

THE TRINITY TIMES

THE NEWSLETTER OF TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

January 2021

From the Pastor

When I was in the sixth grade, I got a diary for my birthday. It was small and had a black cover with gold edging, and inside, every day of the year was assigned a few lines beneath it. It came with a little set of keys which fit into the little lock sewn onto the clasp of the diary.

Looking back over the pages of that diary (yes, I still have it), I can now read such exciting things as “I made a C on my geometry test today”, or “Diane’s boyfriend is mad at her,” or my favorite line--which appears a number of times on a number of days in my diary--“I have nothing to write about today.” That thought must have taken hold, since I quit writing about midway through the year. I moved from writing, “I have nothing to write about today” to simply not writing that I had nothing about which to write.

Diaries are still in use but today they are called journals, or on the internet, “blogs.” Keeping a diary or journaling or blogging reminds me of the Book of Acts because that’s exactly what the Book of Acts is--it’s a diary, a journal, an 1st century blog which describes the story of how the gospel of Jesus Christ expanded from one small room in Jerusalem where the disciples were gathered after Jesus’ death, to the entire world. We think that Luke wrote the Book of Acts, which reads less like a diary than a novel until we get to Chapter 16, verse 10, when we find ourselves right there in the middle of the action with that eyewitness who wrote, “we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.”

Macedonia is best known for being the home country of Alexander the Great, who, using Macedonia as the home base, conquered all the land from Afghanistan to Egypt. So, “We set sail” and went to Philippi, the leading city of Macedonia, and “we remained there for some days” until the sabbath when “we sat down and spoke to a group of women who had gathered there by the river.”

Now let me point out how unusual this journal entry

is. The Apostle Paul, who is the leader of this group of missionaries, has only recently become a Christian. Before then, Paul was a devout Jew, a “Pharisee of the Pharisees,” and so obedient to all the Jewish laws and ordinances which included keeping the sabbath, refraining from eating certain types of food, and--not speaking publicly to women, specifically Jewish women but most certainly speaking to Gentile women was out of the question. Remember how Jesus raised everyone’s hackles when he had that long conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well? Beverly Gaventa writes, “That Paul the Pharisee should sit to teach a group of women is nothing less than astonishing. This detail reminds us how significantly Paul had changed. He now disregarded such traditional Pharisaic maxims such as ‘talk not much with a woman. . . everyone that talks much with a woman causes evil to himself; and desists from the words of Torah and his end is he inherits hell.’”

But the gospel changed Paul, and now instead of practicing law, Paul chose to practice hospitality, the same hospitality about which he writes in his letter to the Galatians, “there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus”

Paul and company sat down and taught the women, and our journal writer commented that one of them, Lydia, “was listening to us. The Lord had opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul.” She listened and heard the good news of Jesus Christ with an open heart and mind. She had her entire household baptized but went one step further: she returned Paul’s hospitality with an offer for Paul and company to stay at her home. It’s a generous gesture and it’s more than having a room in which to spend one night. Lydia offered Paul and Timothy and any of their entourage a place to live while they preached and taught and practiced the gospel of there in Macedonia.

In a time and culture when women had little or nothing in terms of power, property or freedom, Lydia seemed to have all three in abundance. She had money, she ran a business and she owned a

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The Trinity Times is published monthly. We welcome news items and other contributions from members and friends of Trinity. Bring your articles to the church or e-mail them to the editor, Judy Schomber (schomberstat@aol.com) by the 20th of the month for the following month's newsletter.

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH STAFF

Sally Hughes, Pastor

William E. Berger, Minister of Music

Linda Rogers, Office Manager

Jeff Durham, Facilities Manager

SESSION MEMBERS

Sally Hughes, Moderator	Vira Baker (2020)
Lucas Bates (2022)	Vera Billington (2021)
Jackie Elbert (2022)	Hank Howerton (2020)
Paul Parker (2021)	Linda Rutherford (2020)
George Ward (2022)	Aad Zeeuw (2021)

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SESSION

Moderator: Rev. Sally Hughes

Stated Meeting of November 24, 2020

Work to establish an online donation option is in process.

Jeff Durham thinks he can repair Trinity's road sign without LED light and save church \$1100 dollars.

One temporary doggie station has been set up in front yard to see how it will work.

Presbytery will have a virtual Lessons and Carols Service available during December and. Twenty churches in Presbytery (including Trinity) are involved.

Christmas Eve Service activities will depend on Metro Nashville guidelines but alternative to an indoor service, Trinity will have a brief service outside.

Session approved congregational meeting for December 13, to elect elder nominating committee of Vira Baker, Hank Howerton, Benita Sims and Katy Wilson. Sally will reach out to Robin and Ray of Presbytery to discuss instructions on a congregational meeting during mandated COVID-19 guidelines.

Lane The Finance Committee was asked to move forward to hire a part time bookkeeper.

A meeting has been scheduled to discuss an issue with owners of property along Trinity which backs up

JANUARY WORSHIP SCHEDULE AND LECTIONARY READINGS

January 3 **Second Sunday of Christmas**
Jeremiah 31:7-14 *and* Psalm 147:1220;
Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1 (1-9) 10-18

January 10 **Baptism of the Lord**
Genesis 1:1-5 *and* Psalm 29; Acts 19: 1-7;
Mark 1:4-11

January 17 **Second Sunday of Epiphany**
1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20) *and*
Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20;
John 1:43-51

January 24 **Third Sunday After Epiphany**
Jonah 3:1-5, 10 *and* Psalm 62:5-12;
1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20

January 31 **Fourth Sunday after Epiphany**
Deuteronomy 18:15-20,10 *and* Psalm 111;
1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28

to Trinity concerning an old wall that runs along a portion of the boundary. The area has not been maintained for many years and as a result the wall has fallen. Homeowners feel the area is hazardous due to instability of wall and debris hidden by overgrowth.

JOIN THE HANDBELL CHOIR!

If you are interested in learning how to play the handbells and being part of a handbell choir, please let Linda Rogers or Will Berger know. The handbell choir might be our next chancel choir, until singing is safe during worship.



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS



Sara Anne Berger 3
Thoma Parker 5
Peter O'Brien 22
Ruth Sims 22

THANK YOU FROM FIFTY FORWARD

Dear Trinity Giving Team,

See below – and THANK YOU for the difference you have made in the lives of these families this Christmas!!! Also, a HUGE THANK YOU to Katy Wilson for coordinating this project AND delivering the gifts to Fifty Forward last week.

*Blessings,
Linda*

From: Robin Johnson
To: Katy Wilson, Sally Hughes
Subject: Photos (Ed. Note: the photos did not transfer from the e-mail. We will try to have them resent for next issue.)

Hi Katy & Sally – A few photos from deliveries. We've got a good photo of Katy and Ron

PIES & COOKIES FROM OUR TRINITY BAKER!

Abby Crawford, has moved her business location to Mesa Komal kitchens, where she will be able to scale up her efforts. You can order cookies and other treats online at www.mountainlaurelbakeshop.com, for pickup on Sundays in front of the Trinity Office from 12:30 to 1:30, or you can email her at abby@mountainlaurelbakeshop.com if you need your goods delivered or want to pick up on a different day.

and then one of Karl who was especially excited about his ham – his #1 wish! He and Daphne were so very appreciative of all the gifts. I think there is a personalized thank you coming from them.

And finally, I've got a photo of our Victory Over Crime team (Ashlyn and Ashley) with their loaded "sleigh" that includes the gifts for Grecia and her grandson. Because of the sensitive nature of the clients in that program I'm not sure we will be able to get a photo of them but I know that we'll have lots of reactions!

Thank you again for your donations!

Robin Johnson

FRIDAY PRAYER TIME

On Friday mornings, Sally Hughes is offering a Facebook Live prayer time beginning at 8:30 AM. This prayer time includes concerns and people for which we pray on Sunday, as well as any provided by members or friends. The prayer time will consist of opening words of scripture, a psalm reading, then prayer, and conclude with the Lord's prayer. If you are a Facebook member, you can submit prayer requests via the comments, and if you are not, you can send them via text to Sally (615-594-5765) or email. These Facebook prayer times will NOT be saved on the Facebook page as our worship services are saved.

TRINITY'S BOOK CLUB

The next meeting by Zoom and in person, will be Thursday, January 14 at 6:00 p.m. The book for January is *Chances Are* by Russo. If you would like to be on the email list for the book club, please let Carla McDonough (carla_mcdonough@bellsouth.net) or Katy Wilson (katybwilson@gmail.com) know. (Sneak peek for reading ahead: February 11 meeting – *The Last Girls* by Smith.)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS!

A big thank you to everyone who has been mailing their financial contribution to the church! That is so wonderful! Please continue to remember pledges and contributions to the church via the US Post office, or online if you have the ability to send payments through your bank. As always, we should be careful but not fearful. We should practice compassion as well as cleanliness. Whether sick or well, we are in the hands of a loving God.

The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?

The Lord is stronghold of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?

Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord! (from Psalm 27)



TRINITY TRACKINGS

Please keep these folks in your prayers:

If you would like the minister to offer prayer on your behalf or on behalf of someone else, please call the office and leave a message with a prayer request or email at sally.hughes@trinitypresnashville.org.

Norma DeJarnette who has returned to her home.

-Steve Sanders, who is diagnosed with cancer.

-Mary Anne Berger, Will's mother, who has health concerns.

-Friends of Joe Brady, Steve Johnson who has cancer and Matthew Drumright who was diagnosed with COVID-19

-Sympathy to family and friends of Madeline Adams who died in Atlanta in November. She was a member of Trinity for many years.

-Steve Nunn's cousins, Cathy Fox and Carleton Orme, and Cathy's grandson's, Kaden and Christopher Davis. Their family has sustained a great personal loss.

-Friends of Linda Rutherford: Diane Hubbs; Gordon Evans and his wife Susan

-Derrie Edge, who has been diagnosed with breast cancer.

-These folks who are in assisted living facilities: **Frances Burns, Norma Johnson, John McRae**. Please consider sending these folks a letter or card, as they are not able to receive visitors at this time. If you don't have the addresses, please call the church office.

-Joel Guest, son of Sara and Bob Guest

-Bill and Joan Dougherty, at home. Joan is recovering from a laparoscopic hysterectomy. At this time, they welcome prayers, but request no texts, flowers or food.

-Bill Barger and Kim Dougherty

-Those who are grieving over the death of a loved one during this time of year.

-All those affected by COVID-19, whether physically, emotionally, spiritually or financially

PRISON MINISTRY

Trinity's prison ministry from previous years resulted in some prisoners on death row joining the church. One of those church members, Kennath Henderson, is asking for folks to correspond with him. If you would like to do so, please use the church address as your return address. When the office receives any response mail, it will be forwarded to your home address. Please limit sharing of personal information in your correspondence.

Kennath A. Henderson #250126
RMSI Unit 2
7475 Cockrill Bend Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37209-1048

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home. She was a seller of purple goods, which were sold only to the members of the upper class in the Macedonia area--they would be the only ones who could afford such expensive cloth. For our day, imagine that Lydia is the local retailer for Vera Wang, selling dresses that cost thousands of dollars. She lives well and she employs a staff and has a fabulous home. . .and she's a worshipper of God, and she's open to hearing the good news of Jesus Christ, and she's anxious, eager, insistent that the gospel be proclaimed to all the city. Our journal writer uses the word, "prevailed." "She prevailed upon us" to stay at her home, to use Lydia's home as a base of operations, to enjoy Lydia's hospitality in proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ.

Lydia's hospitality reflects the meaning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Her hospitality reflects these hospitable words from the gospel of Matthew: "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it

to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

Lydia, our sales executive from Thyatira, embodies the gospel of hospitality by welcoming the stranger, giving food and drink, and even after Paul and his crew were thrown in prison, she received them back into her home. And Lydia, wealthy citizen of Phillipi, doesn't hoard her money but uses it for the comfort and well-being of others. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the gospel of welcoming, including, nourishing, sharing and providing company. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the gospel of hospitality.

The Gospel of John offers us another facet to the good news of hospitality--peace, and the presence of a helper, a comforter, an advocate.

While the disciples were finishing up their meal, Jesus spoke to them. It was just an hour or so before his betrayal and arrest. Jesus knew what was about to happen, and he knew that in the dark shadow of his crucifixion, his disciples would be frightened. They wouldn't know where to turn or whom to trust. Their world would be in complete disorder and chaos.

So to them Jesus spoke these words, "I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with
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you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

That’s what the gospel of hospitality is: offering strength in times of weakness; guidance in times of perplexity and confusion; a shelter during and even after the storm; comfort and encouragement when all seems lost or hopeless or simply chaotic. “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

After natural disasters, I have heard and read stories of complete strangers who stopped to help someone in need. I have heard of folks who opened their homes and offered a place to stay to those who could not return to their own damaged homes. I have heard stories of people opening their hearts and sharing their resources with those who had none. I have heard stories of how those while physically unable to assist the victims of natural disasters, would give money to provide meals or shelter.

Every day we have the opportunity to practice the gospel of hospitality, even during this pandemic time-- especially in this pandemic! That gospel can be proclaimed wherever we are, no matter who we are. The gospel of hospitality is regularly writing an elderly person. The gospel of hospitality is making two casseroles for dinner and taking one to the young family in the neighborhood. The gospel of hospitality is complimenting someone’s smile on a ZOOM call. The gospel of hospitality is donating to a charitable cause instead of buying money for one or two cups of coffee. The gospel of hospitality is inviting someone to watch online worship. The gospel of hospitality is calling to offer condolences weeks after the funeral is over.

Eugene Petersen, a retired Presbyterian pastor who is best known for his brilliant Bible translation called *The Message*, wrote, “if there is a single word that catches the relationship complexity of my wife’s personality, it would be the word, hospitality.” He wrote about how hospitality was part of who his wife was, just like eating or breathing. Which, he said, began to run counter to what was going on in society. “Inhospitability is epidemic in America. There are a lot of displaced persons in America. It is hard to be a woman in America today. It is hard to care for creation in a culture of consumerism. There is a

lot of hate in the air and strangers who are suspicious of each other. There is a lot of rude treatment of people and of creation...and the conditions are not favorable for hospitality.” Petersen gives reasons for today’s inhospitability but he is less interested in why our culture—even in, especially in the church—has become inhospitable, and more interested in where do we start to overcome it?

As Christ’s disciples, we have been put on this earth to love one another, to let our light shine before all, and to proclaim the gospel of hospitality to everyone. Now, in the dead of winter, I would like for us—as individuals and as a church—to increase our hospitality to each other, to strangers, to those in need.

In our society’s current climate of excluding people and allowing hate speech to dominate, it is all the more important that we push forward with love, fellowship, unity, hospitality.

It can be a little or it can be a lot. It can be one time or ongoing. But the gospel of hospitality is a little like the story that a friend of mine told me a story after the 2010 flood waters entered her home. After the waters had receded, she stood in the living room and surveyed the aftermath of mud and soaked carpet and ruined furniture, and despaired. There was a knock on the door, and when she opened it, there stood a friend who gave her a hug, and then came in with a candle. She lit that candle and immediately the sweet smell of spring and flowers filled the whole room. It didn’t magically get rid of the mud or dry the carpet or put their home back in order but the fragrance assured my friend that her family was not alone. It brought to mind Jesus’ words, “My peace I give to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

Sharing our time and resources like Lydia, offering words of strength and comfort like Jesus, lighting a candle of hope—the gospel of hospitality takes many forms.

We have many opportunities to proclaim that gospel in our families, our jobs, our neighborhoods, our communities, our churches, our world. Share. Include. Comfort. Connect. Give. Help. In these days ahead, may we look and listen to those around us, and as keep our hearts open eagerly to proclaim the gospel of hospitality, the pages of our diary, journal or blog will be filled.

