearing the gospel lesson, Joe knew what the answer should be. Yes! We should welcome him.

Obviously, Joe and I would have further conversations and we would not always agree with one another and we would not always understand in the same ways. But what we both believed was that Brian—and for that matter, any and every person—should be welcomed in Christ's church.

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Tom

Crop Walk Update

Fifteen people from four area churches including nine people from Trinity Reformed Church participated in the CROP Walk sponsored by the Ridgewood Glendale Sunday School Association on October 1. Our church raised a total of \$1,645 for Church World Service and we wish to thank everyone who walked or contributed. Special thanks again this year to Hanna and Theo Hessenius who secured three generous donations from organizations that they belong to.



Church Directory

Our church recently purchased new computer software that will help us better organize our membership information and it also has the capacity to produce membership directories. We will shortly be making a new and up-to-date directory which will include our members' and friends' addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses. The directory will also include photographs of our members and friends which we will be taking during the coffee hour fellowship each Sunday for the next several weeks. Plan on stopping by so that your photo can be taken and included in the directory.

Frauenverein/Ladies Aid Cake & Rummage Sale

The Ladies Aid/Frauenverein will hold their Cake & Rummage Sale on **Sat., Nov 19th** from 10:00am to 2:00pm. They are in need of volunteers to help the day of the sale and to help set up the week before the sale. If you can volunteer, even for just a few hours, please contact Margot Groezinger or the church office. Please spread the word and come support the sale while enjoying your favorite home-baked goods. We all know how delicious they are!!!

Gebet

Halte zu mir, guter Gott, heut' den ganzen Tag;
 Halt' die Haende ueber mich, was auch kommen mag.
 Du bist jederzeit bei mir, wo ich geh' und steh'
 Spuer' ich, wenn ich leise bin, Dich in meiner Naeh'.
 Gibt es Aerger oder Streit und noch mehr Verdruss
 Weiss ich doch, Du bist nicht weit, wenn ich weinen muss.
 Meine Freude, meinen Dank, alles sag' ich Dir;
 Du haeltst zu mir, guter Gott, spuer' ich tief in mir.

Stand by me, gracious, loving God, throughout this coming day;

Uphold me by Thy powerful Hand, whate're may come my way.

At all times Thou art with me, should I but go or stay;

In silence deep I realize Thy nearness when I pray.

Thou art especially near me in trials, stress and fears;

In every trying circumstance I see Thee through my tears.

My deepest joy, my heartfelt thanks to Thee I now impart;

I feel Thy Presence ever near and deep within my heart.

translated by Rosemarie Walz

Stewardship and Finance Report

<u>Expenditures for Month of:</u>	<u>September 2011</u>
Personnel Expenses	8479.00
Utilities	1386.00
Ministry/Supplies	0.00
Maintenance	340.00
Spiritual Life/Outreach/Advertising	0.00
Other Disbursements	3288.00 **
Total Expenditures	\$13,493.00

<u>Receipts for Month of:</u>	<u>September 2011</u>
Weekly Envelopes	5502.00
Weekly Plate	105.00
Benevolences	362.00
Memorial Fund	15.00
Special Offerings	491.00
Other Receipts	5000.00 *
Total Receipts	\$ 11,475.00

** Taxes and Insurance paid

* Transfer of funds from Benevolent Fund

Because a number of bills came due and there were insufficient offering envelope donations, we had to transfer \$5,000.00 from the Benevolent Fund to the General Fund to meet expenses.

Prayer and H.A.L.O.

by Karl H. Kurtz

I feel that when you focus your prayers and pray frequently about a specific issue you help to magnify the request. I recently prayed and fasted for prosperity. A week later I received a blessing (not a large sum, but I still was blessed). A co-worker named David asked me about my prayer life. I told him that I used to attend the prayer group and now pray mostly in the morning. Currently we both pray before the start of the work day and at the end of the day. "As Iron Sharpens Iron" (Proverbs 27:17) God is working in both of us through the strength of prayer.

H.A.L.O. is a military term that stands for "High Altitude Low Opening". It is a team of specially trained individuals who jump from approximately 25,000 feet during a military invasion. They are followed by paratroopers who jump from a few thousand feet followed by an air assault repelling from helicopters two to three hundred feet off the ground. The final group is an air mobile unit which lands on the ground. These different groups working together bring about the success of the maneuver.

I feel that prayer can be focused in the same way here at church. The Pastor and Vice President of Consistory offering prayers are like the H.A.L.O. team. The prayer groups and both the current and greater Consistory are like the paratroopers, the Sunday School and Vacation Bible School are the air assault group, and the members of the congregation praying as a group in church and as individuals at home are like the air mobile unit. Praying together we can accomplish great things.

Prayer can also be compared to steeping tea. My wife Laura dislikes a cup of tea when the bag is removed too soon. The flavor of the tea is increased when you wait and dunk the tea bag up and down. A problem or issue steeped in prayer will have a better outcome.

Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for the December issue of the *Trinity Chimes* will be November 20. If you wish to have something included, please get it to Bill Voges, our editor, on or before that date.

Worship Schedule for November

November 6, 13, 20, 27 – Regular Worship Schedule
 10:00 a.m.

- Communion will be celebrated on November 6
- Prayer Meeting each Sunday at 9:00 a.m.
- Junior Church each Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

November 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3 UPC Soup Kitchen 4:00 pm	4 UPC Soup Kitchen 4:00 pm	5
6 Worship Service with Communion 10:00 am Daylight-Saving Time ends	7	8 Consistory Meeting 7:30 pm	9	10	11	12
13 Worship Service 10:00 am	14	15	16 Frauenverein/ Ladies Aid 1:00 pm	17	18	19 Frauenverein/ Ladies Aid Cake and Rummage Sale 10am – 2pm Couples and Friends 6pm
20 Reign of Christ Sunday Worship Service 10:00 am Last day for newsletter submissions to Bill Voges	21	22	23	24 Happy Thanksgiving!	25	26
27 Worship Service 10:00 am	28	29	30	<i>Their Daily Bread</i> collection 1 st . Sunday of each month	Prayer Meeting Sundays 9:00 am	Junior Church Sundays 10:00 am