

TRINITY CHIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE TRINITY REFORMED CHURCH

March 2012

Dust and Honesty

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.

You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.

You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.

Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely.

You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.

Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?

If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,

even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night,"

even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.

My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.

-Psalm 139:1-16, 23

By the time this issue of Trinity Chimes reaches you, we will already be a week and a half into Lent so I understand that it may seem a little late to be bringing up Ash Wednesday,

but hang with me a moment, because I think Ash Wednesday and the subsequent season of Lent is one of the most important observances for Christians. For you see, Ash Wednesday—and truly Lent as well—is one of the few times where we are so explicitly and even brutally honest with ourselves. On this day we are reminded, with words and physical rituals that “from dust we came and to dust we shall return.” In a world filled with gimmicks and lies, a death-denying culture with its obsession on individualism, autonomy, and independence, the Christian calendar calls us to remember our mortality, sin, and ultimately, our utter dependence upon God’s grace. It is truly a radical notion!

But it’s hard to be honest. It’s much easier to be busy. Or nice. But when faced with reality, busy and nice don’t cut it. That’s the beauty of the day of Ashes and the season of Lent, it helps us to be honest with ourselves. And here’s the honest-to-goodness truth: each of us are sinners and we are going to die. There is something beautiful in stating what may seem obvious, or what others may prefer not to speak of at all. But in speaking the truth, in being honest, God is able to break through the hard exteriors of denial that we create for ourselves.

Now, it should be noted, to even bring up sin carries with it a lot of baggage. Let me share how one of my colleagues, the Rev. Nadia Bolz-Weber, pastor of *House for All Sinners and Saints* (Lutheran Church) in Denver, speaks of sin:

“So one end of the church tells us that sin is an antiquated notion that only makes us feel bad about ourselves so we should avoid mentioning it at all. While the other end of the church tells us that sin is the same as immorality and totally avoidable if you are just a good squeaky clean Christian. But when sin is boiled down to low self esteem and immorality then it becomes something we can control or limit in some way rather than something we are bondage to. The reality is that I cannot free myself from the bondage of self.

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



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I cannot keep from being turned in on self. I cannot by my own understanding or effort disentangle myself from my self interest and when I think that I can ...I am trying to do what is only God's to do."

It is SUCH A CLICHÉ but it is so true, Lent truly is a time to "let go, and let God." That is why fasting has always been a practice of Lent. In fasting, we choose to give something up, to let something go. Fasting is not about self-denial and feeling bad about yourself. Nor is Lenten fasting like a New Year's resolution. Perhaps you do need to give up sweets, or meats, or various beverages, but if you're doing it for some health reason, well that just misses the point. In Lent we are encouraged to take opportunities to be honest with ourselves, to face our sin and mortality, and to let God be God in our lives. For many of us, a practice that may help us in this process is by letting things go—fasting—in order to focus on Christ and our relationship with God. It's not about self-denial, rather it's about relinquishing what we believe we have control over and letting God into those places and moments in our lives.

For others, a Lenten practice that assists us in "letting God" may be a kind of going back to the basics, a return to (or a new practice of) prayer and scripture reading. Still for others, perhaps we could use Lent as an opportunity to try something new in our spiritual life, exploring a different Christian discipline such as silence, meditation, solitude, bible study, or some form of service.

Finally, some of the most honest ways of approaching our sin and mortality in this season of Lent may not be acts that we consider "religious" at all. Rather, maybe it really does mean letting go and letting God, seeking forgiveness and letting go of past mistakes or grudges or grievances. Maybe it means taking the time to reconnect with someone whose relationship you've let go amiss. Maybe even it means reconnecting with yourself? Searching your own heart?

However you observe this season of Lent I truly encourage you to be honest with yourself and with God and to let God be God in every aspect of your life. And I am also thankful that God has put us on this journey of faith together, here at Trinity.

In Christ's Grace & Peace,
Pastor Tom

Wednesday Lenten Bible Study

The season of Lent is a time for self-examination and penitence, prayer and fasting, practicing works of love, and by reading and reflecting on God's Holy Word. But what does that all mean? And how do we do it? You are invited during this season of Lent to engage and explore these various Christian disciplines and practices as we gather together in study, prayer, and fellowship each Wednesday evening in Lent at 7:30 pm in the church fellowship hall. Whether you are a complete novice (what's fasting? or how do we pray?) or an "old pro," all are welcome and encouraged to come!

Consistory Elections

With a unanimous vote in favor at the congregation's Annual Meeting, Max Teodorescu was elected to the office of Deacon. His ordination and installation will take place sometime in March. We are thankful that God is raising up leaders in the church!

Congregational Meeting

Our annual congregational meeting was held on Sunday February 5 following the morning worship service. Various reports were presented and the budget for 2012 was approved. As mentioned before, Max Teodorescu was elected to the consistory as a deacon. Ludwig Hauser, Karl Kurtz, and Bill Voges have completed their terms on consistory and will be going off. We would like to thank them for their years of service and look forward to them serving Trinity in other capacities.

Music Program

The Ridgewood Glendale Church Laity Association is sponsoring a music program on Sunday March 25 at 2:30 p.m. here at Trinity Reformed Church. Members from different area churches will be presenting various musical selections, and previous programs have been enjoyable. We hope you will be able to join us.

Poem

Hab' Sonne im Herzen ob's stuermt oder schneit,
ob der Himmel voll Wolken, die Erde voll Streit.
Hab' Sonne im Herzen, verlier' nie den Mut,
Hab Sonne im Herzen und alles wird gut!

Keep the sun (Son) in your heart though it rains or it snows,
Though the heavens be darkened, the world full of woes.
Keep the sun (Son) in your heart and courage as well,
Keep the sun (Son) in your heart and all will be well.

translated and adapted by Rosemarie Walz

Prayer List

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; Eleanor Rizzo; Donna Dowd; Doris Church; Chloe Holland-Anderson; Andrew Stoneman; United Presbyterian Church, Ridgewood and Pastor Henry Fury; Fritz Reif; Gideon Abbas; Bill Albanese; Family of Christian Gerber; Family of Georgine Crabbe; Susan Gebhart; Family of Russ Gebhart; Betty Klaar; Maritza Garcia-Castro; Friends of Willy Henke; Family of Sophie Gaslevich; 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.

Stewardship and Finance Report

<u>Expenditures for Month of</u>	<u>Jan. 2012</u>
Personnel Expenses	\$ 6,705.00
Utilities	\$ 403.00
Ministry/Supplies	\$ 321.00
Maintenance	\$ 0.00
Spiritual Life/Outreach/Advertising	\$ 133.00
Other Disbursements	\$ 968.00
Total Expenditures	\$ 8,503.00
<u>Receipts for Month of</u>	<u>Jan. 2012</u>
Weekly Envelopes	\$ 129.00
Weekly Plate	\$ 5,437.00
Benevolences	\$ 355.00
Memorial Fund	\$ 820.00
Special Offerings	\$ 2,311.00
Other Receipts **	\$ 2,007.00
Total Receipts	\$ 11,059.00

** Classis Assessment

Happy Belated February Birthdays

Bobby Murphy Feb 1	Kristen Hauser Feb 3
Helga Theocharides Feb 8	Deborah Andreas Feb 11
Anita Aronowitz Feb 11	Max Teodorescu Feb 11
Maureen Carvin Feb 18	Marieanna Trautmann Feb 18
Diane Carvin Feb 26	

Happy March Birthdays

Betty Klaar Mar 2	Anni Seeliger Mar 2
Trudy Bambach Mar 4	Erika Huneke Mar 6
Anna Pretzer Mar 11	Theodora Sirghi Mar 12
Trudy Mische Mar 20	Danielle Carrasquillo Mar 22
Peter Trautmann Mar 22	Philipp Kuhner Mar 24
Amanda Doring Mar 25	Robert Bambach Mar 27
Kathy Burger Mar 27	James Wtorkowski Mar 27
Andrew Mains Mar 28	Elisabeth Roth Mar 28
Brigitte Brady Mar 29	Reinhard Groezinger Mar 30
Denise Villamia Mar 31	

Worship Schedule for March

March 4, 11, 18, 25 –Worship Service 10:00 a.m.

- Communion will be celebrated on March 4 and 18
- Prayer Meeting each Sunday at 9:00 a.m.
- Junior Church each Sunday at 10:00 a.m.
- Lenten Wednesday Bible Study – March 7, 14, 21, 28

March 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Prayer Meeting Sundays 9am Junior Church Sundays 10am <i>Their Daily Bread Collection</i> 1 st Sunday of each month				1 UPC Soup Kitchen 4:00 pm N/A Mtg. 7pm	2 UPC Soup Kitchen 4:00 pm	3 N/A Mtg. 7pm
4 Worship Service with Communion 10:00 am	5 N/A Mtg. 7pm	6 Al-Anon 7:30 pm	7 Lenten Bible Study 7:30 pm	8 N/A Mtg. 7pm	9 N/A Mtg. 7pm	10 N/A Mtg. 7pm
11 Worship Service 10:00 am <i>Second Sunday Symposium</i> Daylight Savings Time begins	12 Consistory Meeting 7:30 pm N/A Mtg. 7pm	13 Al-Anon 7:30 pm	14 Lenten Bible Study 7:30 pm	15 N/A Mtg. 7pm	16 Couples and Friends 6:00 pm	17 N/A Mtg. 7pm
18 Worship Service with Communion 10:00 am N/A Mtg. 7pm	19 N/A Mtg. 7pm	20 Last day for newsletter submissions to Bill Voges Al-Anon 7:30 pm	21 Frauen-Verein/ Ladies Aid 1:00 pm Lenten Bible Study 7:30 pm	22 N/A Mtg. 7pm	23 N/A Mtg. 7pm	24 N/A Mtg. 7pm
25 Worship Service 10:00 am N/A Mtg. 7pm	26 N/A Mtg. 7pm	27 Al-Anon 7:30 pm	28 Lenten Bible Study 7:30 pm	29 N/A Mtg. 7pm	30 N/A Mtg. 7pm	31 N/A Mtg. 7pm