

TRINITY CHIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE TRINITY REFORMED CHURCH

JANUARY 2010

Faith Community

Tell me about your faith.

Go ahead. Take some time if you need it. Set the newsletter down. What would you share?

Ok. You're back. What did you come up with? Given the opportunity, what would you tell me about your faith? How would you share it?

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:1

The writer of the book of Hebrews defines faith as assurance and conviction. What are some of the assurances and convictions that you have?

For me one of the greatest assurances that I have is that I am not alone—that God is with me, that Christ is with me. That assurance of holy presence means more to me than many of my other beliefs and convictions put together. Like a little child holding hands with one who loves and protects them, I need only reach out my hand and know that God is there. I may not always “feel” God. And in some circumstances it may be incredibly difficult to go through or to understand, but nonetheless, my faith finds expression in holding fast to that knowledge, to that hope. It is the promise and conviction that Saint Paul proclaims in Romans 8:38-39, “For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Along with the assurance of God's presence faith assures a comfort in the conviction of belonging to God. What is my only comfort? That I am not my own, but belong body and soul, in life and in death to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. Christ has fully paid for all my sins with his precious blood, and has set me free from all the power of the devil. He also watches over me in such a way that not a hair can fall from my head without the will of my

Father in heaven; in fact, all things must work together for my salvation. Because I belong to him, Christ, by his Holy Spirit assures me of eternal life and makes me wholeheartedly willing and ready from now on to live for him. (Heidelberg Catechism 1)

I think it's interesting to note that in telling about my faith I didn't tell about the church. Not that church isn't important. It is. Nor that faith is all individualistic. It's not. But faith is indeed very personal and it gets down to the very core of our being and from there it wells out (or should) to all aspects of our life. Faith is foundational to our identity, to our calling, to our mission and ministry as a church.

I'm about to use a phrase of two words that I absolutely abhor being put together: faith business. Ugh. In my mind it conjures images of charlatan televangelist or corrupt faith healers. Church is about many things, but a business it is not. At least it shouldn't be. Business is about money, and well, as necessary as it may be to the church, the church is not all about money. And I hesitate to simply substitute the word money in the concept of business with the word faith; to think of the church as a faith business, as something that wheels and deals in faith (instead of money) is simply, well, unfaithful.

All that said, while not a business, the church is an organism that functions in faith. We are the faith community. Faith is the foundation we are built upon and the, eh, currency, that we use.

As we enter into a new calendar year I'd like to explore how our faith could grow here at Trinity Reformed, how our faith could expand. I hope we can talk about our faith more. I hope we can as a faith community nourish and encourage the faith of one another, and perhaps even, share our faith with those who are struggling or lacking a faith of their own. I hope we can do that on a personal level—the exercise at the beginning of this newsletter, please, please, please share it with someone; tell someone about your faith. But also at a faith community

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

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level—what are the ways that as a church we can enhance and expand our faith.

In Christ's Grace & Peace and Happy New Year/Guten Rutch,

Pastor Tom

REZEPT fuer das NEUE JAHR

Man nehme zwoelf Monate,
putze sie ganz sauber von Bitterkeit und Geiz,
Pedanterie und Angst
und zerlege jeden Monat in 30 oder 31 Teile,
so dass der Vorrat genau fuer ein Jahr reicht.

Es wird jeder Tag einzeln angerichtet
aus einem Teil Arbeit
und zwei Teilen Frohsinn und Humor.

Man fuege drei gehaeufte Essloeffel Optimismus hinzu,
einen Teil Toleranz, ein Koernchen Ironie
und eine Prise Takt.

Dann wird die Masse sehr reichlich mit Liebe
uebergossen!

Das fertige Gericht schmuecke man
mit Straeusschen kleiner Aufmerksamkeiten
und serviere es taeglich mit Heiterkeit.

Guter Rat nach Goethes Mutter
Katharina Elisabeth Goethe

Food Pantry

Trinity collects food for St. Matthias' food pantry the first Sunday of every month. The food pantry feeds 120 families each month and is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. The groceries are given out according to need. There are seniors who can't make ends meet, families with children, single parents, and people who have lost their jobs.

The need is great and as we know, we are going through difficult times. There have been times when people were turned away because there wasn't enough food to give. At other times the food pantry could not open due to a lack of food.

We thank everyone who has been so generous in donating food each month and for helping those going through difficult times.

Read Matthew 25:34-40

Souper Bowl Sunday

Super Bowl Sunday is February 7. Here at Trinity we are going to make it "Souper Bowl Sunday" and are asking everyone to bring in a can of soup or other non-perishable item which will be donated to the local food pantry.

Classis Assessment

In your offering envelope boxes you may have noticed an envelope marked "Assessment." As part of the Reformed Church in America we are responsible for paying an annual assessment to the denomination for each active adult member in our congregation. This assessment is used to pay for the denominational programs and expenses. For 2010 the annual Classes assessment is \$91.00. This means that the first \$91.00 you donate in your offering envelopes to Trinity Reformed Church goes to the denomination and not to Trinity. We ask you to remember this when you make your contributions. Thank you for your support.

Annual Congregational Meeting

The annual congregational meeting will be held on Sunday February 7, 2010 immediately following the regular worship service. The congregational meeting provides you with an opportunity to hear from Pastor and members of the consistory about what is going on in the life of Trinity and also for you to ask questions. Please make every effort to attend.



Open House

Pastor Tom hosted an open house at the parsonage on December 19. Although it was snowing, 18 people attended and enjoyed home made tamales and a pleasant evening.

Couples and Friends Christmas Party



The Couples and Friends Club met on December 5 for their Christmas party. There were 47 adults and children present and we enjoyed a delicious dinner, good music, and fellowship. Pastor's Christmas story was enjoyed by all, especially the children.

Frauenverein Meeting



The Ladies Aid/Frauenverein celebrated the Lord's birth with a great luncheon and good fellowship.

When I Say Good Morning

When I say good morning I mean to say:

G-od
O-ffers us His
O-utstanding
D-evotion to

M-ake us
O-bedient &
R-eady for a
N-ew day with Him.
I-nspire others please, and
N-ever forget
G-od loves you!

Worship Schedule for January

January 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 —Regular Worship Schedule
10:00 a.m.

- * Communion will be celebrated on January 3
- * Prayer Meeting each Sunday at 9:00 am
- * Junior Church each Sunday at 10:00 am

The Painting

Years ago, there was a very wealthy man who, with his devoted young son, shared a passion for art collecting. Together they traveled around the world adding only the finest art treasures to their art collection. Priceless works by Picasso, Van Gogh, Monet, and many others adored the walls of the family estate. The widowed elder man looked on with satisfaction as his only child became an experienced art collector.

As winter approached, war engulfed the nation and the young man left to serve his country. After only a few short weeks, his father received a telegram. His beloved son had died while rushing a fellow soldier to the medic.

Distraught and lonely, the old man faced the upcoming Christmas holidays with anguish and sadness. On Christmas morning, a knock on the front door awakened the depressed old man. As he walked to the door, the masterpieces of art on the walls only reminded him that his son was not coming home. As he opened the door, a soldier greeted him with a large package in his hand. He introduced himself to the man by saying "I was a friend of your son. I was the one he was rescuing when he died. May I come in for a few moments? I have something for you."

As the two began to talk, the soldier told of how the man's son had told everyone of his – not to mention his father's – love of fine art. "I'm an artist," said the soldier, "and I want to give you this." As the old man unwrapped the package, the paper gave way to reveal a portrait of the man's son. Though the world would never consider it the work of a genius, the painting featured the young man's face in striking detail. Overcome with emotion, the man thanked the soldier and promised to hang the picture above the fireplace.

True to his word, the old man hung the painting above the fireplace, pushing aside thousands of dollars worth of paintings. Then the man sat in his chair and spent Christmas gazing at the gift he had been given. He told his neighbors it was the greatest gift he had ever received.

The following spring, the old man became ill and passed away. The art world was in anticipation. With the collector's passing, and his only son dead, those paintings would be sold at auction. According to the will of the old man, all the art works would be auctioned on Christmas day, the day he had received his greatest gift. The day soon arrived and art collectors from around the world gathered to bid on some of the world's most spectacular paintings.

The auction began with a painting that was not on any museum's list. It was the painting of the man's son. The auctioneer asked for an opening bid. The room was silent. "Who will open the bidding with \$100?" he asked. Minutes passed. No one spoke. From the back of the room came, "Who cares about the painting? It's just a picture of his son. Let's forget it and go on to the good stuff." More voices echoed in agreement.

"No, we have to sell this one first," replied the auctioneer. "Now, who will take the son?" Finally a friend of the old man spoke, "Will you take ten dollars for the painting? That's all I have. I knew the boy, so I would like to have it." "I have ten dollars, will anyone go higher?" called the auctioneer. After more silence, the auctioneer said, "Going once, going twice, gone." The gavel fell. Cheers filled the room and someone exclaimed, "Now we can get on with it and bid on those treasures!"

The auctioneer looked at the audience and announced that the auction was over. Stunned disbelief quieted the room. Someone spoke up and asked "What do you mean it's over? We didn't come here for pictures of some old guy's son. What about all those paintings? There are millions of dollars of art here! I demand that you explain what is going on here!"

The auctioneer replied, "It's very simple. According to the will of the father, whoever takes the son . . . gets it all."

Puts things into perspective, doesn't it? Just as those art collectors discovered on that Christmas day, as Christians we believe the message is still the same – the love of a Father. A Father whose greatest joy came from his only Son who went away and gave his life rescuing others. And because of that Father's love . . . whoever takes the Son gets it all.

Stewardship and Finance Committee Report

<u>Expenditures for Month of</u>	<u>November 2009</u>
Personnel Expenses	6030.00
Utilities	612.00
Ministry/Supplies	315.00
Maintenance	89.00
Spiritual Life/Outreach/Advertising	0.00
Other Disbursements	1581.00
Total Expenditures	8627.00

<u>Receipts for Month of</u>	<u>November 2009</u>
Weekly Envelopes	5921.00
Weekly Plate	176.00
Benevolences	435.00
Memorial Fund	20.00
Special Offerings	1271.00
Other Receipts	874.00
Total Receipts	8697.00