

# TRINITY CHIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE TRINITY REFORMED CHURCH

OCTOBER 2011

## Bee Music

A soft hum. Almost like music. That's what it was like as I ate my lunch outside today sitting on the patio behind the parsonage in the churchyard surrounded by a purplish-blue blaze of autumn blossoming asters. The hum however, obviously, was not coming from the flowers, but from what the flowers attracted—a multitude of bees! In my short time of watching them I observed at least four different species—pretty cool for our little back yard and focused on one plant type! All coming and going, alighting on a bloom, collecting the nectar, dispersing with pollen, with each bee so purposeful in her work, pressing on towards the goal.

And what is her goal?

Well, the bees that I observed were all worker bees and their job was to collect nectar as well as pollen and to carry those substances back to her hive. There, generally speaking, in small part the pollen is used as a food additive in the raising of baby bees. But the primary job is bringing the flower nectar—a sugar rich liquid produced by plants—back to the hive and processing it into honey, which will be for the entire bee colony their primary food sources once the weather has turned cold. Fortunately for us *people*, many bees, especially honeybees have become so effective at their job that they usually produce more honey than is needed; thus humans have learned to collect the excess. A very sweet benefit, at least to us!

Here's another cool benefit about bees, especially if you like to eat food (and even if you don't like honey): pollination. As the bees fly from one flower to another, their little bee bodies collect (unintentionally?) pollen from this flower and that flower. They then in the same manner distribute that pollen from one flower to the next. Not to get too thoroughly involved in the science lesson, but as the saying goes about "the birds and the bees" this is how flowering plants reproduce—by sharing their pollen from one plant with the appropriate flower part on another plant. From

this, fruit happens! As well as vegetable. And subsequently, seed. So much so that bees are responsible for assisting in the pollination process and helping plants reproduce in about 90 species of flowering plants, which makes up just about one out of ever four bites of food we eat. Incredible! Delicious! And might I add, super significant for us!

What I just describe is the basic job description for a bee as well as the—shall we call them, complimentary benefits—she provides for both the flowering plant and human world, but I don't really think it's her "goal." Let me anthropomorphize for a moment. When a bee gets up in the morning, I don't think she ever says to herself, "making honey is my goal." And certainly never, "pollinating Pastor Tom's garden is my goal." (Although the bee and me are friends and I'm sure she'd like to help me out if she could...) No. I think her goal is much simpler yet messier than that. Her goal is to be a bee. To be the best darn bee she can be. To fully be her bee self. And part of her bee self-identity is also her fellow bees—the bee hive or colony, her bee neighbors.

Now, all kidding aside, I'm serious here, the goal of a bee's life is not the honey she makes and the pollination she provides but it is in simply being her God-created and species'-evolved self, which is integrally connected to her neighbor bees. The same is so for us.

What is your goal? What is our goal?

*I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.*

*- Philippians 3:14*

The goal is to become most fully ourselves—most fully human—and we discover that identity in Jesus Christ. And our goal is to follow after him, even in a lost and broken world so loved by God. We follow Christ's call.

A caveat here, becoming fully and truly ourselves and following after Christ takes work.

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

But the work is not the goal. If anything, Christ is the goal and Christ has come to us and Christ has done the work. Too often in our spiritual lives we can become "busy as bees" but entirely miss out on the goal or too easily become mis-focused. Yes, it takes work but the work is not the focus.

How about an example. We, like bees, are to bear fruit. But unlike honey or produce, the fruit of our lives are sometimes both palpable yet just as importantly, spiritually tangible. So, for instance, the fruit of the Spirit, peace. It is something that many of us desire and seek for our lives. It is also something that we need to practice. For some of us, to experience peace may mean to slow down, to stop, to quiet ourselves. We may be (again, some of us) so focused and frantic on getting or gaining peace, that we don't allow ourselves to be peaceful. But for others of us, practicing peace may necessitate the work of confrontation, confronting those elements and choices in our lives that keep us from producing peace. Maybe even confronting other persons. For peace is not simply the absence of conflict, ignoring difficulties and hoping they go away. Peace can take work and practice.

Our actions and business are not the only distractions to our true goal. Sometimes, church can be a distraction too. This is complicated and messy but let me be clear. Church is not the goal. Yet, like the bee and her hive, church is indeed the community that God calls us Christ followers into and Church is also the environment in which we are to be nurtured and to share and to seek the goal alongside each other. Like the complimentary benefits that bees provide, church can even be an environment for spiritual cross pollination.

There is an important aspect that we haven't addressed yet, as it relates to both bees and to the Church, and that's about getting stung. Bees in general and honeybees particularly don't want to sting you or me. (Now wasps are a different scenario...) Honeybees only sting as a last ditch effort and usually to save the hive. For in the act of stinging, the bee actually loses her own life. If you come across a group of bees take time to observe them carefully and you'll notice they are often quite docile and pleasant, not wanting to sting you any more than you want to be stung. But it means you too need to be gentle and careful with them.

Unfortunately, the church is a different organism. And too often people have been stung by it. Like bees, some in the church have stung out of fearfulness or defensiveness, but unlike bees, people in the church have another component in our lives, sin. Sometimes we do things we should not do and at other times, do not do what we ought to do. And people get stung. All the more reason to keep our eyes on the goal and to practice the forgiveness and reconciliation that Christ calls us to.

Finally, I began this post mentioning the hum I experienced, a hum that was like music to my ears. It was the cacophony of many different bees and even many different species and kinds of bees all being their bee selves flying about from flower to flower. It was music created by their lives lived out as they pressed on toward the goal. In a small sound picture, it was as

scripture has proclaimed in Psalm 148, all creation joining in to praise God. May we join in the song as well.

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Tom

## The Silence was Golden

In August I had the privilege of living out Psalm 46:10; "Be still and know that I am God". I participated in a 10 day silent retreat at the Jesus House in Wilmington, Delaware. Along with 20 other participants, we met daily for 4 hours of Centering Prayer (silent prayer). In addition we did not speak to one another for the duration of the ten days, except on the last night before departing. We did not speak to each other at meal times and did not make eye contact with anyone. We did not use our cell phones or our cars. If anyone needed anything purchased from a store, we wrote the name of the item on an index card and left money for the item in a designated basket. The item was purchased for us the following day. Noise was minimized to the degree that none of the ladies used hair dryers to dry their hair. They merely got up earlier in the morning to wash their hair so that it would dry before the first session of prayer at 7:15AM (before breakfast).

When I explained all of this to my daughter she said, "And you paid for this?" If you are thinking the same thing right now let me give a little background on Centering Prayer. Centering Prayer is not a new practice but an ancient practice of the desert Fathers. The underlying premise of the practice is that God is not "out there somewhere", but rather, inside each of us, at the very ground of our being. What God desires most is to have an intimate relationship with him in which we not only sense this presence within us but live in close communion with him. We cannot sense this God that is closer to us than a heartbeat because our lives are cluttered with activities and our minds are constantly cluttered with thoughts and commentaries about what is happening to us during the day. We focus on the past and project into the future, but God desires to be with us in the present moment. Centering Prayer is a way of cutting through the clutter in our minds so that we can find God in the present moment. It is a way of practicing stillness and allowing God to speak to us in that stillness.

I had been practicing Centering Prayer for the past three years and so decided to intensify the experience by attending this retreat. Although the first two days seemed a bit strange to me, I slowly began to get into the rhythm of quietness all around me. I began to notice every tree and all the animal life around me and I felt truly relaxed for the first time in a very long time. I experienced the closeness of God in new and beautiful ways. What a wonderful thought to realize that it is not my own effort and hard work that bring me close to God, but rather my ability to be willing to receive, and to allow God to do the filling. At 62 I am finding that God is still "able to do exceedingly, abundantly more than we can ever dream or imagine" to draw us closer to him.

-Brigitte Brady

## Life Hereafter?

### *An Imagined Conversation between Twins in a Womb*

It so happened that twin brothers were conceived in a womb. Weeks went by, and the brothers' growth continued unabated. As their self-consciousness grew, so did their happiness: "Tell me, is it not terrific that we were conceived? Is it not wonderful that we are alive?"

The twins began to explore their world inside the womb. When they found the umbilical cord that connected them with their mother and that gave them nourishment, they cried out with joy, "Our mother must love us an awful lot to share her own life with us!"

As weeks turned into months, they suddenly realized how different they had become. One of the twins asked the other, "What does this mean?" The other responded, "It means that our stay in this world will soon come to an end." The first twin responded with concern, "But I don't want to go. I want to stay here forever." The other twin replied, "We have no other choice. But maybe there is life after birth!" The first twin doubted this and pointed out, "How could that be? How can life be possible after we have lost the cord that connects us to our mother? And besides, others have left this womb before, and none of them have come back to reassure us that there is in fact life after birth. It must be that birth signifies the end."

The first twin fell into a deep despair and wondered, "If gestation ends with birth, then does life in the womb have any meaning at all? It's meaningless! There probably isn't even a mother behind this womb." The other countered, "But she must exist. How else would we have gotten here? And how else could we stay alive?"

The first twin asked, "Have you ever seen our mother? In all likelihood she is only a figment of our imagination. We came up with the idea of her so that we could better understand our own life."

And thus, during their last days in their mother's womb, the twins had many questions and were filled with fear. Finally, it was time to be born. Once the twins left their old world, they opened their eyes and cried. What they saw in their new world exceeded their wildest expectations.

(translated version of "Leben danach?", a story appearing in the newsletter of the Protestant congregations of Mackenbach and Schwedelbach, Germany)

## Gebet

HERR, den ich tief im Herzen trage,  
sei DU mit mir!  
DU Gnadenhorst in Glück Plage,  
sei DU mit mir!  
Und wenn ich an mir selbst verzage,  
sei DU mit mir!  
Dein Segen ist wie Tau den Reben,  
nichts kann ich selbst;  
O DU mein Trost, DU meine Starke,  
mein Sonnenlicht,  
Bis an das Ende meiner Tage,  
sei DU mit mir!

Emmanuel Geibel

## Prayer

Abide within me, oh Lord, deep in my heart;  
In happiness and pain your grace impart;  
E'en when my faith and confidence depart;  
Abide with me!  
Your blessings on the vines are like the dew;  
Much, by my own strength, Lord, I cannot do;  
You are my comfort, help, the sun's bright rays;  
Abide with me, oh Lord, till end of days!

Translated by Rosemarie Walz

## Soup Kitchen

Several of our members serve at the soup kitchen on the first Thursday and Friday of each month at the United Presbyterian Church. Duties include setting up the tables, preparing and serving the meal to our guests at 5:00 p.m., and cleaning up. Fortunately the church has a dishwasher which makes that part a lot easier.

You may have heard that the United Presbyterian Church has sold its building to the local Egyptian Coptic Church. United Presbyterian Church has reached an agreement with Covenant Lutheran Church on Catalpa Ave. to hold its worship services and soup kitchen there. We will now be going to Covenant Lutheran Church to serve at the soup kitchen.

Additional volunteers are needed. We would like to be able to rotate who serves at the soup kitchen and we can only do this with more people willing to help. If you would like to help out or want more information, please speak with Pastor Tom, Marieanna Trautmann, or Linda Morton.

**Please be mindful of the following members and friends of our congregation in your prayers:**

Sister Kaethe; Margarethe Roth; Janet Roth; Martha Bauer; Frederick Dalm; Groezinger family; Philipp & Hildegard Febel; Laura Kurtz; Helga's grandson Nicholas; Trudy Mische; Alona; Debra Meraglia; Jon Reeverts; Eleanor Rizzo; Donna Dowd; Steven Chin; Doris Church; Puselia's mother and father; Chloe Holland-Anderson; Andrew Stoneman; Theodora's family; United Presbyterian Church of Ridgewood; Juergen Schroder; family of Lucille Albanese; Joyce Silver; family of Brigid Herlihy; Reformed Church in America, Queens Classis, and Regional Synod of New York; Dave & Char Alexander (RCA missionaries in Taiwan); Doug Leonard (RCA missionary in Oman); Peter Mark Trautmann (The Navigators at NYU); Leonard & Linda Schiefer (Gideons International); Pastor Tom and the Consistory.

**Trinity Chimes**

As you may or may not know, Bill Voges is the editor of our church's newsletter Trinity Chimes. If there is something you would like for him to include in the November newsletter, please submit it to him by October 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Stewardship and Finance Report**

<u>Expenditures for Month of:</u>	<u>August 2011</u>
Personnel Expenses	\$2,900.00
Utilities	274.00
Ministry/Supplies	64.00
Maintenance	139.00
Spiritual Life/Outreach/Advertising	283.00
Other Disbursements	1,932.00
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$5,592.00</b>
<u>Receipts for Month of:</u>	<u>August 2011</u>
Weekly Envelopes	\$3,704.00
Weekly Plate	186.00
Benevolences	0.00
Memorial Fund	0.00
Special Offerings	180.00
Other Receipts	100.00
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$4,170.00</b>

**Due to cancellation of the worship service on August 28, Personnel Expenses, Memorial and Benevolence will reflect in the figures for September.**

**Daily Survival Kit**

**Items Needed:**

Mint, Candy Kiss, Tea Bag, Eraser, Rubber Band, Toothpick, Chewing Gum, Band Aid, Pencil

Why???

Toothpick – to remind you to pick out the good qualities in others.

Matthew 7:1

Rubber Band – to remind you to be flexible. Things might not always go the way you want, but it will work out.

Romans 8:28

Band Aid – to remind you to heal hurt feelings, yours or someone else's.

Colossians 3:12-14

Pencil – to remind you to list your blessings every day.

Ephesians 1:3

Eraser – To remind you that everyone makes mistakes, and it's okay.

Genesis 50:15-21

Chewing Gum – to remind you to stick with it, and you can accomplish anything.

Philippians 4:13

Mint – to remind you that you are worth a mint.

John 3:16-17

Candy Kiss – to remind you that everyone needs a kiss or a hug every day.

1<sup>st</sup> John 4:7

Tea Bag – to remind you to relax daily and go over your list of blessings.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

**Worship Schedule for October**

October 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 – Worship 10:00 a.m.

- Communion will be celebrated on October 2
- Prayer Meeting each Sunday at 9:00 a.m.
- Junior Church each Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

# October 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 CROP Walk @ Juniper Valley Park 9:00 am
2 Worship Service with Communion 10:00am  Christian Unity Dinner @OLMM 3:00 pm	3	4	5	6 UPC Soup Kitchen 4:00 pm	7 UPC Soup Kitchen 4:00 pm	8
9 Worship Service 10:00 am	10	11 Consistory Meeting 7:30 pm	12	13	14	15 Couples and Friends 5:00 pm
16 Worship Service 10:00 am	17	18	19 Frauenverein/ Ladies Aid 1:00 pm	20 Last day for newsletter submissions to Bill Voges	21	22
23 Worship Service 10:00 am	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 Worship Service 10:00 am	31			<b>Their Daily Bread collection 1<sup>st</sup>. Sunday of each month</b>	<b>Prayer Meeting Sundays 9:00 am</b>	<b>Junior Church Sundays 10:00 am</b>