

PASTOR'S PEN

We instructed the youth to share their stories, to talk about people or events that shaped their faith and to talk about what impact Confirmation Connection had on them. The youth drenched us in unbidden thanks...for their *parents*, and not just for being parents but for bringing them to worship!

Faith matters. You wouldn't be reading this if it didn't. You wouldn't worship or bring your children to Sunday School if it didn't. What 13 of our Brothers and Sisters in Christ shared with us as they affirmed their Baptism was that their regular worship was of paramount importance in their faith lives. It wasn't just family. It wasn't something private. Worship mattered.

When I was a toddler I came to worship with my little bear, Lewis, and a Baggie of Cheerios. When I was a child I came to worship with blank paper and a box of magic markers, or I came with a book. My brother and I waged kicking contests during the sermon. I paid attention only when I felt like it, but I was there. I grew up with worship and Sunday School as a part of my life. As I got older and wondered what it meant I had a foundation, I had a context. Worship matters.

We come to worship to be fed. We nourish our faith on Word & Sacrament. Children need to eat, too. Just because they don't "understand" it doesn't mean they aren't nourished.¹ Just because they're drawing or reading or playing with a children's bulletin doesn't mean they aren't fed. Being here, worshipping with the faithful, and repeating the rites shape each of us regardless of our age.

The Church is the Body of Christ, and as a body it is alive. It is always changing as parts age and die and new parts are born. It is destructive to segregate the parts of the body on the basis of their age. Old eyes might not see well but they have seen a lot, and can share that. Young eyes see things with clarity and novelty, and offer perspectives as yet unseen. We need young people in worship. There's nothing more pleasing to me than standing in the pulpit and seeing the many faces of the congregation, be they worn or new, be the hair thin and grey or thick and dark. I love having to compete with a fussy baby or getting unexpected (yet welcome) laughter from a five-year-old. I love the sight of a child skipping down the aisle after receiving the blessing, and then deciding that mom's quiet prayer after Communion is the perfect time to climb over her and tug at a sibling's arm. When we exile children to a nursery or crying room—or simply don't bring them to worship at all—we deny them the best place for their faith to grow and we deny ourselves a part of life in the Body of Christ.

To parents I say, "Bring your children to worship." We celebrate Holy Communion four times in an average week. The 11:15 a. m. Sunday liturgy contains a Children's Sermon and frequently enjoys the musical offerings of the Cherubs and the Music Makers. Some kids are tired and hungry by 11:15 a. m., but are going strong at 8:45 a. m. That liturgy contains even more music and feeds directly into the coffee and Sunday School hour. The 5 p. m. Saturday liturgy suits still others better as it is totally separate from Sunday School and lets families focus more on the liturgy without worrying about getting somewhere next. Even the Wednesday 7 a. m. has a child or two, now and then, and at that service they get the special moment of gathering around the altar with everyone else for Communion. The point is that there are a lot of opportunities. Take the one that suits you best.²

To everyone else I say, "Welcome children in worship." A happy baby is not exactly a bad distraction. The children around you are your brothers and sisters through baptism. They are ministering to you. Are you ministering to them? The witness of our thirteen youth on Pentecost weekend was powerful and undeniable. They spoke the gospel to us. They ministered to us just as Christians are supposed to minister to one another, and they could not have done that without being a part of the faith community, without worshipping regularly with the Body of Christ. We know that because they told us. Teenagers thanked their parents for bringing them as children to worship. Teenagers *thanked* their *parents*! That doesn't just happen on its own!

In + Christ,
Pastor Leitzke

¹ I am confident that *none* of us understand how the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ!

² The 11:15 a.m. service will return in September, after its summer hiatus.

A PASSAGE TO NAMIBIA

The time is drawing near for our team's mission trip to Namibia. Fourteen of us will travel from the New Jersey Synod of the ELCA. The team is comprised of 5 pastors, Assistant to the Bishop Bruce Ewen, and 8 lay people. We have had several group meetings and everyone is very excited about the trip and our time together and the time we will be spending with our sisters and brothers in Christ in Namibia.

Many of you may not know that, as a representative of Holy Trinity, part of my mission will be to establish a relationship with a sister congregation in Namibia. (For your information – Namibia is 98 percent Christian and 69 percent Lutheran.)

We recently learned that Uudhengelo Lutheran Parish is our sister's name.

We will continue our relationship with Uudhengelo forever and attempt to assist them in their immediate and daily needs as well as any needs that might arise when doing their long term planning. I will present a monetary gift to the pastor of that church as a gift from the members of Holy Trinity. I also plan to take about 1000 small trinkets for members of the congregation, which is approximately 1500 to 2500 people. Holy Trinity, along with other churches in the Synod, will also be presenting a seminarian student with books that are not available in Africa. Our team will be bringing these books to them.

I have taken lots of photos of you, our church, services and Lenten dinners, coffee hours and the grounds of Holy Trinity, and I will be putting together a photo album to give to this congregation so they can see who we are and what we look like! It is also my desire to take some knitted baby caps to give to the local hospitals for the newborns and preemies. I thank those who so diligently knitted these caps to help me achieve my goal.

This trip was a gift to me from God. When I first learned of our relationship with Namibia, I felt a strong arm pulling me there and I am thrilled to finally be able to reach out as a disciple of our Lord to a world I have only read about. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for your support in my fund raising, not only to help pay for my fare but so that I could present a check to the Synod which will assist the entire team during our

visit, as well as help purchase Communion wine for various congregations who may not be able to afford it which would cause them not to have Communion sometimes for 3 or 4 months. There is so much need in this country and we as Christians and children of God must reach out in the best way we know how – I feel we are all reaching out now – It is not just Cindy traveling to Namibia, it is all of you who will travel with me. Please pray for our safe arrival and return and pray that we will all represent God, his Church, and the United States of America in a positive and loving way, so our friendships abroad will last forever. Pray for our team that we experience, each day, the gift of the Holy Spirit and be able to pass this gift to everyone we meet.

We will be leaving on Monday, July 24 and returning to New Jersey on Tuesday, August 8. I will miss you and be thinking and praying for all of you while I am away.

Joyfully a child of God,
Cindy Markus

BLAZAK GIVES EYEWITNESS REPORT OF NEW JERSEY SYNOD ASSEMBLY

Almost 600 people attended the annual meeting of the New Jersey Synod on May 12 and 13 in New Brunswick. Pastor Mary and Pastor Leitzke attended as rostered members of the Synod with June Gregory and Dennis Blazak as our congregation's two lay voting members.

Bishop Riley reported on so many ministries it is difficult to summarize his message. Instead, let me paraphrase him by saying that we, as a synod, continue to walk boldly, sharing the Good News, loving God with all our hearts while sharing our gifts with our neighbors. New mission church efforts are focusing on Latino and other newly-arrived immigrant populations. Bridge of Peace in Camden hopes to join the Synod as a new congregation later this year with the help of Reverend Judith Spindt, who preached to us in the sanctuary a couple months.

The Bishop spoke of success in finding new candidates to serve in New Jersey. Nine pastors were ordained and one diaconal minister was consecrated in 2005. These are all-time highs for our synod. Ten pastors retired and one serving pastor died during the year. The challenge of

providing pastors for the congregations remains daunting.

Reverend Bruce Davidson described several successes with the Lutheran Office of Governmental Ministry. The State Legislature established a rental assistance program, providing \$15 million to help house those most in need. Work with GreenFaith, an ecumenical environmental organization, encourages the use of non-polluting energy and promotes Stewardship of natural resources at the churches across the Synod. Governor Jon Corzine spoke to the assembly on Saturday, discussing his administration's commitment to help the weakest members of society and to advocate for those whose voice is softest.

Several resolutions were presented including endorsement of Natural Church Development, Companionship with Namibian Lutheran Churches and, after some debate, a call for peace in Iraq.

Resolution Two concerned policies regarding gay and lesbian ministers. This resolution was submitted by The Rev. Gladys Moore and was debated by the assembly at length. The resolution endorses "restraint" in applying ELCA policies to gay and lesbian ministers and passed by a vote of 238 to 159. Because the ELCA referred this whole matter back to committee during the 2005 Church-wide Assembly, there is considerable doubt what, if any, impact the resolution will have on the candidacy process in New Jersey other than to continue debate.

My overall impression of the assembly was of a great many people walking together on a path. The final destination is known but only understood through ancient writings and visions. The path each individual walks is filled with twists and turns, so many people get lost. But no matter how long we are lost, we are found again. This was an assembly of the found, trying, with all their hearts, to give some light to the millions wandering in the dark.

~ ~ *Dennis Blazak*

'STEPHEN' A LIFE-CHANGING MINISTRY

For me, Stephen Ministry has been a life-changing event. I began the training for Stephen Ministry with apprehension about whether I would be able to find the time to devote to this wonderful ministry and whether just being a person who cared for others was enough. I soon realized that I shouldn't have feared either.

In our weekly sessions, I learned everything I needed to know to become a caregiver. Most important of all was the comfort of knowing God was always there to support me, as were the loving, compassionate people in my group. Through our sessions, we did some role-playing (which originally scared me). Through this role-playing though we came to know each other and care for each other and were taught one of the most important things in this ministry – how to listen, really listen, to what your care receiver is saying.

The training I received has been invaluable in my everyday life. One incident occurred when my aunt who had breast cancer was going through chemotherapy (She was also in the beginning stages of Alzheimer's). She often felt sick and was afraid to go to more sessions. My uncle and cousins kept telling her not to be afraid. Although well intentioned, this is not what my aunt wanted to hear. From what I learned in Stephen Ministry, one should acknowledge what the care receiver is feeling. When I did this with my aunt and told her it was ok to be afraid, the biggest smile came over her face and she said, "Thank you for understanding."

There have been innumerable times since my training that I have used what I learned. Whether in my daily life with family, friends or co-workers, when I am assigned a care receiver, or when I see the loving smile of a fellow Stephen Minister, I feel I have been blessed to have experienced the training to become a Stephen Minister. Won't you consider enriching your life as well?

~ ~ *Linda Dodds*

PASTORAL CARE TRAINING

Do you enjoy lightening others' burdens? Have you ever gone through a difficult time and had the gift of a friend who listened to you, not feeling the need to give advice or offer quick fixes, but simply **listened**? Do you have the gift of time to give?

This coming fall Pastor Mary will begin training a new group of lay pastoral care givers for our church family, to be added to the ranks of our existing Stephen Ministers. The training will consist of weekly 1 ½ hour sessions, beginning in September and lasting 'til spring. Participants will learn active listening skills; role play, offering pastoral support to someone who is ill, grieving, depressed or otherwise in pain; hear guest speakers talk about bereavement issues, postpartum depression, domestic violence, medications and the elderly, the psychological dynamics of job loss, single parenting, the loss of a parent or child, etc.

Those who complete training and wish to serve as lay pastoral care givers will be assigned a care receiver whom they will visit weekly for one hour. Participation in training is a way to discern if this is a gift you can give. Questions? Interest? Call or e-mail Pastor Mary or any of our Stephen Ministers!

THIRTEEN AFFIRM THEIR BAPTISM

The Holy Trinity family congratulates the following young men and women who fulfilled their Confirmation requirements and affirmed their baptism at services June 3 and 4 --

Christian Boodey	Eric Dreibelbis
Annie Lynch	Jacob Clayton
Summer Groh	Megan McGarry
Kelsey Comerford	Michael Guarini
Zachary Ritchie	David Cox
Jillian Gutleber	Kelly Spill
Nicholas Suchecki	

We offer our sincere appreciation to Director of Youth and Family Ministries Karen Astrom, guides Chuck Augustine, Robin Baymore, Shelli Ritchie, Pat Augustine and Debbie Cox and Pastor Leitzke.

WELCA NEWS

The executive board will meet at 9 a.m. Tuesday, Aug 15.

The Elisabeth Circle will not meet in July and August. In July members will attend the annual WELCA picnic (details below). Their next meeting will be at 9:30 a.m. on Sept. 11. Read the September Lamplighter for details.

The Louise Circle will not meet in July and August. Members will attend the W. E. L. C. A. picnic in July. Their next meeting will be at 7:30 p.m. on Sept. 11.

The Circle of Hope will not meet in August. The women will have a social gathering/picnic at 11 a.m. Saturday, July 29 at Shark River Park. Call Nancy Smarr (732) 681-3369, Kathy Nicholas (732) 988-5355 or Karen Jeffray (732) 223-8255 for details. Members are also welcome to attend the annual WELCA picnic.

Check the church bulletin for dates when the Trinity Crafters will meet or contact Ronnie Reed for information. Ronnie's telephone number is (732) 701-1160.

HOLY TRINITY WELCA
ANNUAL PICNIC

6 p.m.
Wednesday, July 26
(rain date Thursday, July 27)

At the home of
Patti Reed
(Ronnie's daughter)
802 Clark St., Point Pleasant

All women of Holy Trinity are invited!
Our bulletin board in Fellowship Hall has a sign up sheet and directions to Patti's house. Bring a covered dish, if you wish, but it is not necessary. Join us for an evening of fun, fellowship and good food.

forgetting your envelope, forgetting your checkbook, if you are out of town, or if you are ill. When winter arrives, even the occasional snow storm will not keep your offering from doing the Lord's work.

If you would like more information or an enrollment form, please call our Finance Secretary, Paul DiCorcia (732) 899-0870.

We hope you enjoy the peace of mind Simply Giving can provide. Have a wonderful Summer!

'SEW' WHAT?

Sew blankets (you may also knit or crochet them, if that's where your talents lie) for Project Linus with The Trinity Blanketeers. The group will meet July 24 at 9:30 a.m. in the back room of Fellowship Hall and go out for lunch at a local spot. For more information, please call Gloria Smith (732) 449-1942.

Looking ahead, all Lutheran women are invited to attend the New Jersey Women of the ELCA Annual Convention, Oct. 13 and 14 in the St. Pius Spiritual Life Center, Blackwood, New Jersey.

Registration forms must be submitted by Aug. 15. A delegate is needed and scholarships are available. See the WELCA bulletin board for details or call Diane Guarini. Diane's telephone number is (732) 974-8263.

STEWARDSHIP

Program Makes Giving Simple

The members of the Stewardship/Evangelism Committee would like to wish everyone a safe and happy, healthy summer. Many of you will be traveling and vacationing, doing things you have been planning for a long time. We will miss some of you at worship but trust God will be watching over you while you are away. We hope in your planning you will remember to leave your "First Fruits" offering for God's work here at Holy Trinity.

This would be a good time to consider "Simply Giving."

"Simply Giving" is a safe, reliable, automated giving program to help you conveniently and consistently contribute to our congregation. You can be faithful with your giving even when you are away. "Simply Giving" eases the worries of

SUMMER READING

Sunday School is closed for summer break but you can still borrow books from the Sunday School library. There are over 700 books in our library. A suggested reading list is posted on the library bulletin board. Books may be borrowed for two (2) weeks. Be sure to fill in the card at the back of the book with the date borrowed, your first and last name and your telephone number. No need to shelve the book when you return it – just leave it on the book cart and one of the library volunteers will return it to its proper place. Happy reading!

A gentle reminder: The following library books are overdue or missing. Adventures of Frog and Toad, Bridge to Terebithia, For Every Child: The Rights of the Child (UNICEF), Hatchet, The Little Drummer Boy, Prayer of the Earth, Santa's Favorite Story, Where Does God Live? and Who Was Born This Special Day? Also, videos Prayer Bear: Best Friends and The Story of Christmas and the CD Raised on Earth.

If you borrowed any of these titles, please return them so that others may enjoy them. Many thanks!

SCHWIER MAKES THE GRADE

Tamara E. Schwier recently completed the Graduate Realtor Institute (GRI) course!

Individuals who complete this program learn the fundamentals of brokerage and other areas of real estate specialization.

The NJ GRI program is certified and approved by the National Association of Realtors and only members of the Realtor organization may earn the GRI.

Congratulations, Tammy!

READ & DISCUSS AMONG YOURSELVES!

The Stacey Book Discussion Group meets at 7:30 p.m. the second Tuesday of every month of the year in the Manasquan Library.

The group's purpose is to informally discuss books suggested by the members. These discussions add dimension and meaning to the literary works and provide considerable insight into the authors' sometimes hidden meanings or messages.

Join the Stacey Book Discussion Group when they discuss A. Chekov's Ward in July and Faulkner's Light and August – appropriately ☺ -- in August!

CHILDREN OF GOD

Benjamin Kenneth Bahrs was baptized Saturday, April 15; *Jack Logan Kaelber* was baptized Saturday, April 22; *James Gerencser* was baptized Sunday, April 23.

Ryan James Martin was baptized Sunday, May 7.

Ava Jean Hartnett and *Colby Joseph Johnston* were baptized Sunday, June 11; *Kenneth Reliance Wines* was baptized Sunday, June 18.

LOVE & MARRIAGE

Thomas Louis Mertens and Nancy Joan Intilli were joined in Holy Matrimony May 20 at Holy Trinity Church.

We want to thank all who worked on our Mother's Day floral arrangements and all who purchased them for their loved ones.

All profits will be donated to a special charity. Also, thanks in advance for the supplies you have donated to our summer health kits.

God bless you,
Janet Barber and Joan Bowers
Social Ministry Co-chairs

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Thank you very much for collecting supplies for my trip to Honduras. Your kindness is appreciated. The people in Honduras were very gracious and thankful. I hope I will get the chance to see them all again.

Thanks, again, for your donations and support.

Sincerely,
Megan Thompson
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Dear Friends,

I am truly touched by your cards, prayers, sentiments and hugs during this most difficult time. Your love, warmth and support for me and my family is appreciated more than you could ever know.

I thank God for the precious gift of you, my Holy Trinity family.

Marge Voigt and family
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