

# Trinity Tidings for Feb. 2021

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Pastor Julie Osterhout, Deacon Carol Koch, Musician: Nancy Moyer, Sexton: Jamie Black

## “I’m Okay, You’re Okay”—or Not

So some of you may know I am an avid Trekkie. If you don’t know what that means it means I am a *Star Trek* Nerd. I am aware of this and so have for the most part spared my church family from having to deal with an overload of *Star Trek* analogies in my sermons.

I have watched almost every *Star Trek* series ever made. I am currently in the middle of season 3 of *Star Trek: Discovery* and when I finish that season and the new animation, *Lower Decks* I will be up to date with all *Star Trek* shows and movies. And yes, there are more coming.

Last night I was watching a few episodes of *Star Trek Discovery* and without going into too much detail, I will sum up the series plot: The *Star Ship Discovery* has flown through a worm hole which has pushed the ship and its crew 930 years into the future. The crew had agreed to go on this mission into the unknown, but when they get there they find that all they had known a thousand years before is missing and or changed in this new, frightening future. The galaxy they find is not the galaxy they left behind.

The crew has many repairs to make and they have lost some of their crew mates on this wild journey. All of that amid the understanding that their families and friends have been dead and gone for hundreds of years takes a mental and emotional toll on the crew. And yet, as *Star Fleet* crew and officers they continue to keep a stiff upper lip, march forward, and do their jobs unwaveringly. And they do it until they realize they can’t do it.

It is at the end of episode three after the captain has tried to lift their spirits with a scrumptious dinner that they realize they are not okay. Their traumatic journey and ensuing events have left them with deep, open, emotional wounds. And in order to begin the healing process they must admit to themselves and each other that they are not okay.

Folks, we are not okay. I don’t say this to scare anyone or make you think that our church family is any kind of danger. As the doctor of the *Star Ship Discovery* learns, everyone is physically fit and ready for duty—but there’s more to being fit than being physically okay. It is the same for us.

I doubt there is anyone who has not been affected by the past year in some way or another. We too have been on a journey that feels as if we have squeezed through a worm hole into a future that looks nothing like what we left behind back in 2019. Some of us have lost family, friends, health, jobs, and much more. In 2020 I presided over 15 funerals for both Trinity members and non-members. I have had family and friends suffer with the virus and some have died of the virus.

The virus has changed how we connect with life, how we do church, our jobs, relate to our friends and family. And of course our ideologies and convictions concerning politics and race have become unraveled in so many different ways. And yet, there is hope being that good will come out of the unraveling.

We have handled this unexpected future in different ways depending on each person’s character and personality. Whether you are a stickler for schedules and order, or flexible and easy going, extraverted or introverted, anxious or relaxed has—in many ways—determined how you have weathered the crises of 2020.

Regardless, we have been “injured and broken.” Perhaps we need to admit we are not okay before we can begin to heal after such a year. (Some of you may be thinking 2021 didn’t start off too well either—but time will tell.)

I know church life has been irregular. We’ve gone from in person worship to parking lot worship to outdoor worship to indoor to Zoom and back to indoor face to face worship. Newsletters have been few,

committee meetings have felt non-existent or few and far between. Sunday School plans evaporated, and so many of us are sheltering in place that a Sunday morning attendance of 35 feels large.

But be assured, our finances are better than ever (we are solidly in the black). We are grateful for the continuing gifts and prayers that support the ministry of Trinity even if it feels invisible. We continue to look for ways to be the church together wherever and however we are. Worship and Music, Mutual Ministries, Council, Finance, and Endowment committees continue to do the work of ministry as we meet in person or by Zoom. We continue to try to reach people with worship materials and recordings (though the memory on my phone and tablet are so depleted I can no longer use them to record sermons). And yet, we move forward—we move forward out of Christmas and into Lent.

Last year our Lenten season was abruptly interrupted with the onset of the virus. This year, on February 17<sup>th</sup> we enter back into the season of Lent that—in some ways—feels as though we never really left it. As we enter this Lenten season I encourage each of us to seek out healing prayer, study, and devotional time. Perhaps we need to admit that we are not okay in order to seek the healing balm of God's love and grace so we can live into whatever our new future brings.

Because the truth is, we *will* eventually get back into the swing of things. It may not look the same as it used to or feel the same as it used to and that is okay, too. We will have grown and changed as a result of our experiences. How we worship, when we worship—even why we worship—has changed and evolved over the last year and those changes will drive where and how we move forward into this next year—all for the better.

And so be patient with yourselves, each other, and all those with whom you come in contact each day. Be kind to one another and give room for not being okay—that's grace—God's grace. And know that there was and is no right or wrong way to have "done" 2020.

We *will* move ahead, and—eventually—we will be okay.

Grace and peace to you,  
Pr. Julie

### **Prayer Chain**

If someone you know— or you yourself— are in need of prayer, allow us to add your prayer request to our daily prayers. Prayers will always remain confidential. Prayer requests may be as detailed or as anonymous as you prefer. Ex. "Pray for my Aunt Nellie who has cancer," or "Pray for healing for a friend." To activate the prayer chain, please call Mary Young at 610-678-4470. If there is no answer, please leave a message or call at a later time if you are not comfortable leaving a message. Your prayer request is important and we do not want to miss it.

If you would be interested in helping with this ministry there are no face to face meetings required, simply a desire to pray for others and the world on a daily basis. Please see, call, text, or e-mail Pr. Julie for details. 717-687-8682 or [k25music@aol.com](mailto:k25music@aol.com)

## **Lent 2021**

### **Ash Wednesday is February 17<sup>th</sup>**

#### **In Person Ash Wednesday**

This year there will be two Ash Wednesday services offered. They will be abbreviated services as we continue to limit in person time together in order to curtail the spread of Covid. Services will be offered at: **10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.**

#### **Pre-Recorded Ash Wednesday**

For those who are sheltering in place or are homebound the West Berks Mission District has prepared a

joint worship service to be presented at 7:30 p.m. on Ash Wednesday on cable station 190 (I believe this is only for Comcast users). It will also be uploaded to YouTube for viewing anytime. I believe it will be found under West Berks Mission District.

## Wednesdays in Lent

Study and devotional time will be offered Wednesdays in Lent beginning February 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. We will study various Psalms and how they speak to us during times of upheaval and hardship. Following is the ID number and Passcode for these Wednesdays. We will use the same ID and Passcode each week. If you cannot Zoom by computer/tablet/phone, it is possible to dial in or simply call someone who is Zooming and they can put you on speaker phone. You should be able to hear and be heard quite well.

Julie Osterhout is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Trinity Wernersville Wednesdays in Lent  
Time: This is a recurring meeting Meet anytime

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82523035881?pwd=RjRsbzRVdnVQRmx3M242UjlxZUh4Zz09>

Meeting ID: 825 2303 5881

Passcode: 999444

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kc00LegM8>

## Lenten Kits for those at Home

For those who are sheltering in place and are homebound, Lenten kits will be available for pickup or delivery. They will contain ashes, a candle, devotional materials, etc . . . They will be available the week of Feb. 8<sup>th</sup> (we'll give you an exact date as we grow closer to Ash Wednesday).

## Also

This will be an unusual Lenten time. We ask for your forgiveness in advance as we make mistakes and perhaps change things as needed. Information for Holy Week will be forthcoming. Peace and grace as we prepare our hearts and minds for the journey ahead.



***A reminder to all Committee Chairs, task forces, etc. that the deadline for all reports for the Congregational Meeting is Sunday, February 14th. They can be e-mailed (preferred method) to the office-[tlcworship@aol.com](mailto:tlcworship@aol.com). Otherwise, a hard copy should be in Carol Koch's mailbox by the above date. The Annual Congregational Meeting for reception of reports and adoption of endowment and rental management budgets will be held following worship on Sunday 3/14.***

**Happy Birthday**  
*Birthday Milestones in February*

Ruth Rush will be 83. Happy Birthday Ruth.



If you would like to change your Simply Giving Amount or if you would like to participate in the program or withdraw from the program, just pick up a form in the narthex, fill it out and place it in a sealed envelope with Barbara Debiec's name on it.

**Please remember in your prayers:**

**Members who are sick or recently hospitalized:** Allison Given, Beverly James, Janice Lamm, Sandra Miller, April and Matthew Schwartz.

**Members who are homebound or in care facilities:** Sharon Gring, Joan Kava, Diane Klinger, Dan Nace, Barbara Pennypacker, Rosie Putt, Betty Reber, Pat Sickles, and Kay Weatherholtz.

**The Military:** Rena Butcavage, Kiley Gring Mohn, Natalie Ketner, and Justin Klinger.

**Family and Friends:** Wanda Barnett, Carolyn Bryant, Fred DeLong, Marge Dietrich, Ellen Emanuel, Peggy Guido, Glenn Helbert, Kali, Betty Kauffman, Shirley Kerchner, Sharon and Marty Kleczynski, Hannah Kramer, Arlene Leese, Cindy Marsh, Destiny Olivarares, Jake Powers, Clairre Putt, Tom Reppert, Dorothy Stone, Jerry Zachousk, and Ann Zimmerman.

**Special Ministries:** Our missionary in Tanzania-Dr. Stephen Friberg and his Family.

**Please let us know when our prayers are answered so we can keep our prayer list current.**

**How are We Doing?**

**Trinity's Financial Summary for December**

Average Weekly Giving in December 2020: **\$6439.50**

Average in December, 2019: **\$5663.29**

Total income in 2020: **\$193,085.73**

Total income in 2019: **\$196859.71**

Total expenses in 2020: **\$183,885.14**

Total expenses in 2019: **\$188,146.83**

Total income in December: **\$25,758.00**

Total expenses December: **\$22,727.49**

Percentage of Mission Support for 2020:

to Synod: **102%**, to Mission District: **100%**

**Thank you for your generosity.**



December 2020

Christmas Greetings and blessings to the people of Trinity,

Thank you, thank you, thank you. I am blessed to be a part of such a wonderful church family. As Bruce and I weathered the ups and downs of the coronavirus it was lifesaving to have the prayers, cards, and help of so many caring people.

Thank you for the meals of which we absolutely could not have done without. Thank you to those who called and texted to see how we were doing. Thank you to those who sent cards and well wishes. All were read, cherished, and kept. Thank you to those who ran errands for us—picking up groceries and going to the pharmacy or post office.

The coronavirus is extremely debilitating in so many ways. Not being able to go out of our home for three weeks was incredibly isolating and limiting. We cannot imagine what it would have been like to not have such a wonderful church family who could help out.

Peace and blessings to all this Christmas as we continue to navigate how to do life during this virus. Your flexibility in making all kinds of decisions regarding worship has been much appreciated. I know some decisions were difficult to make and not everyone agreed with them—heck, I didn't always like them—but we do what we think will be safest for everyone. We will never know if they were the right decisions, but know that God has been with us through all of it. We move forward in faith and hope grateful for the brilliant, scientific minds who created the vaccines against this virus—minds molded and shaped by God.

May 2021 be a year of renewal, peace, and health,

Reverends Bruce and Julie Osterhout

### ***Mission Support – where does our money go?***

Several months ago, Pastor Julie asked if I would serve as Trinity's Mission Interpreter and share information on our mission support activities. Since that time, I have been doing my homework to find out what that really means, where the money in that budget line goes and what it supports. Do you remember when we had a line item for "benevolence?" Well, that's been rebranded as *mission support*. These offerings contributed by Trinity's members along with those from other congregations support God's work in our community, throughout the mission district and NEPA synod, across the greater ELCA and around the world. According to information I received from the ELCA, mission support contributions are "unrestricted offerings" (i.e. not given for a specific ministry) and, when combined with other resources from more than 8900 congregations and 65 synods, we become partners with many others in accomplishing the mission of the ELCA through a variety of outreach and ministries. As a congregation, Trinity does many wonderful things as "freed by grace, we are called by faith into an active mission and ministry of Jesus Christ." Just think of the power we have, and the impact we make in spreading God's word and love in partnership with all those other Lutherans!



I would like to thank each of you for your contribution to help Trinity meet our designated mission support contribution for 2020. We budgeted \$17,982 and we sent \$18,333 (102%) to the ELCA! The mission district amount was \$540 and that's what was sent. Even in these unsettling and trying times, we have met our commitment. **Well done thou good**

**and faithful servants! Thanks for your continuing faithful support and generosity.**

During the coming months, I'll be sharing stories of some ways in which we have been involved in God's work in serving out brothers and sisters in Christ through our mission support resources.

Diane Brown,

Mission Interpreter



Thanks to everyone who contributed shoes to our fall drive to support the outreach work of *In Ian's Boots*, a non profit organization located in Pottstown. Several years ago, Ian's mother and father, Holly and Ron Miller, visited Trinity to tell us about Ian and the charitable organization they established to honor Ian's memory, their only child, who was killed in a tragic ski accident in January 2010. When they were called to the hospital, they were given a verse that the medical team found in one of Ian's boots, That verse, from James 1:2-4, reads: "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because

you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything." The mission of the organization is "to spread the good news of Ian's faith by providing shoes and winter boots to those in need." Shoes are provided to local families, those in the SE PA region, across the United States and even around the world whose lives have been changed due to natural disasters or financial circumstances beyond their control.

Over the past few years, members of Trinity have collected shoes to support the work of In Ian's Boots. In less than 2 months last fall, we collected over 100 pairs of gently used shoes, boots, flip flops, etc., that were delivered to be given to those in need. When I delivered them to the warehouse where they are sanitized, prepared for distribution and delivery to recipients, Ron couldn't believe that we collected so many in a short period of time. While at the facility at least 5 volunteers came over to thank me for **YOUR** generosity. Thank you, members of the Trinity family, for participating in this mission outreach - another way we do God's work and show his love to help others in need.

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Dear Friends,

We are very grateful for your recent donation of \$500 to Godparents for Tanzania!

Thank you for sharing your endowment fund resources with our students. Fortunately, Tanzania has been spared the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic, and our students only missed ten weeks of school last year. So they have been able to continue their education at secondary schools, vocational training centers, and colleges across Tanzania.

With support from generous folks like you, our students are preparing to become leaders in fields like medicine, education, law, business, and more. Your investment in them will pay huge dividends for their families and their communities!

I hope your congregation has been able to stay connected during this challenging time. Thanks for staying connected with Godparents for Tanzania and giving our students the opportunity to realize their full potential and help build their communities and their country.

With thanksgiving,  
Kristin

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Just to update you, your congregation sent in a total of \$735 to Food for the Poor in 2020. THANK YOU! Please keep us in your prayers as well as your future plans for projects in 2021 to help the poorest of the poor in the Caribbean and Central America. Thanks again.

Together in Christ,  
Pastor Bruce Potteiger

A heartfelt thanks to those who faithfully donate to the meal for Opportunity House. Your generosity and hard work is greatly appreciated. This church outreach is possible only because of you.

Mary Young



### **Flower and Bulletin Sponsorship**

The cost of sponsoring the flowers is **\$38.00**. If you are sponsoring the flowers, please note that there are flower envelopes in the narthex beside the sign up list for altar flowers. Please put your check (payable to Trinity) or cash in the envelope and place in the offering plate. The cost of sponsoring the bulletins is **\$15.00**. We also want to remind you that the week you are an altar flower sponsor, please call the office, Nancy Moyer, or contact the altar guild person listed in the bulletin if you want to keep the flowers. Otherwise, the flowers will be given to the sick, shut-ins, or others in need. Thanks. **We need Altar Flower Sponsors for 2/14 and 2/28. We need bulletin sponsors for all the Sundays in February plus Ash Wednesday on 2/17. Please sign up on the appropriate chart in the narthex.**

**Altar Flower Sponsors for February:** 2/7-Barb and Jim Debiec in honor of Fern Ervin's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, 2/21-Laura Miller in memory of her brother

### **Helpers for February**

**Council Devotions:** Jerry Jarsocrak

**Communion Assistant:** Betty Lou Franzen

**Lay Readers:** 2/7-Kathy Lawry, 2/14-Kathy Lawry, 2/21-Diane Brown, 2/28-Kay Stout.

**Ushers:** 2/7-Lawry's, 2/14-Bashore's, 2/21-Kurtzes, 2/28-Givens.

**Sound System:** 2/7-Scott Franzen, 2/14-Stephanie Kurtz, 2/17 (Ash Wednesday)-Scott Franzen, 2/21-Scott Franzen, 2/28-Wendell Byler

**Counters:** 2/7-Hummel/Jarsocrak, 2/14-Debiec/Rinehimer, 2/17 (Ash Wednesday)-Franzens, 2/21-Rapley/Pirl-Roth, 2/28-Hummel/Jarsocrak.

**Bulletin Assemblers:** 2/3-Laura Krick, 2/10-Kathy Bashore, 2/17-Barb Debiec, 2/24-Beverly James, 3/3-Helen Hummel.

### **Church Council Members**

Harmony Wentzel, President 610-390-9986  
Glen Given, Vice President 484-955-1780  
Wendell Byler, 610-670-8512  
Scott Franzen 610-781-7674  
Jerry Jarsocrak 610-670-0954  
Elwood (Woody) Noll 484-638-2057  
Cindy Hassler-Schappell 610-451-6131

### **Church Council Highlights for January**

- Set date of March 14 for Congregational Meeting following worship. All reports are due into the office by 2/14 so report can be compiled.
- Elected Harmony Wentzel as President and Glen Given as Vice President of the council/congregation.
- Council meetings for February and March will be via Zoom. February Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 2/10 @ 7:30 PM and March will be Wednesday, 3/17 @ 8 PM (following Lenten Zoom worship).
- Discussed preparations for Trinity's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
- A task force will be gathered to work on updating the constitution and bylaws of Trinity.
- 2 council members still needed to fill vacant seats-each with a term of 2 years.