

TRINITY CHIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE TRINITY REFORMED CHURCH

OCTOBER 2007

JESUS SAID: COME, FOLLOW ME!

Dear church family and friends...

Our annual spiritual growth journey will kick off on October 21, and we want you to start praying that God will do great things in our church as a result of it. "Disciples" is a 5 week journey that will increase our understanding of what it means to follow Jesus.

We live in a fast-paced world that places high value on speed, productivity, and efficiency. If we are honest, sometimes we measure our discipleship by the same values. We want results! What if discipleship were first and foremost a beautiful journey? What if we believed our relationship with God was the most beautiful personal encounter we've ever had? What if we deeply desired to pattern our lives after this awesome tenderness we know as grace?

During this journey we will have an opportunity to stop and ask the big questions. Not so much the big philosophical questions but the big questions about whom you follow, who you are, and how you are going to live. Because at the end of your life, will you and your loved ones focus on how successful or impressive your life was, or on how beautiful it became as you grew towards maturity in Christ? Nothing is more beautiful than God and the evidence is all around us. "Disciples" will help you to live more deeply into the life and heart of God.

At the heart of the Christian story is the conviction that around 2000 years ago God, the God

who created and loves the world and is passionately determined to redeem and renew it, did something astounding and almost inconceivable. God became human; God joined the human race. For thirty years he lived an ordinary life, which the Bible doesn't tell us much about. But after he was baptized by John, Jesus burst on the scene. The gospels tell us that almost the first thing Jesus did was to call together some disciples.

In those days rabbis did that sort of thing, seeking the best, most promising men to pass on their knowledge. Jesus called twelve quite ordinary men, mostly fishermen, along with a few rather notorious crooks. The words he used still ring with urgency: "Come and follow me." His personality was so compelling, his words so captivating, that they literally dropped what they were doing and set out on a three-year journey of following him around. They ate together, traveled together, laughed together and all the while Jesus taught them about what he called the kingdom of God.

So the primary method Jesus used to spread his gospel, the good news of God's love, was to hang out with this group called "the twelve." He "discipled" this little community of people. That's the way he prepared them to spread his word when he was gone. Amazingly, starting with twelve ordinary people called disciples, the gospel of Jesus Christ has spread through the whole world.

The Sunday messages, daily readings and weekly small group lesson will help you understand what it means to follow Jesus as his disciple – What it means to follow him with all your heart. Jesus, God's own Son, extends to each of us the same compelling, adventurous, life-transforming invitation he made to his first disciples: "Come, follow me." You don't want to miss it!

Rev. Dr. Albert Potgieter

(The content of this article was taken from the "Disciples" daily reading and small group books.)

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



Join a Small Group

We will be forming small groups that will be meeting in homes for the duration of our "Disciples" spiritual growth journey. This particular study will last for 5 weeks and the first meeting will take place during the week of October 21. We want to encourage you to sign up for a small group, which will enable you to dig deeper into God's Word with other believers. By participating with others you will also deepen existing relationships and establish new friendships. If you are interested, please put your name on the list when you come to worship on Sundays, or give Pastor Albert a call.

Daily Readings for Disciples

"Disciples" will be no different than the other spiritual growth adventures we have had, in that there will be three very important aspects. The Sunday sermon, and we encourage you to attend all 5 Sundays; the weekly small group meeting, and we encourage you to join one; and the daily reading and devotional. For this you will need a book, which you can order through us for a donation of \$10.00. By obtaining the book you will be able to participate fully in this year's spiritual growth journey. Please put your name on the list when you come to worship on Sundays, or call Pastor Albert.

Der bessere Samaritan

Da geht der Samaritan ein zweites Mal nach Jericho, fand einen zweiten Verwundeten, las ihn ein zweites Mal auf. Ging ein drittes, ein viertes, ein fünftes Mal den gleichen Weg und fand jedesmal einen Verwundeten. Er ging hundertmal und fand hundertmal. Ging tausendmal und fand tausendmal ... Und immer an der gleichen Stelle. Als er zum 2333. Male von Jerusalem nach Jericho ging, dachte er bei sich: Es liegt bestimmt wieder einer da ... und stolperte darüber ..., holte dann, wie üblich, den üblichen Vorrat aus der Satteltasche und begann mit üblicher Sorge, diesen neuesten, 2333. Verwundeten übungsgemäß zu salben und zu wickeln, um ihn abschließend - weil Übung den Meister macht - mit einem einzigen Ruck auf den Esel zu verladen ..., der auch sofort davonlief in üblicher Richtung auf die Herberge, und dort auch richtig ankam, der Esel mit dem Verwundeten ..., diesmal bloß zu zweit, ohne den Samaritaner.

Der Samaritaner war nämlich in der Wüste geblieben, um dort zunächst einmal ein Räubernest auszuspionieren ... Als er über seinen 2333. Verwundeten stolperte, war ihm nämlich plötzlich die Erleuchtung gekommen ..., dass es eine bessere Qualität von Barmherzigkeit sei, sich vorsorglich, und zwar resolut, mit dem Räubernest zu befassen, statt nachträglich Heftpflaster auszuteilen. Er merkte sich das Rezept. Und war von da ab mit immer weniger Arbeit ein immer besserer und noch besserer barmherziger Samaritan.

Aus: Ernst Schnydrig; So gute Augen für Zachäus Verlag Josef Knecht, Frankfurt. 1977

Natural Church Survey

As we mentioned in the previous edition of the Chimes, Trinity is about to engage in the Natural Church Development process. NCD is being used by thousands of churches around the world to produce healthier congregations. After carefully studying 25,000 congregations around the world, pastor and researcher Christian Schwarz identified eight "quality characteristics" - eight factors that affect the life, effectiveness, and growth of congregations: Empowering Leadership; Gift-oriented Ministry; Passionate Spirituality; Functional Structures; Inspiring Worship; Holistic Small Groups; Need-oriented Evangelism; and Loving Relationships, with the emphasis on the underlined words. NCD measures a church in these eight areas that affect the life, effectiveness, and growth of congregations. Schwarz's research shows that if a congregation scores low on any of the eight quality characteristics, the fruitfulness of that congregation is limited.

The next step for us is to do a survey that will give us a spiritual snapshot of our church, and tell us our scores on these eight different factors. The results of this survey will help us to identify our strengths and weaknesses. We will then use our strengths to start addressing the area in which we scored lowest. To complete the survey, thirty people from our congregation, who were randomly selected by the Consistory, will each fill out a questionnaire. This will take place in the Fellowship Hall on October 7, after a combined worship celebration at 10:00 am. Once the results are known and our weakest area is determined, the next step will be to form a church health team, which will help strategize on how to become healthier in that area.

We are asking for your prayers as we start this process. Please pray for Pastor Albert and the leadership of Trinity, the people who will be filling out the questionnaires, the formation of the health team, and for God's Spirit to breathe new life into our church and its people. For more information on the NCD process, feel free to contact Pastor Albert.

Helping Hands Disband

The Helping Hands will hold their final meeting on October 3 at 10:00 am. Due to a lack of members and leadership, the ministry will dissolve after this last meeting. Material that is left will be donated to another church with a similar ministry. The Helping Hands was started by the late Dorothy Dell'Amore. When she passed away it continued under the leadership of Jean Kunzinger, who just recently moved away. We want to thank all the ladies who participated in this ministry over all these years. Countless organizations and individuals were blessed by your handiwork of beautiful quilts, blankets, lap robes and scarves.

Response Team

During heavy rain storms, many people in the area have experienced water coming into their basements. Trinity is no exception. Several times in the past few months we have had to mop and clean up the fellowship hall and furnace room when water

came in. We would like to form a "response team" of people who could be contacted during such an emergency who would be willing to come down to church to help clean up. If you would be able to volunteer, please speak to either Theo Hennessee or Bob Bambach who are the members of our maintenance committee.



Relay for Life

Relay for Life is an event sponsored by the American Cancer Society. Last June I had the privilege of taking part in the Relay for Life event at Juniper Valley Park in Middle Village. I was deeply moved by what I witnessed that day. The event is 24 hours in duration. It begins on a Saturday afternoon with a survivors walk. People that are battling with cancer walk around the track while hundreds cheer them on on the sidelines. Following this walk, everyone who participates begins to walk around the track. There are walkers on the track for a period of 24 hours, through the night and into the following Sunday morning.

At 10 PM on Saturday evening there are luminaries (candles inside waxed paper bags) that are lit all around the track. Each luminary has the name of a person that has either passed away because of the disease or someone who is battling the disease right now. It is a tremendous sight to see all the luminaries light up the track. They are 3 and 4 rows deep. On the bleachers were luminaries that spelled out the word "hope". And it is most definitely "hope" that was so evident at this event. There were many families with children that participated, as well as young and old. It was a demonstration of solidarity and compassion for those who are bravely living one day at a time with this disease.

I would like Trinity Reformed to take part in this event next June. This would mean getting together a team of about 15 people. I am willing to be the captain of the team. The team should have someone on the track, walking around at all times through the 24 hour relay. We would therefore need to sign up for specific hours from Saturday afternoon, through Sunday morning. If you are at all interested in being a part of this event, please contact me, Brigitte Brady, as soon as possible. I will need to enter the event by November. I believe this is a way that we as Christians can show our concern for the many in our own church and in our families that are battling with this disease. It is also a way for us to live out our Christian calling to be compassionate and care for our sisters and brothers in Christ.

For more information, please contact Elder Brigitte Brady. Further information is also available at www.relayforlife.org.

Crop Walk to Stop Hunger

The Ridgewood Glendale Sunday School Association will sponsor another CROP Walk on Saturday October 6 at 9:00 a.m. at Juniper Valley Park in Middle Village. The money that

is raised will be donated to Church World Services to help alleviate world hunger. Last year Trinity Reformed Church raised \$470.00. We hope we can do at least as well this year.

If you would like a little exercise, then plan to walk with us and be at the park at 9:00 a.m. If you can't walk, then sponsor a walker. If you have any questions, please speak with Gerard Tate or Bill Voges.

To Make You Smile

A visiting minister was very long-winded. Worse, every time he would make a good point during his sermon and a member of the congregation responded with "Amen" or "That's right, preacher" he would get wound up even more and launch into another lengthy discourse. Finally, the host pastor started responding to every few sentences with "Amen, Pharaoh!" The guest minister wasn't sure what that meant, but after several more "Amen, Pharaohs" he finally concluded his very lengthy sermon. After the service concluded and the congregation had left, the visiting minister turned to his host and asked, "What exactly did you mean when you said "Amen, Pharaoh?" His host replied, "I was telling you to let my people go!"

A guy is 86 years old and loves to fish. He was sitting in his boat the other day when he heard a voice say, "Pick me up." He looked around and couldn't see any one. He thought he was dreaming when he heard the voice say again, "Pick me up." He looked in the water and there, floating on the top, was a frog. The man said, "Are you talking to me?" The frog said, "Yes, I'm talking to you. Pick me up. Then, kiss me and I'll turn into the most beautiful woman you have ever seen. I'll make sure that all your friends are envious and jealous because you will have me as your bride." The man looked at the frog for a short time, reached over, picked it up carefully, and placed it in his front breast pocket. Then the frog said, "What, are you nuts? Didn't you hear what I said? I said kiss me and I will be your beautiful bride." He opened his pocket, looked at the frog and said, "Nah, at my age I'd rather have a talking frog."

Combined Worship Services

Please note that there will be a Combined Worship Celebration at 10:00 am on October 7, since this is the day when the NCD Survey will be done. On October 14 there will be both German and English language services. On the 21st and 28th there will be only one service at 10:00 am, as we will be on our "Disciples" spiritual growth journey.

Worship Schedule for October

October 14—Regular Worship Schedule

German—9:30 am

English—10:45 am

* Communion will be celebrated on October 7

October 7, 21, 28—Combined Service at 10:00 am