



The Orbit

February 2018

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The Orbit



THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
ALTOONA PA
TrinityAltoona.com | Facebook.com/TrinityAltoona

February 2018

"Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. 'So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you they have received their reward. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your alms may be done in secret and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.'" Matthew 6:1-4

From the Pastor:

This is the gospel that we read on Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday is the start of the Lenten season. Lent is traditionally the season when one looks at their sinful nature and takes the steps to repent and turn back to God. Part of this discipline is a tradition of giving something up that one likes or a bad habit that one is trying to change. I would like to suggest that it is also a time of giving, or to add giving something positive in one's life. Here at Trinity we offer many opportunities to give. One can increase their weekly offering, give to the ongoing food bank collection at the back of the church, support the different fundraisers that the youth are having for their trip to Houston, or perhaps contribute to the emergency fund that the church has for people who come in need of help with food, heat, gas or other utilities. Something to think about as well is that you do not have to wait until a death in the congregation to contribute a gift to the church. Monies can be given in honor of loved ones, friends, or family. Trinity has a gift policy in place to use those gifts wisely. Remembering that as the ashes are placed on our forehead we are reminded that we are dust and to dust we shall return, perhaps remembering the ministries of the church in ones will or estate is also a way to give alms. It may seem as though the church is always asking for money; however, the giving of alms is an important part of Christian discipleship and the Lenten season is a great time to start a new positive discipline of giving.



Peace,

Lectionary Readings for the Month of February

February 4th

Isaiah 40: 21-31
Psalm 147: 1-11 20
1 Corinthians 9: 16-23
Mark 1:29-39

February 11th

2 Kings 2: 1-12
Psalm 50: 1-6
2 Corinthians 4: 3-6
Mark 9: 2-9

February 18th

Genesis 9: 8-17
Psalm 25: 1-10
1 Peter 3: 18-22
Mark 1: 9-15

February 25th

Genesis 17: 1-7, 15-16
Psalm 22: 23-31
Romans 4: 13-25
Mark 8: 31-38

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Also worth mentioning...

We would thank Ward Trucking on their generous donations to our Theater building/Youth building project. Their donations have helped to keep the cost down.
Thank You Ward Trucking

The next Orbit Deadline is Feb 20th

Please get your article to the newsletter in one of the following ways:

- Email your article to:
office@trinityaltoona.com
drgeesey@verizon.net
 - Drop your article in the Orbit mailbox inside the Christian Education office.
- Please remember:**
- **All articles will be included as long as space permits.**
 - **Articles will be edited for grammar and/or clarity where needed.**
 - **Any article turned in after the deadline will be included in the next month's Orbit.**

Thank You!



Come on down...

TRINITY'S ONGOING ADULT BIBLE STUDY WILL RESUME SPRING

"LEARNING TO LIVE BY FAITH: THE STUDY OF ABRAHAM"

Trinity's Ongoing Adult Bible Study

Spring 2018

- *What do you know about Abraham?*
- *What is Abraham's connection to all 3 major world religions?*
- *Why is Abraham such a prime example of how to live by faith?*
- *How can Abraham's life help us as Christians learn the secrets of living by faith?*
- *What does living by faith actually mean?*
- *How can we live by faith in today's world filled with insecurity and uncertainty?*
- *What is the result of walking by faith?*

These questions, their answers, and many more topics will be the focus of Trinity's Spring Bible Study sessions. No prior experience in Bible study is necessary. Bring your Bible and come on down!

4 weekly times are available for this group study:
Mon. 7:30-8:30 p.m., Tues. 9-10 a.m. and 7-8 p.m., Wed. 7-8 p.m.

All groups meet at the church.

For more info call Lisa Bradley @ 932-7488, lkbradley310@verizon.net

Sessions begin the week of March 5th, 6th, 7th. This study will be 10 weeks long.

Prayer List

Please keep the following people in your prayers ...

Trinity Members

Jim Aungst
Tyler Bennett
Tina Chestney
Sondra Deffibaugh
Jim Gosnell
Paul Hamilton
Kathy Hatch
Kristina Henderson
Ken B. Myers
Ray Nycum
Gene/Joyce Otto
Jaden Rhode
Harry Yeager
Todd Wilkins
Church Health Team

Trinity's Homebound Members

Chris Burda
Arlene Leonard
Bob Nearhoof
Margaretta Perry
Joan Rhiver
Arlene Roessing
Ruth Ann Saleme
Bill Sauserman
Robert Streightiff
Joan Stoudt

Those Serving in the Armed Forces

Sarah Brown
Jim Buchanan
Jason Buck
Kyle Eberhart
Nathan Frank
Justin Patz
Peter Quinn
Eric Sweet
Jason Smith

Family Members and Friends

Janet/Charlie Aungst
Ashley Batisti
Pat Burk
Simon Casalvieni
Sue Casalvienri
Deb Civiello
Gaine Dodson
Andrew Fundack
Haley Gehret
Ed Kaps
Dennis Miller
Harry Miller Sr.
Leslie Mussleman
Skip Mussleman
Joan Spencer
Elaine Stetser
Rachel Stoudt
Tom Stoudt
Jon Walters



Please know that you may add someone to our prayer list at any time by calling the church office (943-3972). If it is appropriate to remove someone from the prayer list, again, please inform the church office. Names of family and friends will remain on the prayer list for two weeks. You may keep someone's name on the list by calling the church office and giving us a brief update so that we can continue to effectively pray for your loved one.



Stewardship Community

A message from Trinity's Stewardship Committee:

Offering statements should be examined carefully

By the middle of February, offering statements for anyone who used envelopes in 2017 will be available for pickup in the sanctuary.

Even if you do not use this information when you file your federal income tax, you should carefully examine your record of giving for the past year and prayerfully ask yourself these simple questions:

How many offerings did I give last year?

Were there large gaps where I gave nothing to church, even though our ministries continued 52 weeks each year?

Am I faithfully setting aside an offering whether I attend worship or not?

When was the last time I considered a modest increase in my weekly or monthly gift?

As is stated in Deuteronomy 16, "Each of you shall bring such a gift as he can in proportion to the blessing which the Lord your God has given you." Please keep this very important verse in mind as you evaluate your personal offering record.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE: As was stated at the annual meeting in November, Trinity needs almost \$6,000 each week in offerings to pay the bills and fund our ministries. As this weekly target was rarely achieved last year, our treasurer was forced to dip into our modest reserve fund and withdraw about \$30,000 to make ends meet in 2017.

Reversing this alarming trend will be a top priority in 2018.

If your worship attendance and offerings were inconsistent in 2017, don't forget about the Simply Giving opportunity.

This program enables our members to have their offerings electronically deducted from their bank accounts. *Please give this some serious consideration if you have difficulty attending worship services on a regular basis.*

And finally... We still have offering envelopes available for our members. If you are one of the people who have not used envelopes in past years, we encourage you to contact the church office if you'd like a box for 2018.



Are you receiving your broadcast emails?

Up-to-the-minute information is just a click away

There are few churches in the Allegheny Synod that keep their members better aware of ministry opportunities, upcoming events, dates and times than Trinity.

In days gone by, people came to rely on our *Orbit* newsletter, which arrived in their U.S. mailbox around the first of the month, for vital information. Of course, the weekly worship bulletin has always been used to keep members in the loop.

Thanks to modern technology, there are additional ways to stay connected at any hour of the day or night. Trinity's new and improved website, www.Trinity-Altoona.com, is a fabulous source of accurate information. We hope you have the site bookmarked and check it often.

For those of you who enjoy Facebook, Trinity's page is another way you can stay connected, share photos and the like.

For more than ten years, members for whom we have an email address have been receiving regular broadcast emails. Thanks to the expertise of Tom Settle, a member of Trinity's Church Council, you probably noticed a change in the appearance of these regular broadcasts since last December.

Tom Bradley now uses a Mailchimp server to prepare and send these emails from home. "The Pulse" emails are attractive, can be read quickly and best of all – there is no charge to the church for using this program. A few notes about our email service:

- If you are reading this article and you never see "The Pulse," we may not have an accurate email address for you in our system. ***Please shoot Tom Bradley an email today!***
- "The Pulse" might not be arriving in your inbox. Check your SPAM FOLDER or your JUNK EMAIL FOLDER. You may find it there if your computer security settings send "The Pulse" there.
- To keep "The Pulse" from ending up in your spam folder, add the email trinity@altoona.org to your list of contacts. This may help.
- If you don't have access to the computer, copies of the most current broadcast emails can be found on bulletin boards inside the church entrances.

Please feel free to contact Tom Bradley by telephone (943-7488) or by email (tmbradley17@verizon.net) if you are missing out on this way to stay connected to your church via the emails.



Endowment Fund

Gift Acceptance Policy is revised Progress continues on creation of a Trinity Endowment Fund

Trinity's Stewardship Committee has been working diligently for almost a year to establish a mission endowment fund that will support the current and future ministry of our church.

The committee has been guided by Pastor Elizabeth Polanzke, our Gift Planner representing the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Foundation. *Perhaps you remember meeting Pastor Liz when she gave a sermon at Trinity on October 15.*

Pastor Liz assists congregations with wise stewardship through disciplined planning; helps congregations manage, establish and grow their endowments; assists a follower of Christ plan the wise distribution of their wealth through current, special and legacy gifts; and guides major gifts for ELCA ministries including congregations. *Her services are free-of-charge.*

Stewardship Committee members Mondon Smith, Paula Ford, Craig Cameron, Debbie Simpson and Tom Bradley collaborated with Pastor Eli to revise Trinity's **Gift Acceptance Policy** – an important first step in the process. Church Council approved this policy in September.

Copies of the Gift Acceptance Policy are available in the back of the sanctuary should you wish to take a look at it.

The major purpose of the policy is to ensure that special legacy gifts given to Trinity are accepted in a manner that respects the intention of the giver and supports God's priorities discerned prayerfully by our congregation.

The acceptance of gifts of cash; publicly traded and closely-held securities; real estate; life insurance; tangible personal property; estate gifts; designated memorial gifts and bequests; and undesignated gifts and bequests are addressed in the policy.

The Stewardship Committee met with Pastor Polanzke on November 28 to continue developing the guidelines and parameters of Trinity's mission endowment fund.

Be watching for regular updates on this process in the months ahead.



Children's Page

Words List	I G L P Y R Z I K T C K O G V G J L E A
jesus	A W R U R V W N D Z H I I H C R O O G M
bible	F F V E P Z G D F C B O S K P N P P N L
pew	J E H G Y R K F A T I P L U P J R H R G
song	V X T B D A P P Q D B V A Y M U E P J X
god	F Z L D C H R I S T L G N I G N I S U O
church	Y G Y E D E N P E V E X M K V H P R U N
holyghost	W N L A A P S O O F F S Y A S A O B Y S
sun-	F A J C A S O H P I G O H W U G L S U S
dayschool	G P H O O Y N C S D B I O V N N P E T I
pastor	A E U N X P O R Z D H L A I D I D I Y J
music	R W G J I J F U Z Q L Q H N A R B K G I
youngpeople	P R A Y I N G H N E D C J L Y E O K L E
preaching	I Z P P N Z O C F G A J T K S F O L J N
singing	H W J A R T D F I E P E A O C F Q K N G
hymnal	S A B S I N G E R I R E L H H O Q O Q B
praying	R Z U T A P H P A Z S O O G O D I G K R
worship	O X H O Q A Y E Q I S X J P O T F U B W
tithes	W E I R R X I M Y Y U Y X N L N F T Y X
fellowship	S R O X P T O Y L L H F R B H E N K Y L
prayer	
deacon	
singer	
preacher	
christ	
sonofgod	
offering	
lord	
alter	
pulpit	



ELCA Youth Gathering

Congregation financial support is needed Trinity will be well-represented at ELCA Youth Gathering

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Youth Gathering will take place in Houston, TX, June 27-July 1, and Trinity will be well-represented by **Elizabeth Fogle, Josh and Lilly Gutshall, Ericka Selfridge, Tori Morgan, Emily and Lily Humbertson, Joleyna Martino, and Allison Everhart** along with chaperones **Pastor Eli, Geri Selfridge, Lisa Gutshall and Ted Williams.**

Every three years, 30,000 high school youth and adult leaders from across the ELCA gather for this week of faith formation. Through interactive learning, worship, Bible study, service and fellowship, the hope is that every young person grows in faith and is challenged and inspired to live their faith in daily life. For most, this goal comes to life back home, in their congregations and in the world.

Our church was also represented at the last two Gatherings in New Orleans (2012) and Detroit (2015). It speaks to the quality of the event that three Trinity youth – Elizabeth Fogle, Victoria Morgan and Emily Humbertson – have chosen to attend the Gathering again.

Tori Morgan noted, “After the hurricane hit Texas last summer, I knew I couldn’t pass up this opportunity to help. We went to a community garden in Detroit and helped to clean it up. The woman who ran the garden was so grateful we were there. We also collected food and diapers to give to families.”

“I am excited to help the community of Houston in their time of need – especially after the devastating floods of last summer,” said Lizzie Fogle. “I’m eager to meet new people and make new friends from throughout the United States.”

Each night of the Gathering, participants will come together in NRG Stadium, the home of the Houston Texans, for a time of inspiring speakers, uplifting music and more. Speakers will share how God’s call, God’s love, God’s grace and God’s hope changed everything in their lives.

During a closing worship service on July 1, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton will preach and attendees will celebrate and remember that Jesus Changes Everything!

Because of the size of the Trinity group, more than \$10,000 is needed to cover registration as well as transportation, meals and lodging. The youth have been raising money since last summer, and now asks the congregation to assist through special offerings.

In March, a special remittance envelope will be enclosed in the *Orbit* newsletter and in selected worship bulletins.

If it’s more convenient, you can also add an extra amount to each of your weekly offerings. Please be sure to clearly mark your intentions on the front of each envelope.

Thank you for supporting this important youth ministry!



Memorial Gift Program

Do you know how Trinity’s memorial gift program works?

It’s been a few months since we reminded our members about Trinity’s memorial gift program that has been flourishing for more than ten years. In case you’ve forgotten how the program works or you are one of our newer members, we are happy to present a few reminders about this very successful program.

Upon the passing of a friend or relative, whether they attended Trinity or not, a person can make a gift *in any amount* in that person’s name instead of sending flowers.

The donor *always* receives a thank you letter for the gift which also serves as a receipt.

The family of the deceased *always* receives a complete list of donors so they can send thank you cards if they so desire. *The amount given by each donor is never shared.*

Donor names are also recorded in the Book of Remembrance located in the back corner of the sanctuary. They are also listed in our newsletter.

Memorial donations do not have to be earmarked for a special purpose. All money received into the Memorial Fund is used for special projects in and around the church.

Our memorial gift envelopes are always available in the back of the sanctuary.

In recent weeks, these memorial gifts have been received by December 18, 2017:

The **Altoona Area High School Alumni Association** made a gift in memory of **Beverly Thompson.**

Memorial gifts for **JoAnn Boyd** were received from **Barbara Stalter, Marian Bruno, Patricia Gildea and Terry Boyd.**

Gifts in memory of **Donna Williams** were remitted by **Trinity’s Healthy You Group, Trinity’s Prayer Breakfast Group, Tom and Mary Valentine, Darlene Morris, Nelda Sharbaugh, SCI Rockview-Medical Records Department, Tom and Lisa Bradley, Susan Green and Family and Jeffrey Stancheck.**



MEMORIAL GIFTS RECEIVED

Memorial gifts are received...

In recent weeks, several memorial gifts have been received by our church by January 15.

An additional gift in memory of **Donna Williams** was remitted by **Trinity Church Council**.

Deborah Williams and **Blair Kerstetter** sent a gift in memory of long-time friends, **Beverly Thompson** and **Joyce Kerstetter**.

Each donor received a letter of thanks/receipt from the church and the families received the names of the donors.



Mission Endowment Fund

Development of Trinity's Mission Endowment Fund continues

By Tom Bradley

For more than a year, Trinity's Stewardship Committee, comprised of **Mondon Smith, Paula Ford, Craig Cameron, Debbie Simpson** and **Tom Bradley**, has been working with **Pastor Eli** to establish the policies and procedures for a Mission Endowment Fund that will support the current and future ministries of our church.

Many churches in Central Pennsylvania have had an Endowment Fund in place for years. They've encouraged and promoted estate gifts and used the fund earnings to support ongoing ministries.

Unfortunately, this has not been the case at Trinity. Legacy gifts have neither been promoted nor encouraged. While Trinity has been fortunate to receive a handful of estate gifts over the past 40 years, there were no guidelines in place for the use of these funds. These gifts were used for ongoing projects and expenditures rather than being added to an endowment that can grow and support future ministries.

That's why the Stewardship Committee has undertaken this project that will benefit future generations at Trinity.

The first step was the revision of Trinity's Gift Acceptance Policy, which was written about in the **January Orbit** newsletter. Copies of the Gift Acceptance Policy are available in the back of the sanctuary for your review.

The purpose of the Mission Endowment Fund is to hold both current and estate gifts from which annual earnings can be used for important ministries. As the principal grows over the years, so will the distributions.

Our Mission Endowment Fund will be managed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Foundation. Pastor Elizabeth Polanzke, the Central PA Regional Gift Planner of the ELCA Foundation, has guided the Stewardship Committee through the process and will be available to meet with our members who need assistance with the estate planning process in the months ahead. You may recall meeting Pastor Liz when she visited Trinity in October.

The Endowment Fund Policy was presented to Church Council for discussion and possible approval in January.

This is one of the most-important tasks our church has ever undertaken. Stay tuned for continuing news about the Mission Advancement Fund process.