

# Trinity Times

A newsletter for the members and friends of Trinity Episcopal Church

Trinity Episcopal Church  
The Episcopal Church in Athens since 1842  
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## Pentecost Season - June 2022

### Abortion & the Bible

The Rev. Benjamin Lee Lentz

There's the story of two theologians arguing a verse of scripture, as is their nature. At that moment, a third theologian is wandering by and they call him over and ask her opinion, "Which one of us is right?" The third theologian proffers, "Well, actually, neither of you are understanding the verse." While the three of them expand the heated debate, God happens to stroll past. They call over God, "Which of us is right?" God shakes the divine head, "None of you," and explains the intention of the Biblical passage. The theologians shrug their collective shoulders and exclaim together, "Oh great! Now we have four opinions."

With the uptick in a possible over-turning of *Roe v. Wade*, there is much biblical misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and misapplication of the scriptures, both Hebrew and Christian, upon which people attempt to fortify their position. Allow me to make a few observations.

Although I believe that the scriptures are a part of a divine attempt to interact with God's frail creation of humanity (us), I fear that we are verging upon the sin of idolatry when we elevate a single book – in reality an anthology – such as the Bible, to a definitive divine statement about all things human and natural. "God said it; I believe it; that's that," as an oft seen bumper sticker proclaims, is a fallacy. It becomes worse when we declare that one particular English translation of the Bible is the ultimate 'authoritative' edition of the divine intention – that's human hubris at its pinnacle and pure idolatry.

To the best of my knowledge – I admit I'm not a Hebrew scholar – there is no word for abortion in the scriptures. There are words for miscarriage and premature birth, but the context is a legal direction for accidental situations – recompense or retribution being the options: "*When men strive together, and hurt*

*a woman with child, so that there is a miscarriage, and yet no harm follows, the one who hurt her shall be fined, according as the woman's husband shall lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine."* (Exodus 21:22).

What we can infer from this passage is that the fetus is seen as the property of the husband and he can demand that an appropriate fine be paid. If the woman is further harmed (injured or killed), the *lex talionis* is invoked. Clearly, she is seen as a person; the fetus is not.

There is only one passage that may or may not be speaking of an abortion as a curse brought upon a wife for infidelity (Numbers 5:21-22). However, pregnancy is never specifically mentioned in the passage, only the jealousy of the husband and a test of the wife's fidelity.

Abortion aside, the Bible, however, is more specific concerning when life begins: it is with the first breath. Genesis 2:7 "*Then the Lord formed man of dust from the ground, and **breathed** into his nostrils the **breath of life**; and man became a living being."*

Job 33:4 "*The spirit of God has made me, and the **breath of the Almighty gives me life.**"*

Ezekiel 37:5-6 "*Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: Behold, **I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live.** And I will lay sinews upon you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, **and put breath in you, and you shall live;** and you shall know that I am the LORD."*

Those of course are passages from the Hebrew scriptures. But what does Jesus say about abortion? Jesus is silent on it.

There are passages against murder in the Christians scriptures, as in the Hebrew scriptures, but again, it all depends upon when life begins according to the scriptures.

I am not trivializing unborn children. There are most

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certainly moral and ethical decisions to be made by people who have the breath of life concerning an unborn child. The scriptures, however, do not specifically contribute any definitive or easy answers to those moral decisions. Most certainly, any decision should be made in consultation with doctors and spiritual advisors, but not made preemptively by politicians.

For those of you with internet connectivity, here are a few Episcopal Church resources: [Religion, morality, and politics: the abortion debate](#). [Ladriere P. Religion, morale et politique: le debat sur l'avortement [Religion, morality and politics: the abortion debate]. Rev Fr Sociol. 1982 Jul-Sep;23(3):417-54. French. PMID: 12339249.] [Abortion: a guide to making ethical choices](#). [Fromer MJ]. Abortion ethics. Nurs Outlook. 1982 Apr;30(4):234-40. PMID: 7041095.] [Abortion ethics. Abortion—the breath of life](#) [Joling RJ. Abortion—the breath of life. Med Trial Tech Q. 1974 Fall;21(2):199-232. PMID: 4613988.].

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**Fr. Ben's Bible Study on the Gospel of Matthew** is available in both paper and electronic format. He began the study during Lent with a Prologue about the life of Peter. That was followed by six sessions (so far!) examining Matthew. All seven weeks are available on our website, beginning with the [Prologue](#). You can read each week there as an article, as well as download it as a pdf to print or read at your leisure. The pdf versions contain the original Greek and Hebrew, which are not supported on the web site. For those without internet access, paper copies are on the back windowsill in the church. Fr. Ben has put a great deal of time and work into this offering and it is highly recommended.

### Stewardship Statements

Your pledge statement for the first six months of the year will be ready for you to pick up on July 10. Please remember, this is not a bill! The statement is for your information so that you can compare your records with ours. If you have chosen not to pledge but would like weekly envelopes, they are available. Speak to Barbara.

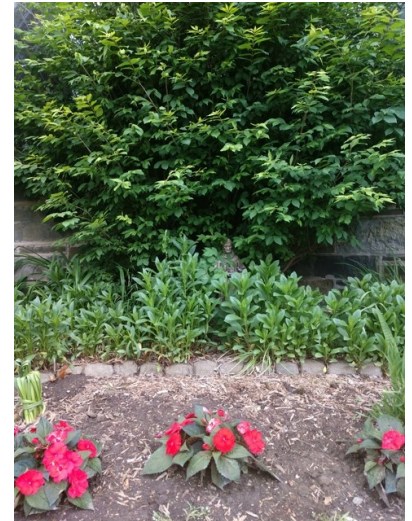
### Covid-19

has not gone away. Bradford County, Pennsylvania, and Tioga County, New York, are, unfortunately, hot spots listed as "high risk." Most of us are vaccinated and also eligible for boosters - make sure you are up

to date. The vestry encourages social distancing during worship and mask wearing if you are at high risk. We continue to receive communion in one kind, the bread, to minimize any risk of contamination.

### Garden help

is most welcome. This season's work on our Memorial Garden has begun, but as you can see, St. Francis needs to be freed from the burning bush and Shasta daisies. The blank area behind the sunshine impatiens will be filled with zinnias, which are now germinating in peat pots. Our peonies are close to blooming and we've started a wild-flower garden on the south-east side of the church next to the sacristy. Whether you would like to dig in or prefer to keep your fingernails clean and share your ideas or suggestions, talk to our resident gardener, Barbara.








We welcomed **The Rev. Canon Melinda Artman** on May 22. She preached the sermon and met with Trinity's vestry members and others after coffee hour. As Canon Missioner for the North in the Diocese of Bethlehem, she represents the Bishop and acts as a resource for the parishes in this area. Since she is also the rector of Church of the Redeemer, Sayre, she knows what it's like to be in the farthest reaches of the diocese. The discussion was fruitful as she patiently listened to Trinity's questions and concerns. She explained that it is her job to make sure our voices are heard and that we can call on her anytime. Looking ahead, we may find ways to work with other small parishes in the north to address common issues. We are fortunate to have her so close and so energetic as she balances the demands of two parishes (Redeemer and St. John Lutheran) along with her duties as canon of the north.



# Trinity Episcopal Church - June 2022

Pentecost

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Trinity Cycle of Prayer:</b> 6/5 Kathy Patterson, Alex, and Jonathan Ayres. 6/12 Ralph, Bonnie, Rose, Jeffrey, Chris and Justin Bailey. 6/19 David, Chela, Brandon and Sean Bubniak. 6/26 Marie and Rick Bubniak.		<b>Anglicans around the World:</b> 6/5 The Church of the Province of Myanmar (Burma) Archbishop Stephen Than Myint Oo. 6/12 The Church of Nigeria, Archbishop Henry Ndukuba. 6/19 The United Church of North India, The Most Rev. Dr. Prem Chand Singh. 6/26 The Church of Pakistan (United), Bishop Azad Marshall.		<b>Diocese of Bethlehem:</b> 6/5 St. Mark's and St. John's, Jim Thorpe, The Rev. Bill Martin. Kirby House. 6/12 Grace Church, Kingston, The Rev. Dan Gross, Rector. Clergy of the Diocese. 6/19 Trinity, West Pittston. Commission on Ministry. 6/26 Christ Church, Susquehanna.		
 <b>Our Partner Diocese of Kajo Kejo:</b> 6/5 St. Peter Kinyiba. 6/12 Gurube and Mangaloti Parishes. 6/19 Sonder Parish. 6/26 St. Paul Kasurak Parish.		<b>Pentecost Season is a time of learning and growth, so the liturgical color is green.</b>	<b>1</b> AA Intergroup 5 pm AA 7:30 pm	<b>2</b> AA 7 pm	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>  <i>John Strange</i>
<b>5 Day of Pentecost</b> 10 a.m. Holy Eucharist II 11 - Coffee Hour <b>WEAR RED!</b> 	<b>6</b> AA 7 and 8:00 pm	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> AA 7:30 pm	<b>9</b> AA 7 pm  <i>Laura Cama Chris Bailey</i>	<b>10</b>	<b>11 St. Barnabas</b>
<b>12 Trinity Sunday</b> 10 a.m. Holy Eucharist II 11 - Coffee Hour  <i>Malcolm Forbes</i> 	<b>13</b> AA 7 and 8:00 pm	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> AA 7:30 pm	<b>16</b> AA 7 pm  <i>Kate Murray</i>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>  <i>David Caum</i>
<b>19 Pentecost 2 - Proper 7</b> 10 a.m. Holy Eucharist II 11 - Coffee Hour  <i>Bruce &amp; Colleen Barton</i>	<b>20</b> AA 7 and 8:00 pm	<b>21 Summer Begins</b>  <i>Hildegard Mohr Greg &amp; Ginny Caum-Lake Jill &amp; Steve Kormanik</i>	<b>22</b> AA 7:30 pm  <i>Jeremy Forbes</i>	<b>23</b> AA 7 pm  <i>Jessica Cameron</i>	<b>24 Nativity of St. John the Baptist</b>  <i>Charles Ford</i>	<b>25</b>  <i>Tom Bubniak Shannon Bubniak</i>
<b>26 Pentecost 3 - Proper 8</b> 10 a.m. Holy Eucharist II 11 - Coffee Hour <b>**Vestry Meets**</b>	<b>27</b> AA 7 and 8:00 pm	<b>28</b>	<b>29 St. Peter and St. Paul, Apostles</b> AA 7:30 pm  <i>Karen Nichols</i>	<b>30</b> AA 7 pm	<b>Flowers from your garden are always welcome for the altar.</b>	





## June at Trinity

Worship is Sundays at 10 a.m. followed by coffee hour in the parish hall, which is located across South Main Street.

Our services are Holy Eucharist II with Fr. Ben's usual outstanding sermon.

### Sunday, June 5 - Day of Pentecost - Wear Red!

This day marks the end of the 50 days of Easter and the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, as Jesus promised.

**Sunday, June 12 - Trinity Sunday, our Name Day.** We will begin the service with the traditional hymn

for the day, *Holy, Holy, Holy!* We will also switch to our summer service music from *Wonder, Love and Praise*. Come celebrate!

**Sunday, June 26 - Vestry meets after coffee hour.**

**Help is needed:**

- **Sign up to host a coffee hour.** You'll have help

with making coffee; your job will be to provide snacks. We'll be grateful for anything, from crackers to cake and anything in between.

- **Become a lector.** You can be scheduled to read the Old Testament lesson, or, as a Worship Leader, the Prayers of the People, the Epistle, and, when we are allowed to again, serve the chalice at communion. If you're interested in becoming a Worship Leader (Lay Reader), training is available.
- **Altar Guild.** Those who take part in this quiet ministry set up and/or take down the altar for worship, prepare linens, polish brass (although that's usually a group event), order flowers, or arrange offerings from their own gardens, and make certain all is ready for worship. Training will be provided.
- **Gardening.** Our resident gardener would love some help. See p. 2.

If you're interested in any of these areas or in something not on this list, speak to a member of the vestry or to Barbara, our parish administrator.

**Prayer List** — Please add or subtract names; the list is on the back table in the church.

**Birthday/Anniversary List** — make sure you and your family members are listed. It is regularly updated, so please check it for accuracy — add or edit as needed.

**Food Pantry items** - non-perishable foods in unbreakable containers please. Donations go to the Athens United Methodist Church which serves anyone in need.

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**Pentecost Season**

**June, 2022**

**Pentecost Sunday is  
June 5 - Wear Red!**

*To seek and serve Christ in all people*