

TRINITY CHIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE TRINITY REFORMED CHURCH

March 2014

Journey of Faith

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old—and Sarah herself was barren—because he considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, “as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.” All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them. By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac. He who had received the promises was ready to offer up his only son, of whom he had been told, “It is through Isaac that descendants shall be named for you.” He considered the fact that God is able even to raise someone from the dead—and figuratively speaking, he did receive him back.

-Hebrews 11:1, 8-19

Watching the Olympic these last couple of weeks has brought me back to ten years ago when I had the amazing opportunity to travel to the Republic of Georgia—just a few hours southeast of the Olympic host city of Sochi—

and join with a couple of friends who were finishing up their stint with the Peace Corps. There we spent some time participating in an environmental camp for Georgian youth, then traveled around the country with my friends sharing with me some of the best places and people they encountered while living and working in Georgia. Following this, we spent two weeks backpacking around Turkey, from the Black Sea Coast, down through the arid southeast, back up through the central region of Cappadocia, then east to Ephesus and Istanbul. About a month’s travel in all, it was an incredible journey!

One of the many highlights was a couple days spent in the city of Şanlıurfa, less than an hour north of Syria in the far south of Turkey. Şanlıurfa, more regularly just called Urfa, has a population well over 482,000 people and a written history that dates back to the 4th century BCE, but the city may actually date nearer to 9000 BCE. Tradition has Urfa as the birthplace of the biblical patriarch, Abraham, with Urfa having previously been seen as Ur of the Chaldeans. (This claim is disputed, however, with another location in modern day Iraq.) There is in the heart of the city a cave that is identified as Abraham’s place of birth. Near the cave is the mosque of Halil-ur-Rahman and the Balıklıgöl or “Pool of Sacred Fish” (connected to a miraculous legend about Abraham and his faith), as well as the beautiful gardens of Gölbaşı. I can not over express how beautiful a place this is, the people included, and their warmth and hospitality especially.

Urfa is a pilgrimage site for many children of Abraham who come to journey to the place of his birth and recall his significant faith. (Remember that Abraham is seen as Father of the three great monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.) From all over the world people travel to see the birthplace of Abraham, tourist and pilgrim alike. They line up, take off their shoes, and in single file stoop in to see the cave. In all honesty, I don’t remember much about that experience other than doing it. It was ten

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



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years ago now. Profound of a location as it may be, I don't recall any great enlightenment or remarkable spiritual experience. (That happened on a different day in Urfa, in a different place, and for a different reason. You can ask me about it sometime and I'd be happy to share.) Still, the visit and the journey itself makes you ponder Abraham's journey—both literal and spiritual.

Many years later I had the opportunity to travel with other Reformed Church members from around the country on a peacemaking delegation to Palestine and Israel and specifically to the city of Hebron in the occupied territory of the West Bank. Hebron too is a beautiful and ancient city, although the occupation makes for tragically profound challenges on its residents. Hebron, called also al-Khalīl, is known as a place of great Judaic, Christian, and Islamic significance. There is much biblical witness and traditional lore built upon it, however the most significant is that it is the site of "The Cave of the Patriarchs." The book of Genesis records the purchasing of property by Abraham that is later used as a burial place for Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, and Jacob and Leah. Where now stands the Sanctuary of Abraham or Ibrahim Mosque, tradition has the tombs of the patriarchs and matriarchs lie below.

I relate these places and instances here because there is something important about journey and movement and faith. There is also something related and relevant about life, birth, death, and resurrection, the journey of Abraham and his faith, of his birth and of his death and of his hope.

On Ash Wednesday, we will join with many other sisters- and brothers-in-the-faith in the western church around the world and begin the season of Lent. We will be invited to partake in the ritual of the imposition of ashes, where ashes are placed on the forehead or hand, often in the sign of the cross, as a reminder of our mortality. This Christian practice is neither "Catholic" or Protestant, but much older being used in part way back in the third century and incorporated fully by the tenth as a visible reminder for the worshiper. The words that are proclaimed during imposition usually come from Genesis 3:19, "from dust you came, and to dust you shall return." This sober reminder even of death in beginning of Lent, serves as one means of entering a season of preparation ultimately for Easter as we celebrate our redemption and renewal through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thus in Lent we are invited in our preparations to self-examination and penitence, prayer and fasting, practicing works of love, and reading and reflecting on God's Holy Word. Lent involves these practices, and these practices are meant to help us in our faith. And faith, truly, is a journey. These Lenten observances are aids for that journey, a journey that leads to and through the cross, to and through Christ: "Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.'" (Matthew 16.24)

Faith involves movement. It is a journey. Faith moved Abraham—or just as true, Abraham moved by faith—from

one location to another, through his life, and even in death, faith provided hope in a conviction of a thing not seen. The journey of faith is the movement of our life, the continual dying of the old, the rebirth of what God makes new, leading through cross to resurrection.

As a Calvinist I'd be amiss to not point out that faith **is** a gift **from** God. So let me encourage you, take the gift and run with it! During this Lent, move in the journey. Get active! Even if that may mean for you in your journey of faith to stop and slow down with everything else in your life, and simply dwell in the presence of God.

In Christ's Grace and Peace,

Pastor Tom

Ash Wednesday Worship Service

The Season of Lent begins a forty-day journey with Christ to the cross of holy week and ultimately, the resurrection of Easter Sunday. How are we to make this journey and how shall we begin? On Wednesday, Mar. 5th at 7:30 pm, you are invited to come and worship and to ponder these questions together with your sisters and brothers here at Trinity. This intimate service includes lessons and music, Holy Communion and the imposition of ashes. All are encouraged to come and participate.

Lenten Bible Study: Lent for Everyone: Matthew

The Lenten Season provides us an opportunity for reflection and study, to deepen our relationship with God and one another, and to become more open to the ways in which God is at work in Christ. During this season, we will open the scriptures, reflect on, and explore the Gospel of Matthew using a book as our guide by popular biblical scholar and author, Bishop N. T. Wright. All levels of bible understanding are welcome. We will gather in the church hall each Wednesday during Lent beginning on Wednesday, March 12th at 7:30 to 8:30 pm. All are welcome!



Welcome Kitchen

On February 6th and 7th, members of Trinity served their usual turn at the United Presbyterian Church welcome kitchen. More guests seem to be coming, and over 30 people were served a meal each night.

Some of the Sunday School children were there to present the gifts of scarves, hats, and toiletries which had been made and/or donated. There were many smiling faces and most of the people were indeed grateful for what they received and wanted to make sure that the children and congregation knew it. Thank you to everyone who participated in this.

Congregational Meeting

The annual congregational meeting was held on Sunday February 2. Various stewardship and group reports were presented and accepted. Pastor spoke about changes within churches and the fact that while there are 4,000 new church starts (plants) each year, about 7,000 churches close as well. Churches don't have to be on life support, and we should dream about a different kind of Trinity Reformed Church that can grow and flourish.

In other business, Erik Huneke was re-elected to a three year term as elder, and Karl Kurtz was re-elected to a three year term as deacon.

Under new business, Gerard Tate requested that a committee be formed to consider the possibility of purchasing a new sanctuary piano and creating a fund drive to pay for it.

Happy March Birthdays 🍰

Eddie Joreitz	1 st	Betty Klaar	2 nd
Anni Seeliger	2 nd	Trudy Bambach	4 th
Erika Huneke	6 th	Theodora Sirghi	12 th
Luis Ramos	14 th	Siegy Burger	18 th
Danielle Carrasquillo	22 nd	Philipp Kuhner	24 th
Louis Graniti	25 th	Robert Bambach	27 th
Kathy Burger	27 th	James Wtorkowski	27 th
Andrew Mains	28 th	Elisabeth Roth	28 th
Brigette Brady	29 th	Reinhard Groezinger	30 th
Jessica Schiefer	31 st		

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; Erika Brockmann, health & healing; Merilyn Amoroso, health & healing; Carmen Blanco, 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

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Spring Will Come Again Es muss doch Fruehling werden

von Emmanuel Geibel

Und droht der Winter noch so sehr
mit trotzigem Gebaerden,
Streut er auch Eis und Schnee umher -
Es muss doch Fruehling werden!

Blast nur ihr Stuerme, blast mit Macht!
Mir soll darob nicht bangen,
Auf leisen Sohlen uebernacht
kommt doch der Lenz gegangen.

Wenn dir oft auch bangt und graut,
als sei die Hoell' auf Erden,
Nur unverzagt auf Gott vertraut:
Es muss doch Fruehling werden!

As an encouragement to us all after all these days of cold,
snow, ice, storms and rain -
Spring will come for sure! Just have hope and trust in God.

Stewardship and Finance Report

<u>Expenditures for Month of</u>	<u>Jan. 2014</u>
Personnel Expenses	\$ 6,498.00
Utilities	\$ 1,310.00
Ministry/Supplies	\$ 0.00
Maintenance	\$ 44.00
Spiritual Life/Outreach/Advertising	\$ 133.00
Other Disbursements*	\$ 884.00

Total Expenditures **\$ 8,869.00**

<u>Receipts for Month of</u>	<u>Jan. 2014</u>
Weekly Envelopes	\$ 3,469.00
Weekly Plate	\$ 133.00
Benevolences	\$ 343.00
Transfer from Memorial Fund	\$ 3,854.00
Special Offerings	\$ 1,168.00
Annuity	\$ 2,217.00
Other Receipts**	\$ 2,695.00

Total Receipts **\$ 13,879.00**

*Insurance, Office Supplies, Palm Tree, Sunday School

** Assessment, Interest, Palm Tree

Worship Schedule for March

March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 – Worship at 10:00 a.m.
Ash Wednesday – March 5, 7:30 p.m.

- Communion will be celebrated on March 2, 5, and 16
- Prayer Meeting each Sunday at 9:00 a.m.
- Junior Church each Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

March 2014

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