

TRINITY CHIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE TRINITY REFORMED CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2009

Follow the Leader

I was at a meeting the other day of a sort-of-quasi-faith-based-offshoot of a social advocacy organization. There was a real mixture of people—Christians, Jews, Buddhists, civic organization leaders, and even local political party officials—quite a diverse crowd. I was seated at a table with three young people, twentysomethings, and during a short lull in the agenda the four of us struck up a conversation. We were talking for a while when one of the young people spoke up and asked, “So, you’re a minister?” I replied yes and said a little about the church where I serve. Now in such conversations I try not to make assumptions but do want to know with whom I am speaking, a *know your target audience* kind of thing, so I inquired intentionally in a rather open ended fashion, “Do you come from a particular religious background?” This person returned, “I was raised in a Methodist church but I don’t go to one now. I’m not really religious. I’m more spiritual.” To hear someone say they “are spiritual but not religious” is actually a very common descriptive nowadays, especially among younger generations. I find myself, especially when discouraged by various aspects of church life and even, some church people (certainly nobody at Trinity), wanting to say the same. However, no matter how spiritual I may like to be, I’m also pretty religious. (Perhaps we can talk more about the spiritual vs. religious definers in later messages.) What really perked my interest was what the young man said next. “But I love Jesus!”

I was at another meeting just a day before the one mentioned above. This was a smaller one-on-one kind of meeting with a fellow religious leader in our neighborhood. He was showing me around his congregation’s building, pointing out some beautiful significantly meaningful stained glass windows, etc. but then paused and said, “I sometimes wish we (the Church) could go back before all this, before all these buildings and everything, go back to being how the church was in the book of Acts.” While I certainly appreciate great church architecture and exquisite church art I found that I also agreed with him.

One has to be careful in seeking what is most important and communicating it of not simply paring down to the least common denominator. One has to be careful and yet, that is exactly what Jesus did when asked what was the most important of all the (613) Jewish law. Jesus replied that the most important was to love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, *and* to love your neighbor as yourself. Christ went on to say that on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matthew 22:37-40) In other words, all the rest of the biblical law is to bring us back to these two. All that the prophets spoke was to bring us back to these. St. Paul says something similar in his famous love chapter. (1 Corinthians 13) He says you can be as spiritually gifted as all get out, but if you don’t have love, you are nothing. You can do amazing and incredibly good things, but if you don’t have love you gain nothing. Love is the Great Commandment.

Now, let’s get down to some specifics.

Love is great in concept. But in practice it can be a little more difficult. Therefore, we’ve been given an example to follow: Jesus.

As Jesus began his ministry he began it with two little words (at least two little words translated into English), *follow me*. In the first chapters of both Mark and John Jesus begins his ministry by calling disciples to follow him (Mark 1:17, John 1:43, with similar events in Luke 5:27 and Matthew 4:19). Jesus began his ministry in the 1st Century and continues it today in the 21st Century by calling people to follow him. We in the church call this the Great Commission, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matt 28:19-20)

Now here, let me get a little picky about what it says and what it does not say, and further, to whom Jesus is speaking. The Great Commission says make disciples, that is students or followers of Jesus. It does not say make con

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Our vision is
to help
people find
New Life in
Jesus Christ!

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verts. Only God can convert someone. Nor does it say to make believers, that is, believers who believe just like me, or you for that matter. It doesn't say make church members. No, it says make followers of Jesus. Students of Christ. Who is Jesus talking to? Jesus is speaking to the (then) eleven disciples; but this commission has exponential effect because it is to be passed on or taught to each following "batch" of disciples. Thus, this commission is for you and me, Jesus' 21st Century disciples.

This seems all rather straight forward and is certainly nothing new to the folks at Trinity, right?

And yet I wonder? I can't help but think of my colleague who is at a beautiful (and may I add full and prosperous church) who yearns for the time before Christianity became so institutional. And I can't help but hear the voice of the young man who loves Jesus but isn't in a church. He doesn't really fit there. Maybe he's not religious enough? Maybe he's too spiritual? I don't know.

Still I wonder, in my life, religious, spiritual, and otherwise, am I loving as God has called me to? Am I following the example of my leader and teacher, following Jesus?

How about you?

In Christ's Grace and Peace,

Pastor Tom

Gebet

Allmaechtiger Gott,

wir bringen vor dich die Maenner und Frauen, die die Macht haben in unserem Staat und die in hoher Verantwortung zu entscheiden haben ueber Sicherheit und Schutz von uns allen. Hilf ihnen bei ihren Aufgaben. Lass sie richtig entscheiden, auch wenn oft nur eine Entscheidung zwischen kleineren und groesseren Uebeln moeglich ist. Lass sie stets bedenken, dass ihr Amt letztlich Auftrag von dir ist, vor dem sie es auch zu verantworten haben.

Sei mit denen, die von Amts wegen Waffen tragen, die anklagen und richten muessen, deren Aufgabe es ist, Recht und Ordnung aufrecht zu erhalten. Hilf, dass sie sich beim Wahrnehmen ihrer Pflicht von deinen Geboten leiten lassen.

Gib uns allen den Mut und die Kraft, Gemeinschaftssinn und Buergersinn zu ueben, unseren Staat kritisch zu tragen und unserer Stadt zu dienen, indem wir uns an deine Gebote halten und fuer Gerechtigkeit und Freiheit eintreten. Amen.

aus: Seitz/Thiele: Wir beten

Coffee Hour

People seem to enjoy the coffee hours that we have been having after the Sunday worship service each week. We would like to set up a schedule of different people to help serve and clean up so that the same individuals don't have to do it every week. In addition, there may be others who would like to bake or donate a cake or cookies on occasion. If you are interested in volunteering to serve and clean up once in a while and/or bake or donate a cake or cookies please speak with either Linda Morton or Annalee Pfisterer.

Day Off

Pastor has chosen Fridays as his day off and will therefore not be in the office on this day. If you should have an emergency or other problem, please call the church and leave a message on the answering machine. Someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

IRS Regulations

If you itemize your deductions on your federal income tax form and claim charitable contributions, the IRS has some rules in case you are audited. The regulations state that you must make your contributions in the form of a check instead of cash so that you have an official record of your donation. In addition, the charitable organization has to supply you with a letter indicating the donation. The letter must also state that no goods or services were given to the donor in return for the donation. That's why it's important to use your offering envelopes when making contributions, because we are then able to keep an accurate record for you and provide you with the proper documentation at the end of the year. If you do not itemize deductions, however, then you don't have to worry about these regulations.

If you currently do not have offering envelopes and would like them, please speak with Peter Trautmann.

Box Top Collection

Merilyn Amoroso has been spearheading a ministry at Trinity to collect various box tops and labels for an organization called "Red Bird Missions" which purchases various items for needy children in Appalachia. She calls the project at Trinity "Victory for the Children in Appalachia" or "VCA Ministries." Merilyn presented the following report at a recent worship service.

"First I'd like to thank everyone from the bottom of my heart for all the help you have given me and this ministry. It's year-end and it's time for a report on how well we are doing. The grand totals of what we collected this year are: 29 Tyson 1-2-3 labels, 262 Campbell 1 point labels, 11 Campbell 5 point labels, and 682 box tops for education.

This contribution combined with what the United Methodist Church of Morgantown collected will definitely help Red Bird Missions accomplish its goal of helping the children in Appalachia.

As the New Year dawns, let's strive to accomplish our combined mission to help the poorest children in America enjoy childhood as every child should. If we do this, together we will accomplish our title and achieve true Victory for the Children in Appalachia.

Let me close with the words of our Lord and Savior in Matthew 25:40: "Verily I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." God bless you and thank you."

Merilyn Amoroso

If you are interested in contributing to this ministry, there is a list at the back of the sanctuary of the different kinds of box tops and labels we are collecting along with a box to place them in. You may also speak with Merilyn personally.

Congregational Meeting

This is a reminder that the annual congregational meeting will be held on Sunday February 8, immediately following the 10:00 a.m. worship service. Please plan to attend.

Ash Wednesday and Lent

Ash Wednesday will be February 25 and we will have a worship service with communion at 7:30 p.m. Also, on Wednesday evenings at 7:30 p.m. starting March 4 and running through April 1, we will observe the season of Lent with a time of reflection and fellowship.

Yearly Donations by Category

The following information was presented at the annual congregational meeting and shows the percentage of people contributing in various categories. We ask you to keep this in mind as you plan your own budget for the year.

The number in parenthesis next to each per cent value for 2008 represents the number or people in that category.

\$ Amount	Per Cent of Contributors in this Category for 2006	Per Cent of Contributors in this Category for 2007	Per Cent (and number) of Contributors in this Category for 2008
1 – 50	16%	6%	30% (29)
51 – 100	7%	3%	3% (3)
101 – 250	14%	10%	7% (7)
251 – 500	20%	19%	20% (19)
501 – 750	12%	11%	7% (7)
751 – 1000	4%	8%	6% (6)
1001 – 1250	7%	5%	3% (3)
1251 – 1700	5%	10%	10% (9)
1701 – 2000	1%	7%	1% (1)
2001 – 2500	3%	1%	3% (3)
2501 – 3000	2%	6%	2% (2)
3000 +	9%	14%	8% (8)

Worship Schedule for February

February 1, 8, 15, 22 —Regular Worship Schedule
10:00 a.m.

Ash Wednesday Service—February 25 at 7:30 p.m.

* Communion will be celebrated on February 1 and 25

* Prayer Meeting each Sunday at 9:00 am

* Junior Church each Sunday at 10:00 am