

# TRINITY CHIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE TRINITY REFORMED CHURCH

February 2014

## Children of God

**“But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.”**

**- John 1:12-13**

A recent study on the cognitive abilities and development of 16-months-old children has me wondering about the role of play in developing—and perhaps just as importantly, in being—disciples of Christ.

The study was an examination on how children learned the names of various non-solid foods like jelly and syrup, pudding and porridge, even when served to them in different shapes and colors. The ultimate takeaway was that children who “interacted vigorously with the original samples,” in other words, played with their food, learned more readily to later identify such foods.

Why was this study done? To see how it is that we learn. Apparently psychologists knew already that children are able to learn the names of solid objects more easily. Say a ball for instance or a cup, because of the fixed physical characteristics of it, the child more quickly is able to incorporate its name into her or his vocabulary. Non-solid items generally take longer for the child to learn the names of. Why? It is understood that through the senses the child is able to touch and feel the objects, even taste, exploring them. Non-solids are not as readily available to children to learn about except during mealtime. Mealtimes then can become opportunities not only of nourishment, but also of profound learning and development. And it was observed that especially those children who were deemed “messy” at mealtimes, who played with their food, learned best.

From a New York Times article:

*“So the messy eater experiment is really about the developing brain, and the cues and contexts that small children need to create lexical categories — everything covered by a*

*particular word — a challenge especially when the category is not defined by a shape. The children who squigged around in the cream of wheat, tasted it, smeared it, did various unmentionable things with it — they were the children who understood what cream of wheat was. They could identify it even if it came in a different shape and was doctored with green food coloring. The messy eater experiment is also about play, and the way that children explore their worlds and learn as they go. Toddlers play with their food because toddlers play with their worlds. And by playing and exploring, they accumulate all kinds of data, which helps them put together a picture and a vocabulary for the world around them.”*

Following Christmas and throughout this season after the Epiphany I’ve been absorbed with the thought of Jesus learning, growing, and developing into who he was. As I wrote here about a month ago: “I really have been wondering about the way of learning and the development of the Christ child as he grew, especially about language.” And not merely in that the Word becomes flesh and grows in humanity (as if that isn’t enough!), but also how Jesus grows to become the messiah, how he learns and understands his calling/ministry/mission. So at a basic level there is how the child Jesus physically and biologically grows up and develops language and basic skills. I imagine the young child—in Bethlehem, in Egypt, in Nazareth—playing with his pita bread, smearing around the hummus. But more complexly, I wonder how he grew and developed to understand who he was.

And correlatively us too. The prologue of John has been ever present, especially “But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.” If we are born again, if we are to become like children, if we are disciples—students and followers and learners of Jesus—it follows that there are ways that our development as such happens. And not trying

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



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to force it here, but how does play—something that is so basic, so common, and so important in child development—factor into our spiritual development? If playing with our food as toddlers facilitates cognitive abilities and language acquisition, can play also—or even, need it—function in our becoming better disciples?

And if so, again not trying to force it, but if play hasn't "played" a role in one's development, is the church worse off because of it? Are there many of us who have stunted development because of this?

The abstract of the above described scientific study states: "We discuss what implications this context-dependency has for understanding the development of an ontological distinction between solids and nonsolids. Together, these results demonstrate a developmental cascade between context, exploration, and word learning." Or in another way, as the Times article above says, "Toddlers play with their food because toddlers play with their worlds. And by playing and exploring, they accumulate all kinds of data, which helps them put together a picture and a vocabulary for the world around them."

Certainly, there comes a time when we must put away childish behaviors. We grow up. Obviously. (Although I do have serious concerns about interrupted and stunted development that we may encounter, foster, and promote in the church.) But still, do we need to learn to play better so as to learn better? Is there an element of play as we interact with Word and sacrament, to learn and to grow, to understand both the world around us and God better? I wonder if this is part and parcel of why Jesus said that we must become like children? If we were to "play"—interact with it, get ourselves messy with it—more regularly with word and sacrament, would we "learn" better? I wonder...

In Christ's Grace & Peace,

Pastor Tom

### **Couples and Friends Club**

The Couples and Friends Club is an adult fellowship group of Trinity Reformed Church. Between September and June we meet once a month on a Saturday evening for dinner, usually at church. Different people take turns cooking, or we may "order in." Our next meeting on February 22 will be a pizza party. A short business meeting is included, followed by some form of entertainment and dessert. Occasionally we have an "out meeting" where we go to a restaurant or a show and our June meeting is usually a picnic. Currently anywhere from 18 to 22 people attend.

We always welcome new members, so if you would like to try us out, consider coming down on February 22 at 6:00 p.m. If you would like more information, please speak with Maureen Carvin, Linda Morton, Lenny Schiefer, or Bill Voges, who are the current officers for 2014.

### **Learning from Loss**

On Sunday, January 26th, the Reformed Church in Plano, a RCA congregation in the Dallas region had a "celebration of life" service commemorating their 35 years of ministry. It was their last worship service as the church has closed. A once vibrant congregation numbering over 700 members had dwindled in recent months to about 150. We mourn with our sisters and brothers in Texas the loss—for as the body of Christ, when one suffers we all suffer, and the unity of the Spirit and the church calls us to recognize our commonalities. We must also ask, can we learn from this?

The Rev. Angie Mabry-Nauta, a friend/classmate/colleague/sister in Christ of Pastor Tom was a member of this congregation. She was not their pastor, although she was ordained there and served as an interim there for a short time; she is a writer and has blogged about the church's experience. In a recent post she shares "7 reasons (among many) why my church died." Included below is a short excerpt. Can we learn from their loss?

*There may be as many pastoral leadership styles as there are pastors. As far as I can tell, my church was shepherded by pastors with two styles.*

*The first is what I call "pastor as church leadership." The pastor is the proverbial driver of the church bus. She sets the vision, leads the staff, is active in the community to bring new people to the church, and has her hand in most aspects of the church's life. This pastor's congregation revels in her maternal and charismatic leadership. They like that what they primarily do is follow her. She leads the church leadership board, and they have a clear understanding of how they are to function, based upon the pastor's direction. She is the center of power in the church.*

*The second style is what I call "pastor as empowerer." This pastor sees himself as a leader in as much as he guides his congregation to discover their God-given mission and to live it. Power resides within the people of the leadership board; and the board works with ministry teams that are comprised of congregants. When decisions must be made, the pastor presents the options and steps back for the elders and deacons to make their voices heard. The ministry of the church is done primarily by the congregation. Beyond preaching, the pastor's primary functions are to educate, disciple, and form his congregation and its leaders, and the church's staff toward a priesthood of all believers.*

*My church was planted, raised, if you will, and led by a "pastor as church leadership" for 30 years. For the final three years of its existence, our pastors' leadership style fit the "pastor as empowerer" description almost to a "T." Conflict arose when this church, which had been used to functioning one way, was expected to change their ways. In some ways we adjusted, one of which was worship, which was dynamic to the very end. In most ways, however, we resisted, and even pushed back. The latest pastors and the congregation, it seemed, were at a crossroads. Unfortunately, we never got to the point where we joined arms and walked forward together.*

### Zum neuen Jahr

Geh in das neue Jahr hinein  
mit einem neuen Mut!  
Der dich im alten Jahr beschuetzt,  
Meint's auch im neuen gut.

Geh in das neue Jahr hinein  
In des Allmaechtigen Kraft,  
Die eigene Kraft, sie reicht nicht weit,  
Doch Gott ist's, der es schafft.

Geh in das neue Jahr hinein  
Wie ein vertrauend Kind,  
Das in des guten Vaters Hand  
Sich wohlgeborgen find't.

Go into the new year with renewed courage, knowing that  
He who protected you in the old year also has your best  
interests at heart in the new year.

Go into the new year in the power of the Almighty. Your  
own strength may not be sufficient, but know that God's  
power is at work.

Go into the new year like a trusting child who feels secure  
in our loving Father's Hand.

Sister Gunda Omeis.

### Prayer List

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

Janet Roth, health; Martha Bauer, health; Frederick Dalm,  
healing; Groezinger Family; Philipp & Hildegard Febel,  
healing; Laura Kurtz, health; Debra Meraglia, health &  
healing; Eleanor Rizzo, health & healing; Donna Dowd,  
healing; Doris Church, healing; United Presbyterian Church,  
Ridgewood and Pastor Henry Fury; Bill Albanese, health &  
healing; Susan Gebhart, health & healing; Maritza Garcia-  
Castro, health & healing; Fritz & Betty Klaar, health &  
healing; Anibal Segarra, safety & protection; Martin Seidl,  
health & healing; Barbara Burger, health & healing; Clara  
Gomez, health & healing; Felder Williams, health & healing;  
Mildred Schleeauf, health & healing; Church on the Hill,  
transitions; Isabel, Marcia, and Jade; Andrew Holbrook, health  
& healing; Reinhard Groezinger, health & healing; Marie  
Shanelly Alvarez; Mohr Family; Jennie Cartagena, health &  
healing; Billie Albanese, health & healing; Trudy Bambach,  
health & healing; Sara Segarra; Tito Ortiz; Michele Dimino,  
needs kidney transplant; Alberto Ortiz, serving in military;  
Baby Colette, health & growth; Erika Brockmann, health &  
healing; Merilyn Amoroso, health & healing; 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.

### Happy February Birthdays

Bobby Murphy	1 <sup>st</sup>	Kristin Hauser	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Beatriz Martinez	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Helga Theocharides	8 <sup>th</sup>
Deborah Andreas	11 <sup>th</sup>	Anita Aronowitz	11 <sup>th</sup>
Max Teodorescu	11 <sup>th</sup>	Eleanora Hallex	14 <sup>th</sup>
Romeu Ghioalda	16 <sup>th</sup>	Maureen Carvin	18 <sup>th</sup>
Marieanna Trautmann	18 <sup>th</sup>	Diane Carvin	26 <sup>th</sup>
Bill Mohr	28 <sup>th</sup>	Cindy Park	28 <sup>th</sup>

### Worship Schedule for February

February 2, 9, 16, 23 – Worship Service at 10:00 a.m.

- Communion will be celebrated on February 2 and 16
- Prayer Meeting each Sunday at 9:00 a.m.
- Junior Church each Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

### Stewardship and Finance Report

<u>Expenditures for Month of</u>	<u>Dec. 2013</u>
Personnel Expenses	\$ 9,531.00
Utilities	\$ 1,017.00
Ministry/Supplies	\$ 358.00
Maintenance	\$ 68.00
Spiritual Life/Outreach/Advertising	\$ 584.00
Other Disbursements*	\$ 4,541.00

**Total Expenditures** **\$ 16,099.00**

<u>Receipts for Month of</u>	<u>Dec. 2013</u>
Weekly Envelopes	\$ 6,602.00
Weekly Plate	\$ 262.00
Benevolences	\$ 868.00
Memorial Fund	\$ 20.00
Special Offerings	\$ 4,732.00
Annuity	\$ 1,505.00
Other Receipts**	\$ 873.00

**Total Receipts** **\$ 14,862.00**

\*Assessment, Coffee Hour, Insurance, Taxes,  
Accountant Fees

\*\* NA/ALANON, Coffee Hour, Sunday School,  
Rummage Sale, Insurance Refund

# February 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1  NA Mtg. 7PM
2 Worship Service 10:00 am  Annual Congregational Meeting  <i>Their Daily Bread Collection</i>	3  NA Mtg. 7PM	4  Al-Anon 7:30pm	5	6 UPC Welcome Kitchen 4:00 pm	7 UPC Welcome Kitchen 4:00 pm	8  NA Mtg. 7PM
9 Worship Service 10:00 am	10  NA Mtg. 7PM	11  Al-Anon 7:30pm	12	13  NA Mtg. 7PM	14	15  NA Mtg. 7PM
16 Worship Service 10:00 am	17  NA Mtg. 7PM	18  Al-Anon 7:30pm	19 Frauenverein/ Ladies Aid 1 PM	20  NA Mtg. 7PM	21	22 Couples and Friends 6 PM  NA Mtg. 7PM
23 Worship Service 10:00 am	24  NA Mtg. 7PM	25  Al-Anon 7:30pm	26	27  NA Mtg. 7PM	28	