

TRINITY CHIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE TRINITY REFORMED CHURCH

January 2014

Growth

“And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.”

- Luke 2:40

Generally I'm not a user of the King James Version of the Bible—preferring instead the New Revised Standard Version as a better and more faithful translation of scripture—but there are certain verses and passages brimming full of poetic beauty and having served the traditional English literary canon for years, one can't help but to be moved by them. Think for instance upon Psalm 23, “Yea, though I walk through the valley...thou art with me...” The modern NRSV speaks more understandably, “Even though I walk...for you are with me,” but there is something about the *yea* and the *thou* that set off the passage to our ears comfortingly. Maybe it's like fine china and a fancy table cloth on a dining table: they're not necessary to eat with on a regular basis, but they can on occasion complement the meal. Similarly, think upon the verse, John 11:35, which our NRSV accurately translates as, “Jesus began to weep.” But perhaps doesn't have the same stabbing impact as the King James, “Jesus wept.” It is so simple and so powerful. Or consider one of my favourite passages, the Christmas story from Luke 2. Again, the NRSV modern language is more understandable: “Mary his espoused wife” is replaced with “Mary, to whom he was engaged” and “swaddling clothes” becomes “bands of cloth” while “Shepherds abiding” becomes “shepherds living.” But it is verse 9 that speaks so beautifully to me, “And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.” Sore afraid! Maybe because I hear Linus from a Charlie Brown Christmas saying those words when I read the story, but the contemporary “Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified,” while being accurate, loses some of its poetic panache.

Verses from the King James can have a certain musicality that is hard to get out of one's head. Like the verse at the beginning of this message, “And the child grew...” Especially since we just don't use the word “waxed” enough these days. There's a rather famous choral arrangement by Randall Thompson entitled, “And the Child Grew.” It often reverberates in my head during this season, following Christmas and Epiphany. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom.

I really have been wondering about the way of learning and the development of the Christ child as he grew, especially about language. Jesus had to learn to speak, as all children do. He had to be taught. The Word who became flesh, the Word who was in the beginning, the Word in whom all things came into being through and without whom not one thing came into being had to learn how to put words and ideas together just as all of us humans do. This really is quite mind bending...and shocking and I wonder if our casual familiarity with Christmas dulls us from the amazingness of it. The liturgist reading the ninth lesson of the festival begins by saying, “St John unfolds the great mystery of the Incarnation.” But I don't think it's unfolded as much as simply and poetically proclaimed. The Incarnation is certainly a mystery.

The Word learns to speak, as he waxes strong in spirit and is filled with wisdom. God grows.

I think a lot about language given that I tend to be pretty monolingual working in our much more bilingual congregation in a generally multilingual city. Watching the Christmas Eve mass at St. Peter's in the Vatican I was struck by the beauty of the scripture lessons each being read in a different language—fitting I suppose for the universal Church, God's word in so many tongues. It made me wonder, oddly, about the angels who first proclaimed the good news of great joy to those Judean shepherds and then sang Gloria. Those angels spoke Aramaic, or they must have for the shepherds to understand them. I have never

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to help
people find
New Life in
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thought about what language the angels speak. As God's messengers I imagine they are duly prepared in a variety of tongues, a kind of heavenly diplomatic corps so to speak. Or maybe it's more like with Dr. Who (the British sci-fi television show), somehow connected to the Tardis I think, who is able to instantly translate and communicate across time and space. Certainly God can do that, and thus God's angels too.

Still, God who speaks (or sings) creation into being and is multilingual to the nth degree coming to us as a child who must learn to use words amazes me. I've just been pondering and puzzling and still find some wonder and mystery in it all, in the words and in the story. God grows to become fully human in Jesus and shows us the same.

This edition of the Trinity Chimes comes to you amidst the final days of Christmas leading into Epiphany and just after the New Year. Days like New Year invite us to mark time, to look back, and often resolve as we move forward. In some ways it's a little silly, as if anything really changes between 11:59 PM and 12:01 AM New Year's Day, but still we use it to mark time. We recognize it as an opportunity to look back and look forward and begin anew. And this is not silly at all. On the day to day, minute by minute, we seldom see the change or the growth we experience. Only sometimes do we have those radical "epiphanies," sudden moments of enlightenment, or profound conversion experiences. And sometimes some of us never have them. But still, growth can happen. Even conversion, slow as it seems, to the people and the church that God is making us. Like when children grow, and they stand beside the door frame, and you mark their height each year, we too can grow. You may not see it day to day, but it can happen.

And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. Christ grows and invites us to grow with and in him. May the grace of God also be upon us.

In Christ's Grace and Peace,

Pastor Tom

Maintenance Update

In last month's *Trinity Chimes* we reported that work had to be done on the flat roof on the Palmetto Street side of the church at a cost of \$ 9,000.00. Water has also been coming in on the parsonage side of the church and the damage can be seen if you go up the stairs to the choir loft. The roofer had to replace a number of slate tiles and repair the flashing on this side. Roof work had to be done on the parsonage, and the skylight had to be replaced because water has also been coming in there. This additional work cost \$4,900.00 bringing the total roof repair bill to \$ 13,900.00. These expenditures have been paid for from the Memorial Fund.

Junior Church Activities

The Junior Church has been and continues to be very busy in our church and community. On December 15th we hosted an all-church Christmas Celebration during the Coffee Hour in the Fellowship Hall. The children presented a program of songs and poems about the meaning of Christmas directed by Jenny Burger, followed by a church-wide potluck lunch. It was a good time of fellowship enjoyed by all. We want to thank everyone who helped make it happen. We are also happy to report that the Junior Church "Palm Tree" collection to help those affected by the typhoon in the Philippines netted \$185.00. Thank you everyone for your generosity. The first week in February we are planning to share gift bags with the less fortunate in our community at the Welcome Kitchen our church participates in. Please see Linda Schiefer for details.



Annual Congregational Meeting

The annual congregational meeting will be held on Sunday February 2, 2014 immediately following the regular worship service. The congregational meeting provides you with an opportunity to hear from Pastor and members of the consistory about what is going on in the life of Trinity and also for you to ask questions. Please make every effort to attend.

Classis Assessment

Trinity Reformed Church is part of a church that is larger than merely our congregation. As such, we are covenantal partners to sisters and brothers locally, regionally, and nationally; and as part of the Reformed Church in America we have a denominational financial responsibility working with the church beyond our walls and community. We call this denominational financial responsibility "assessment," that we pay to the Classis of Queens, which we—along with the almost thirty other RCA congregations in Queens—make up. This assessment is used to pay for the denominational programs and expenses locally, regionally, and nationally. For 2014 the annual Classis assessment is \$101.42 for each active confessing member. If you use offering envelopes you will find four envelopes marked "Assessment" spaced quarterly throughout the year of your offering envelope box. Your attention to the assessment envelopes—either in one offering, or spaced out in four quarterly donations—assists our congregation in meeting our denominational financial responsibilities as we join the wider Reformed Church in serving Christ in ministry and mission. Thank you!

Frauenverein/Ladies Aid Christmas Party



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; Janet Kucinskas, health & healing; 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; 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 Statements and Offering Envelopes

Following Christ in mission and ministry calls for significant contribution of self and resources and we at Trinity are thankful for every person who participates in God's redemptive and transformative work. You are a blessing as you bless God and God's creation! One of the services to help our members and friends in their stewardship giving that we utilize here at Trinity are personal offering envelopes. These envelopes help both you and the church office keep an orderly record of your tithes and offerings and any other financial gifts or contributions that you may make. Oftentimes, persons find these orderly records in the form of personal stewardship statements to be helpful for their own income tax preparation. The church office can only provide stewardship statements if you are using personal offering envelopes. Anyone in need of your own offering envelopes should speak with our Office Administrator, Liz Burzynski, who can provide them to you. She can also provide you with an annual personal stewardship statement. But for accurate recording purposes, stewardship statements can only be made when used in conjunction with personal offering envelopes. Any questions, please speak with Liz or Bill Voges.

Stewardship and Finance Report

<u>Expenditures for Month of</u>	<u>Nov. 2013</u>
Personnel Expenses	\$ 5,421.00
Utilities	\$ 769.00
Ministry/Supplies	\$ 23.00
Maintenance	\$ 119.00
Spiritual Life/Outreach/Advertising	\$ 0.00
Other Disbursements*	\$ 5,555.00

Total Expenditures \$ 11,887.00

<u>Receipts for Month of</u>	<u>Nov. 2013</u>
Weekly Envelopes	\$ 6,732.00
Weekly Plate	\$ 175.00
Benevolences	\$ 706.00
Memorial Fund	\$ 0.00
Special Offerings	\$ 270.00
Annuity	\$ 1,505.00
Other Receipts**	\$ 5,096.00

Total Receipts \$ 14,484.00

*Insurance, Office Supplies, Coffee Hour, Children's Ministry, Anniversary Dinner

** Ladies Aid Donation, Rummage Sale, Anniversary Dinner

Happy January Birthdays 🍰

Jenny Burger	2 nd	Don Gorham	7 th
Albert Bauer	17 th	Liesel Neumeier	21 st
Joey Morelli-Burger	24 th	Andrew Sciefer	25 th
Carmen Blanco	26 th	Irmgard Mains	26 th
Helmut Hohenleitner	28 th		

Worship Schedule for January

January 5, 12, 19, 26 – Worship at 10:00 a.m.

- Communion will be celebrated on January 5 and 19
- Prayer Meeting each Sunday at 9:00 a.m.
- Junior Church each Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

January 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 UPC Welcome Kitchen 4:00 pm NA Mtg. 7pm	3 UPC Welcome Kitchen 4:00 pm	4 NA Mtg. 7pm
5 Worship Service 10:00 am <i>Their Daily Bread Collection</i>	6 NA Mtg. 7pm	7 Al-Anon 7:30pm	8	9 NA Mtg. 7pm	10	11 NA Mtg. 7pm
12 Worship Service 10:00 am	13 NA Mtg. 7pm	14 Al-Anon 7:30pm	15 Frauenverein/ Ladies Aid 1:00 pm	16 NA Mtg. 7pm	17	18 Couples & Friends 6:00 pm NA Mtg. 7pm
19 Worship Service 10:00 am	20 NA Mtg. 7pm	21 Consistory Meeting 7 pm Al-Anon 7:30pm	22	23 NA Mtg. 7pm	24	25 NA Mtg. 7pm
26 Worship Service 10:00 am	27 NA Mtg. 7pm	28 Al-Anon 7:30pm	29	30 NA Mtg. 7pm	31	