

TRINITY

Episcopal Church



Trinity Tidings Updated

The "E" Newsletter of Trinity Episcopal Church,
Sutter Creek

Updated
December
2009

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Thoughts and Musings from the Interim Rector

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! This was the favorite greeting Paul used in his letters to churches. I add my own grace and blessings to his.

Thank You's

To Elizabeth Gibson for all, and I do mean all, that she did to organize and to orchestrate *Project Thanksgiving*. This year, the number of baskets increased to 45 and this parish rose to the challenge. Thanks to all of you (too numerous to mention and not to get it accurate) for your contributions of food and labor. This parish can be proud of its outreach efforts.

Also thanks to all who helped Fr. Ray Potter on his two visits here to celebrate and preach in my absence. I heard that he did a great job and I know that he enjoyed being here. A special thanks to Tony and Carol Holt for taking Ray and his wife, Roberta, out to dinner. I have supplied many times in my 20 years of priesthood. It is not always easy to enter an unknown situation to celebrate and to preach; one does know the "lay of the land" (local customs). There are no two clergy and no two churches alike in the Episcopal Church.

Christmas Eve Services

This year the two services will be at 3:30 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.

Las Posadas

Las Posadas was everything that folks had said that it would be. Thanks to all from Trinity who were in the planning and who participated. I just wish that I had dressed warmer. Hey, I should know better; I had two parishes in Massachusetts and have officiated at graveside service in minus 20 degree weather (including wind-chill). Oh well, I survived. I was told that there would be crowds but had no idea how many people would be there. Spectacular!

Ministerial Association of Amador County

Soon after I arrived here, I was contacted (the day of the lunch) and asked if I had been told about the monthly clergy association lunch. This happened on several occasions and I just sort of gave up on it. In September, a member of the association called me and asked two things: one, did I know about the luncheon and could he (and his wife) come to one of our services. He was doing research on liturgical styles for his Master in Divinity degree. I said, "sure" and told him when our services were. He and his wife came to an 8:30 am service, received communion, and said that they felt welcome and comfortable here.

I went to the October luncheon at the Church of the Nazarene and was warmly received by the group, although the clerical collar was something they were not accustomed to seeing. Due to previous scheduling, I was not able to attend the November meeting.

Last Thursday I attended the December luncheon. It was good; the fellowship was friendly. Fr. Tom Seabridge from Immaculate Conception was there. It was my first time to meet Fr. Tom and we soon discovered that we had clergy friends in common. The leader of the group gave thanks that Trinity Episcopal had joined the clerical association. Trinity will host the April meeting with the gracious help of the E. C. W.

Fr. Robert +

Senior Warden's Message

Hello Trinity Family!

This will be a busier than usual December for your vestry. We will be working on our budget, election of Applicant Review Committee candidates, and looking at the work of the Profile Committee, who will be sharing their work with the parish soon, and requesting input from the parish.

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After the Profile Committee has obtained input from each parishoner their information will be forwarded to the Bishops office, and based on what the parish has requested the Bishops office will send the Applicant Review Committee a list of potential candidates to review. The Applicant Review Committee will research candidates from there, and they will make recommendations.

Thanks to the repair work and maintainence work of the "Unknown Angels" in the front and sides of the church, we have had a leakless November, the parkway area is weeded , parking lot area mowed , and our church is looking lovely inside and out. Thank you so very much! Please keep your vestry in your prayers especially this month and next as we wrestle with challenging financial issues.

Since Advent is an Incarnational season, my prayer for our parish is that in each of us is born a renewed spirit of hope, love , faith and energy to carry out God's mission in our world!

Agape,

Jeri Miller

Sr. Warden

News From Trinity Library

Check This Out!

We have so many fabulous books in our church library. In the coming months I'm going to point out a few that are especially worthy for your consideration. (If you find a book in the library you'd like to get others to read, submit a few words about it for the newsletter or write a few words on a post-it and stick it under the book on the shelf for others to find.)

"We have so many fabulous books in our church library. In the coming months I'm going to point out a few that are especially worthy for your consideration."

Remember, it's very easy to check a book out. When you find a book you'd like to take out to read, simply open the book, take the book card out of the glued envelope, write on the card your first and last name and the day's date on which you will be taking the book-the month, the day, and the year. Then leave the card on top of the desk- John or I will properly file the book card. When you return a book, just leave it on the desk; again, John or I will find the book card, slide it back into the book's envelope and re-shelve the book so that someone else can discover it.

Consider these two outstanding books in our library:

1) The sun & moon over Assisi : a personal encounter with Francis and Clare by Gerard Thomas Straub -this book is available for check-out. (I have not read this book, but I discovered it in the library and then found out more about it from some enthusiastic readers. See the reviews below.)

Amazon.com Review

The unlikely pilgrim in this highly recommended story is Gerard

Thomas Straub, a former television producer who worked on popular soap operas such as "General Hospital" and "The Doctors." Raised as a Catholic, Straub fell into a bout of atheism after a disillusioning stint working for one of television's leading Christian evangelists. Nonetheless, Straub was blessed (or is it cursed?) with a seeker's soul and a novelist's imagination. He couldn't stay away from the quest for spiritual understanding. The upshot is a story within a story: the story of two saints from Assisi, Francis and Clare, as well as the story of how a disillusioned man finds himself in the Umbrian hills of Italy, completely entranced by these two legendary Italians.

If you enter this book as you would a meditation, you'll be fine. If you're looking for a light, straightforward narrative, move on. One must be willing to stop fidgeting and let go of expectations of how a memoir or a biography of a saint should read. Instead, this is a wandering and unfolding book that reveals deeper layers with every turn of page. Not only does it unveil the stories of Francis and Clare, it also reveals the classic human quest, where we face our most vulnerable spiritual questions and fears. Billed as an introduction to Franciscan scholarship, this is really more beautiful and ambitious. Consider it a primer on the art of Christian pilgrimage. --Gail Hudson

(Here's another review by Jane K. Griffen, Carlsbad, CA)

When I pick up a book on spirituality, that is nearly 600 pages long, I find myself flipping back and forth, counting the number of pages I still have to read (yawn). Having admitted that, I will add that "religion" is probably my first choice when searching for new books. Conversely with this book, I found myself counting the pages to see how many pages were left, because I didn't want it to end. Straub takes us along on his spiritual pilgrimage. In his "Thoughts Scribbled While walking," we can almost chart his spiritual growth (like an ascending line on graph paper). This book will inspire you to follow his lead by pursuing a deeper relationship with God. I was skeptical upon reading his background as a TV/soap writer, but I found it (along with his honesty and humility), to lend credibility to his personal transformation. I have never read a book that inspired me to write the author to tell him how much his writing touched me. This is one author I would like to thank.

This is a book to be savored. As a resident of Southern California, I found his personal observations on the cultural values of Americans right on target. It's too bad this book may never make the N.Y. Times Best Sellers' List, it could change the world.

(Finally, here's one last one by A. Haag from San Diego, CA)

I love this book and, in fact, I'm buying copies to give to friends. The story of the ongoing conversion of the author is an example of the journey of any seeker of God: great awakenings, stumbles, doubts, reassurances, understanding.

The first portion of the book is compelling and hard to put aside. The other chapters, however, are so rich with material from additional sources that I found them best to meditate on, think of as you live your life, and then dip into once again. This is perfect as a devotional for the liturgical seasons of advent and lent.

2) The Wisdom Jesus: transforming Heart and Mind-A New Perspective on Christ and His Message by Cynthia Bourgeault-this book is available for check-out. (I have read this book and have commented in the past on it's amazingly, clear writing. See the reviews below.)

from Publishers Weekly

Inspired by the Nag Hammadi discoveries and influenced by more than 30 years of study with Fr. Thomas Keating and other contemplatives in a variety of wisdom traditions, Bourgeault, an Episcopal priest, encourages seekers to reach beyond the Western tradition of Jesus-as-Savior to embrace Jesus more wholly as a wisdom teacher. Through a transformative lesson in vocabulary, giving new meaning to perceptions like "head," "heart" and "repentance," she offers a fresh reading of the Beatitudes, challenges us to explore the more complicated messages imbedded in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke and emphasizes a notion of "self-emptying love" that allows for a shift in consciousness from ego-based analysis to acceptance of divine abundance, which in turn sheds new light on examinations of the

Passion, crucifixion and ensuing events. Guided chapter primers on centered meditation and chanting further prepare readers to test the open waters of welcoming the "flow of... deeper sustaining wisdom." Though strict legalists may not warm to this new spiritual perspective, other students of faith will find an especially intriguing and engaging path waiting for them. (Aug.) Copyright 2008 Reed Business Information.

from Library Journal

Episcopal priest Bourgeault (Centering Prayer) offers a fluent, persuasive reimagining of Christian understanding through the lens of the Eastern search for wisdom. Although the publisher is best known for Buddhist works, Bourgeault's innovative approach results in a sound and authentic Christianity that takes into account historical discoveries and Eastern traditions; her vision of Jesus centers around "self-emptying." With five "wisdom practices" for Christians. Highly recommended. Copyright 2008 Reed Business Information.

Diane Christensen
Junior Warden

Diocesan Convention Report

Report on the 99th Annual Meeting
Of the Convention
Of the
Episcopal Diocese of Northern California
November 12 -14, 2009
Redding, California

Trinity Church, Sutter Creek, was represented by five lay delegates: Emmi Felberg, Carol Holt, Gerry and Nancy Moore and Frank Tortorich and our Clergy Representative Fr. Robert Blumenstock.

Also, attending from our parish were our church nurse Susan Wahlstrom with her display on Health Ministry, and Clergy Spouse Doni Blumenstock.

The convention began with a reception at 4:00 p.m., Thursday night to celebrate the 25th anniversary of The Episcopal Foundation, which included light refreshments. Registration began 5:00 p.m.

At the registration tables, each attendee was greeted with welcoming faces, which included our own Mary Ann Tortorich as an assistant to the registration coordinator.



The convention was officially called to order Friday with Morning Prayer followed by reports and elections for a variety of committee positions. One fact I found interesting in one of the reports was that half of all the churches in the diocese have a part-time priest.

Bishop Beisner addressed the delegates with promises for change.

One of the changes comes in the new formula used to calculate parish apportionments. This change will allow more money to remain at the parish level and less apportionment to the diocese. To see his address go to the web site: www.dncweb.org/convention.

The following statement is provided by our church treasure and delegate Carol Holt.

The new mission apportionment calculation resolution was passed. This new method of calculation is a tiered plan so that all churches pay the same percentage on the income of the church. Under the new method all churches in 2010 will pay 10% on the first \$60,000 of income, 16% on the next \$60,000 of income and will pay 22% on all income over \$120,000. The resolution allows for the percentages to be set each year by the diocesan council with the first tier not to exceed 10%, the second tier to not exceed 17.5% and for income over \$120,000 not to exceed 25%. This method will allow Trinity to keep around \$5,000.00 more for mission within our parish.
Thanks Carol.

The diocese pledged to focus more on ministries at the local level.

The Bishop's theme for the convention was, "Jesus, help change us according to Your will." This was repeated numerous times during the convention and we were asked to repeat it with him.

He also stated that, "We welcome acceptance of diversity in thought."

For lunch we went to Buz's Crab Shop, a funky, but fun place, with good seafood.

The afternoon was devoted to more reports and the passage of several resolutions that were non-controversial and all passed unanimously.

"The Bishop's theme for the convention was, "Jesus, help change us according to Your will." This was repeated numerous times during the convention and we were asked to repeat it with him."

The convention attendees and visitors were invited to a very nice sit down dinner. The highlight of the dinner, and certainly the convention, was the Keynote Address by Presiding Bishop The Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori.

Bishop Katharine's speech can also be found on the diocesan website, along with Bishop Beisner's address and photos taken during the convention.

Saturday morning was devoted to more reports and a few more resolutions. When we broke for a two-hour lunch, we went to the Olive Garden for fun, food and conversation.

Doni attended the Clergy Spouses' Luncheon.

The afternoon session was the celebration of the Eucharist with Bishop Beisner as the Celebrant and Bishop Katharine as the Preacher. Her sermon is also found on the website.

A big thrill for our delegation was to receive the communion bread from the hand of Bishop Katharine. She is a beautiful, peaceful lady and looked each of us in the eye as she presented the "Body of Christ."

Bishop Beisner stated, "This is the first time in the 15 years that he has been in the diocese that the Presiding Bishop has been to the Northern California Diocese."

However, some say it has been around 45 or more years since a Presiding Bishop has visited our diocese.

A copy of the Convention Handbook is on the back table in the church for those who might want to see what a convention is all about. Please return for others to view it.

Nancy Moore offered a valuable comment that is so true.

We delegates appreciate conversing with other delegates and from viewing displays showing projects going on elsewhere in the diocese, we got some ideas of things we could do at Trinity- especially in the area of outreach.

Emmi Felberg submitted this statement that is very fitting for those of us

who are delegates.

As a first time delegate to Diocesan Convention, and after hearing various stories regarding endless discussion of mundane resolutions and boring speeches, my comment is--don't believe a word of such stories! I welcomed the opportunity to hear Dean Brian Baker discuss the diocesan budget in the light of living our faith in a changing world and the chance to listen to and talk with folks doing exciting outreach in various ministries. To others at Trinity who have never attended a convention, please consider running as a delegate.

If you have any questions about serving as a delegate to the convention in Redding in 2010, be sure to ask any of us. It will be a celebration of the 100th Annual Meeting.

We will be voting on delegates at our parish annual meeting in January 2010.

Submitted by: Frank Tortorich on behalf of and along with statements offered by the other delegates.

Gratitude Tree Fund Raiser Completed

The Gratitude Tree Fund Raiser raised \$1575.00 towards ending 2009 in a positive position. Thank you one and all who said "Thank You" by making a donation. Most people choose to keep what they were grateful for between them and God.

Below is a list of things that people indicated that they were grateful for:

My Trinity Family

My husbands prostate cancer surgery being successful and he is cancer free

A wonderful Community

Grateful for all

For a loving and great Interim Rector

For Grandson visiting

My Church

The church library

This church & community, new office, my home, love freely given by others, my parents and grandparents, my husband, life itself

Trinity, health, job, home, food, family and friends

That Nick was baptized

My Mom and her healing

Life

The people of Trinity church who have welcomed and blessed us

For the work of our Sr. Warden and Vestry

For those who have continued to share Gods love during the trying time at Trinity

In memory of Rev. Mark Lawrence

In 2010 the Gratitude Tree Fund Raiser will resume. The Vestry approved the idea of using the Gratitude Tree as a way to raise funds to be used for **OUTREACH**. The benefactor of the Outreach funds will change quarterly. Vestry will choose the benefactor for the 1st quarter of 2010 and then we will determine the remaining benefactors by voting at the Annual meeting on January 24th. Currently on the list is Breaking Bread with Friend, Our Sister Diocese of Honduras, the Belfry (this is the college program that is on the campus at Davis and their funding was cut from the diocesan budget), Episcopal Relief and Development. **We are looking for more ideas.** If you have an idea for a benefactor please send me an email or call the church office before January 12th so that I may submit them to Vestry. We are hoping to incorporate speaker events to explain the ministry that will be the benefactor with the start of each quarter.

"The Gratitude Tree Fund Raiser raised \$1575.00 towards ending 2009 in a positive position. Thank you one and all who said "Thank You" by making a donation."

Carol Holt

Health Ministries

**Advent Blessings from
Trinity Health Ministries**

"Unplugging the Christmas Machine"

This popular book has become a reminder that in the midst of all we do during our Christmas preparations, to remember to take good care of ourselves in body, mind & spirit:

- Give yourself the gift of time to remember this season is all about celebrating the birth of the Baby Jesus.
- Get enough sleep, eat right & exercise.
- If you enjoy a holiday drink, remember the **0-1-2-4 alcohol consumption program**. The "0" means no alcohol if you are pregnant, driving a car, or have zero tolerance for alcohol. "1" is for no more than one drink per hour or "2" per day or no more than "4" per week. A "drink" is defined as: a glass of wine, a bottle of beer or a shot of hard liquor.
- Set a budget and stick to it
- Set priorities and focus on what is really important and brings you joy in the holidays.

A Christmas Blessing-By Joyce Rupp

--May there be harmony in all your relationships.
--May you give and receive love generously.
--May each person who comes into your life be greeted as another Christ.
--May the hope of this sacred season settle in your soul.
--May the wonder and awe that fills the eyes of Children be awakened within you.
--May the bonds of love for one another be strengthened around your table of festivities.
--May you daily open the gift of your life and be grateful

Susan Wahlstram

Child Care Provider Needed for Christmas Eve and Annual Meeting

We are looking for one or more people to provide nursery care for children under 5 for the Christmas Eve services and someone to supervise all the kids during the Annual meeting. Vestry has approved the use of some of the unused child care budget to cover these events.

Christmas Eve Services are at 3:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.
Annual Meeting will be on January 24th. We will have one service at 9:30 and the annual meeting will follow.

If you can help or know of someone who can help for any of these events please call/email Carol Holt for more details.

The Advent Wreath

The celebration of Christ's birth on the 25th of December was introduced as a special feast in Rome in the middle of the fourth century, and quickly became one of the main feasts of the Christian Year. During this time also, the practice of keeping a penitential season before Christmas became widespread. In the 13th century it was fixed to the four weeks leading up to Christmas.

The name Advent means coming, and refers both to the coming of Christ in his birth at Bethlehem, and to his coming as the Judge of all at the end of time. The Sunday readings and hymns reflect this dual theme of Christ's coming as Savior and Judge; our joy and our penitence; our "already-but-not-yet" existence.

The Advent wreath originated several hundred years ago among the Lutherans of eastern Germany, and probably came from the symbols of light that were used in folklore during the winter months of November and December. At that time of the year, pre-Christian culture feared the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, as a time when the malignant activity of evil spirits was specially active. During the month of

"This popular book has become a reminder that in the midst of all we do during our Christmas preparations, to remember to take good care of ourselves in body, mind & spirit:"

Yule (December) lighted candles were placed on a wheel, with a prayer that the god of light turn the wheel of the earth toward the sun and lengthen the days.

The Church Christianized many of these light and fire symbols. The evergreens, branches of fir, originally placed near the hearth, symbolized the everlasting life found in Christ. This is the origin of our Christmas trees. One of the branches, bent to form a circle, further symbolized God's Son as the light of the world, and there are four candles for the four weeks of Advent.

Gradually the Advent wreath became a symbol reminding the faithful of the Old Testament, when humanity was "sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death"; when the prophets, illumined by God, announced the coming of the Redeemer; and when the hearts of humans glowed with the desire for the Messiah. The wreath itself came to symbolize the fulfillment of the coming of Christ and the glory of His birth.

-John Patton in The Deacon's Treasure,
Christ Church, St. Laurence,
Sydney, Australia.

"The Advent wreath originated several hundred years ago among the Lutherans of eastern Germany, and probably came from the symbols of light that were used in folklore during the winter months of November and December."

Profile Committee

Calling Process: Section III: Parish Profile Committee Report, December 10, 2009

Since our first meeting on September 30, 2009, the Parish Profile Committee has been working long and hard on the Charge given to us by the Vestry on October 16. Per the Charge, the Parish Survey was presented to the Vestry on their requested date of December 8, 2009. A copy of the Charge is on the bulletin board in Jane's Hall.

The first date suggested by the Vestry Charge of developing a completed Parish Profile by December 28, 2009, could not be met as the committee's deadline for the return of the surveys is Tuesday, January 5, 2010. However, our plan is to complete the profile long before the Vestry's second date, and more realistic date, of February 28, 2010.

We completed the draft of the survey, sent it for suggestions to Bobbie Keill, Diocesan Calling Facilitator. She responded; we made some changes; sent it back to her for approval. Next we sent our final survey draft to the Vestry for their December 8 meeting. The Vestry approved the document with a few additions.

Once the Vestry approved the survey, the next step would be to send it to the Bishop's Office for review. However, since Canon Britt, representing the Bishop, was attending the Vestry meeting, she also approved it with changes on the spot.

Also at the Vestry meeting the Profile Committee was directed to distribute the survey as soon as possible, December 15 at the latest. As you may know, the survey was handed to those at church on Sunday, December 13 and the other survey was mailed December 14, 2009.

The first major step of the Charge was to compose, distribute, gather, and tally responses from a Parish Survey so that we may more accurately and honestly describe our parish and our needs and desires for the future. We had to decide on what information we needed in order to write the Parish Profile. We labored over how to word the questions, or statement options, in order to obtain that information in a positive and accurate way. The report from the World Café event of April 26, 2009, is invaluable and the information will be incorporated into the Parish Profile.

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The committee is anticipating a prompt return of the survey from all parishioners in order to meet the deadlines put forth in the Vestry's

Charge. Reminder contacts begin December 28.

In the meantime the committee is working on other segments of the Parish Profile that do not rely on the survey. For those segments, see the Calling Process Workbook in Jane's Hall. Keep an eye on the committee's poster indicating more than half the steps completed.

Just a reminder, one of many to come, to please return your survey soon, remember:

"Simple as 1) Pray about your answers, 2) Fill it out, 3) Mail it in."

If you don't have a survey by Friday, December 18, contact the church office.

Blessings and Merry Christmas, Mary Ann Tortorich, Scribe for the Profile Committee

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