

The Orbit

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
ALTOONA PA
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March 2018

"Beware the Ides of March"
William Shakespeare in Julius Caesar

From the Pastor:

Many of us know this saying and perhaps where it comes from. Julius Caesar was assassinated on the Ides of March and the prediction of the event was made by a seer. Caesar famously joked with the seer that the Ides of March had come and no harm had been done to him, to which the seer replied, "Aye, Caesar, but not gone." So what is the Ides of March. The simple answer is a date, March 15th. However, it was an important date not only for the assassination of Caesar but also because on March 15th all debts were due. Debts were to be settled by March 15th in Roman society. The Ides of March as the date that all debts are due reminds me of our Lenten journey. We are fast approaching the cross as we observe the Lenten season and the cross reminds us that our debts are paid on that cross by Christ. We do not have to fear the Ides of March, or any day, because Christ died for our sins, once, for all. We may still have earthly debts, but our debt of sin and death is covered by the blood of Christ. The season of Lent reminds us that without Christ or the cross we would have a debt that we could not repay. However, Lent points us to the person and place that takes care of the debt of sin and leads us to the empty tomb of Easter.



Peace,



Come on down...

Ten-week study of Abraham begins March 5

New Bible study participants are welcomed with open arms

For more than five years, you've been hearing about highly-successful and very popular adult Bible study sessions at Trinity.

A core group of more than 30 men and women have made these 60-minute meetings a very important part of their weekly routine. *Perhaps you've considered attending but weren't sure if you'd "fit in" or if your busy schedule would allow participation.*

Four members of our congregation took a bold step last autumn and began attending Bible study for the first time. The topic was "A Christ-Centered Life" and was based on chapters 5-8 of Paul's letter to the Romans. These "newbies" not only enjoyed the experience, they are now eager to delve into the ten-week study of Abraham which begins during the week of March 5.

Barb Counterman noted that the study times were convenient and she was impressed with how well the other participants knew their Bible. "I just wish I had attended sooner," she said. "It's just what I need in my life! To be around other believers strengthens my own beliefs. And everyone has been welcoming and interested to learn and share."

Despite being the mother of two young daughters, **Marissa Thompson** "liked the option of being able to "float" between study groups based upon my weekly schedule. I was able to commit to being there every week. There were great discussions and interpretations of the scriptures. As a person that usually sits back and listens, I felt completely comfortable participating in the discussions."

Another new attendee said, "I realized how the weekly sessions helped me to interpret the Bible and how it relates to being a Lutheran. Bible study has given me the opportunity to evaluate my own faith and what it means to me. Who could ask for anything more?"

All of the groups meet at the church. Sessions are held Monday from 7:30-8:30 p.m.; on Tuesdays from 9-10 a.m. and 7-8 p.m.; and Wednesdays from 7-8 p.m. As facilitators Lisa and Tom Bradley use the same "script" for each session, you can choose to attend at different times without missing a beat when your personal schedule gets crazy.

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 sessions. No prior experience in Bible study is necessary. Bring your Bible and come on down!

For more info call Lisa Bradley at 943-7488 or email her at lkbradley310@verizon.net



Mission Endowment Fund

New Endowment Fund will enhance Trinity's ministries forever

By Tom Bradley

If you read your broadcast email of February 11 carefully, you already know that our Church Council approved a first-ever Mission Endowment Fund Policy during its January meeting. Trinity's Stewardship Committee has been working diligently on this process with Pastor Liz Polanzke of the ELCA Foundation for the past year.

It's unfortunate that creation of a Mission Endowment Fund and the promotion of estate gifts have never been encouraged in the past. I've been a member of this congregation since 1980 and can only recall a handful of times when a member of our congregation included Trinity in his/her will.

And sadly, when those estate gifts were received, the money was used for a variety of "once and done" projects – instead of becoming part of an Endowment Fund that could enhance our ministries forever.

As you probably already know, the principal of an Endowment Fund is never expended. Only the annual earnings are earmarked for ministries. As the Endowment Fund becomes larger, the yearly earnings also increase. It will probably be at least ten years before our new fund begins to produce significant dollars to enhance our ministries.

They say hindsight is always 20/20 and that is certainly true in this case. There's no reason to spend time lamenting the fact that Trinity, unlike many local churches, does not have a "nest egg" on which they can rely both now and in the future. But at least we're finally "off the mark," the Endowment Fund Policy is in place and those of us who love our church can begin seriously solidifying estate plans through legacy gifts.

Pastor Polanzke, who made a favorable impression on our congregation when she visited us last October, will continue to guide us through this process in the months ahead. She'll be available to meet with both groups and individuals who need assistance with their wills.

Perhaps you've already included Trinity in your estate plan. Maybe that is something you never even considered.

This new Mission Endowment Fund will enhance Trinity's ministries forever. Please be looking for additional information about this new Mission Endowment Fund in future *Orbit* newsletters and broadcast emails and give a possible estate gift some prayerful consideration.

And finally, never hesitate to talk to me about our new Endowment Fund. Stay tuned!



The Orbit

ELCA Youth Gathering

Congregation financial support is vital

Special offerings for Youth Gathering expenses are needed

An enthusiastic group of Trinity young people and chaperones are looking forward to attending the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Youth Gathering in Houston, TX, in June *and they need the help of the congregation.*

Because the Trinity contingent includes 13 people, 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.

HOW CAN YOU HELP? You can use the remittance envelope enclosed in this newsletter at a time convenient to you over the next six weeks. Additional envelopes can be found in each pew and at the back of the sanctuary.

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.**

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.

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!

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.

Lizzie Fogle stated, "It's important for our church to go to the Gathering to learn about Jesus and help the community, but also to get out of Altoona without mom, dad or whomever and learn more about yourself."

"Attendees will come out of this event as new people. They'll learn how hard life is around the world and about self love and how good it feels helping in the community."





The Orbit

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.



The Orbit

Trinity Tempo

There are many wonderful things happening at Trinity. The music ministry of the Church is no exception ! The family choir sang in November, the Youth and Adult Choirs sang for the Advent season and Christmas. The Youth and Adult Chime choirs played at Christmas.... and we were also blessed with several instrumental and vocal soloists. Already in the new year, we have welcomed new members to our choirs. Our mission of music ministry continues. What a wonderful blessing this is ! Please watch for more choir and solo opportunities in the coming weeks. Our special service of music is not that far away, and I welcome your participation. The season of Lent is already here and I welcome you to sing with the Choir for the season or to participate in Chime Choir.

Remember, the mission statement of our choir is: Joyfully serving our Lord through voice and song.

Please feel free to contact me regarding all things music. Cindy 330-2202



Prayer List

Please keep the following people in your prayers ...

Trinity Members

Jim Aungst
Tyler Bennett
Kris Bennett
Tina Chestney
Sondra Deffibaugh
Jim Gosnell
Debbie Gracey
Paul Hamilton
Kathy Hatch
Kristina Henderson
Jake Kovisely
Ken Kumpf
Ken B. Myers
Ray Nycum
Jaden Rhode
Ruth Ann Saleme

Church Health
Team

Family Members and Friends

Janet/Charlie Aungst
Ashley Batisti
Mishell Borousky
Ashley Bottisi
Pat Burk
Simon Casalvieni
Sue Casalvieni
Deb Civiello
Gaine Dodson
Andrew Fundack
Haley Gehret
Bob Hamilton
Don Haslem
Ed Kaps
Colson Keagy
Jenelle Lehr
Dylan McGilvry
Tucker McGilvry
Jane Messner
Dennis Miller
Harry Miller Sr.
Greg Moses
Leslie Mussleman
Skip Mussleman
Sharon Myers
Randazzo Family
Joan Spencer
Elaine Stetser
Rachel Stoudt
Tom Stoudt
Jon Walters
Amy Woodard
Allison
Arianne, baby

Trinity's Homebound Members

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

Those Serving in the Armed Forces

Sarah Brown
Luke Dragavich
Jason Buck
Kyle Eberhart
Nathan Frank

Justin Patz
Peter Quinn
Eric Sweet
Jason Smith



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.



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Lectionary Readings for the Month of March

In the Orbit This Month:

From the Pastor.....	1
Come on Down.....	2
Mission Endowment Fund.....	3
ELCA Youth Gathering.....	4
Stewardship	5
Trinity Tempo.....	6
Prayer List.....	7

**Reminder Lenten Services
Wednesdays Noon and 6:30
pm**

Also worth mentioning...

I would like to thank all of my church family who sent cards, stopped by the hospital Maybrook Hills and my home, brought flowers and gifts or called. I especially want to thank all for the prayers, they were greatly appreciated. Thank you so much . Harry Yeager

The next Orbit Deadline is March 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!