

THE BELFRY

Trinity Episcopal Church | Wethersfield, CT

Online and Zoom Opportunities for Prayer, Discussion and Bible Study

Worship services for Monday through Friday and Sunday are posted on our website and Facebook page. Information about Bible Study is on the website as well.

Please leave a contact number at the office if you want to participate in our live Zoom Morning Prayer on Wednesday mornings, Centering Prayer on Wednesday afternoons, and/or Bible Study on Thursday mornings. If you'd like to participate in the Richard Rohr Meditation discussions, email garth.myers@trincoll.edu

From Our Pastor

Be not afraid; for behold I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2: 10 – 11

Christmas in Covid Season: What Good News? What Great Joy?

Dear Trinity Family,

This year has been a tough one for everyone. Some have lost their freedom to move. Some have lost their jobs. Some have lost their businesses. Some have lost their lives. Some have lost their loved ones and not been able to mourn in the way we are used to.

And our church family is not immune to the losses of this past year. Just a week ago, we had the first funeral of a parish member who died of Covid-19. We have had several funerals of members whose family members could not gather with friends in the way they would have wished. Our worship services have been curtailed due to concerns about the safety of the most vulnerable.

And now we are approaching Christmas. I had hoped that we could have had some sort of in-person service on Christmas, even if it was outdoors. But, after much thought and prayer, we have decided to err on the side of caution and safety. So, our services will all be online this year. And yes, that is a bummer for me just as much as it is for you.

But we should not lose sight of the reality of Christmas and the truth about God and ourselves that we celebrate at Christmas.

“Be not afraid” is how the first Christmas worship service began. That’s what the angels said to the shepherds. Every time God does something great in the Bible, God sends an angel to tell the people to not be fearful at the nearer presence of God they are about to experience.

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Virgin and Child, 1973, JESUS MAFA

Sunday Readings

December 6

Isaiah 40:1-11
2 Peter 3:8-15a
Mark 1:1-8

December 13

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 20

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

December 27

Isaiah 61:10-62:3
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:22-40

(FROM OUR PASTOR continued from page 1)

The message is that God is here for our good, not our harm; for our welfare, not our destruction; to show his love; not his displeasure; to redeem us, not to condemn us.

Yes, this has been, and will probably continue to be, a fearful time in our world. But the message of Christmas is “Emmanuel” (God with us). In Jesus Christ, God became what we are — took on our human nature, that we might take on God’s nature. In Jesus Christ, we see the human face of God. In Jesus Christ, we see the divine potential of humanity.

Amidst all of the hurts and fears and brokenness of life, the love and kindness of God shines through. If we listen with ears of faith, we can hear the message of the angels, “Be not afraid.”

Real Christmas is about the blessings bestowed on us by God, not the external trappings we associate with it. This year, many of those trappings, as wonderful as they are, have been taken away. I invite you all to focus on the presence and love of God. And be thankful.

I wish you all a blessed and Christ-filled Christmas.

Father Tom

New Policy for Closing and Re-opening Indoor Services

The decision to close indoor/in-person services is made by the rector in conversation with the wardens. It is to be done on an emergency basis without vestry approval. However, the vestry should be notified that it has occurred and should be kept up to date.

The following criteria are to be considered relevant:

- A parish member who has been in the building reports a positive Covid test
- A parish member who has been in the building reports an exposure to a positive Covid person
- Any outside group reporting an incidence of Covid or exposure to Covid
- Any vendor, employee or person involved in programs renting the lower level who reports having a positive test after being in the building

Also to be considered:

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- Reports and recommendations from the governor's office and the CDC pertaining to positivity rates in the state and in Hartford County and Wethersfield
- Recommendations from the Episcopal Church in Connecticut (ECCT) and its bishops

If any of these occur and the decision is to close, the following will occur:

- The building is closed to all church services and all groups for a 14-day quarantine period.
- An e-mail blast will go out immediately to inform the parish of the occurrence with recommendations. The privacy of the Covid positive person must be maintained.
- Any programs renting the downstairs should be notified and consulted concerning their protocols and whether they choose to remain open.
- The Tri-Town Health Officer shall be notified and provided with the names and phone numbers of everyone who has been in the building for contact tracing.
- The ECCT and the insurance company shall be informed.
- Depending on where the infected person was in the building, the building shall be professionally disinfected.

At the end of the 14-day quarantine, if no more cases occur, the rector in conversation with the wardens shall determine whether to open for indoor/in-person services.

If the State mandate for safety puts Wethersfield in the red zone, the Church will be closed immediately to all indoor activities. The closure will last until Wethersfield returns to the orange zone for four consecutive weeks.

The CDC guidelines and the status of the local schools (in session or not) will be part of the decision making process. All these areas will be considered prior to making a final decision.

If a parishioner's town, e.g. Newington, remains in the red zone and Wethersfield is in the orange zone, the parishioner will please consider that information and their possible exposure before returning to indoor/in-person services.

Please contact one of the wardens or Opening Committee (Carol Jones, Greg Joseph and J.R. Stanko) with any questions.



*Birth of Christ, 1490,
Geertgen tot Saint Jans*

Book Club

Trinity's Evening Book Club will meet via Zoom on Tuesday, December 8 at 6:30 pm. Our selection will be *The Vanishing Half* by Britt Bennett, a "...stunning new novel about twin sisters, inseparable as children, who ultimately choose to live in two very different worlds, one black and one white." Contact Joan Joseph at golfst4@aol.com or 860-666-4847 if you would like to join the discussion.



While Mary Sleeps, 2009, Lester Yocum

Parish Leadership

PASTOR

The Rev. Thomas Furrer
For a pastoral emergency,
please call 860-212-6994.

STAFF

Linda Rubera, Administrator
Tuesday-Thursday, 9-12
operations@trinityepiscopalweth.org
860-529-6825

Dorothy LaBelle, Music Director
Nick Tracano, Sexton

VESTRY

Warren Blessing, Co-Warden
Connie Harasymiw, Co-Warden
Robert Heath, Treasurer
Leslie Jones, Clerk
Greg Joseph
Tina LaMorte
Cheryl Lewis
Rebecca Scruton, Co-Warden
J. R. Stanko
Ann Marie Stavola
Linda Traue

Business Report

Pledge Status (end of October)

Total Pledge	\$ 132,930
Received	\$ 110,775
Difference	\$ -7,661

Income/Expenses (end of October)

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Income	\$ 118,142	\$ 131,232
Expenses	\$ 109,797	\$ 131,232

If you'd like to learn more about the business of the church, you can check out the monthly vestry minutes on our website at trinityepiscopalweth.org/vestry

Christmas Flowers



Please consider a donation to Trinity Parish Christmas Flowers. During the Covid-19 pandemic, flowers have adorned the altars for our virtual services. The Altar Guild suggests a donation of \$50 but appreciates any amount you choose to contribute. Make your check payable to Trinity Parish, write "Flower Fund" on the memo line, and mail your check to 300 Main Street, Wethersfield, CT

06109. If you prefer, you can drop donation off at the office between 9 and noon on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.

Reverse Advent Calendar Returns

During the season of Advent, we have the opportunity once again to help our neighbors with a "Reverse Advent Calendar". Each day during the 26 days of Advent, put a non-perishable item into a box. On Christmas Eve, drop your donation off on Trinity's front porch between 10 am and noon. Your donation will be delivered to the Wethersfield Food Bank for distribution to our neighbors. Here are some suggestions: dried or canned beans, rice, Mac & cheese, canned vegetables, toothpaste, canned fruit, oatmeal, pasta, spaghetti sauce, canned tuna or chicken, applesauce, shampoo, peanut butter, canned soups, toothbrushes, cereal, deodorant. Questions? Contact Anne Tranberg or Leslie Jones.

You have really helped many!

Last February at the annual meeting, we all agreed to place a percentage of our budget into the Mission and Outreach Fund. We have always supported and given generously to all of the various projects. This change was to rework the method we used in the past. This gave us a new, and additional manner of giving to those really in need. It also greatly helped us in prioritizing which groups we should support and how much was needed.

We already know what an unusual year this has been for all of us. To that end, many of the projects and initiatives we love to support have not given us the opportunity to be able to participate in person. However, since we had this funding in place this year, we were able to assist many of the groups and initiatives that we've supported in the past. This was an especially hard year for most non-profits and we were able to support them financially, even though we couldn't be there personally. We are very pleased with what we were able to support this year.

It has been due to the generosity of our parish that we could as a unified body, support various mission and outreach projects. Thank you all for your kindness, support and generosity.

In the annual report, we will provide detailed information that reflects where our contributions have been used to support our Mission and Outreach efforts.

Our Nativity



The property committee has set up our nativity scene in the front yard of the church. Mary and Joseph were purchased by the church; other characters were given anonymously. Anyone wishing to gift the church with another figure should contact Warren Blessing.



Madonna and Child, 1900, Marianne Stokes

Bible Study on Isaiah

Bible Study will continue on Thursday mornings through December 10.

10 o'clock, online teaching at
www.trinityepiscopalweth.org

10:30-11:30, group discussion
on ZOOM. Email operations@trinityepiscopalweth.org
to receive a Zoom invitation.

For a detailed description of the Bible Study, go to our website at trinityepiscopalweth.org



*Madonna and Child – Boundless Love,
Janet McKenzie*

Brother, Give Us a Word

Monasticism began when a few faithful men and women went into the desert to seek God and live a life of prayer. These Desert Fathers and Mothers were spiritual beacons whom others sought out for their wisdom in the ways of God. The seekers would ask, "Father (Mother), give me a word."

The brothers at St. John the Evangelist in Boston have adapted this ancient tradition for today, offering online a daily "word" to all who seek a deeper knowledge of God. Here's an example:

Tithe – Tithing is an Old Testament principle, giving ten percent of what we have and hold to God. If you were to ask me if tithing is an important principle for today, I would say no. I think the invitation is not for 10 percent but for 100 percent. We are trustees of 100 percent of the life entrusted to us by God. The question then becomes how we should spend our lives, being the gifts that they are. -Br. Curtis Almquist

Go to ssje.org to receive a daily word.

Updated Weekly Prayer List

May your kingdom come and your will be done

Monday: The Brown family (Susanna, Mike, Avery Catherine); Kathy Cole; Roger Dickinson; Tom & Maryjane Furrer; Jimmy & Kristine Gonzalez; the Diaz-Lopez family (Josue, Kayla, Josue Jr.); Carol Jones; Nancy Knapp (Chloe & Tate); Rose & Ray Riley; Ginny & Mike Rowland; Ginger Smith; Mel & J.R. Stanko; the Steidel family (Ellie, Amy, Alexandria); Clark & Joyce Tomlinson; Anne Tranberg; Leslie Watson

Tuesday: Tim Boardman, Dan Carcaud, Arnold & Barbara Cosgrove, Bruce Duncan, Arline Hallisey, Joan & Greg Joseph, Martha Koehler, Jane-Helen Ross, Linda Rubera, Sue Smith, J.P. Thomas & Mauricio Garcia, Nick Tracano, Joan True, Hugues Valcourt & Margarita Velez, Mary Lou Wall, Susan & David Whitehouse

Wednesday: David Anderson, Sarah Blessing, Audrey Booker, Denise Carson, Vicki Crafa, Lorraine Ficara, Connie & Raymond Harasymiw, Bruce Henley, Leslie Jones, Dorothy & Lauren LaBelle, Michael & Cheryl Lewis, Paul & Keri Milne, Joan O'Brien, Denise & Carl Paternostro, Marc-Yves Regis, Jan Rouse

Thursday: Warren & Lynda Blessing; Sarah Butters; Mark & Cheryl Chadsey; Ashley Marek; the Desrochers family (Helen, Ben, Molly, Hannah, Andrew); Marilyn Ford; Corinne Helfant; the Karpf family (Jessie, Tom, Bernadette); Billye & Jack Logan; Taylor Measel; Judith & Charles Melchreit; Allison Read, James Ebert & Jamie; Barbara & Ed Rowley; the Tumnesheit family (Heidi, Hubertus, Olivia, Philip, Clara, Jacob); Heidi Viola and Brianna Narducci; Darren Yovan and family

Friday: William & Marion Boornazian; Lorraine Brodeur; David & Mary Chellstorp; Shirley Davies; Sue DeCesare; Peter & Sheila Dewberry; Marilyn Galek; Rob & Nan Heath; Michael Kucka; Geraldeen Lohman; the Myers family (Garth, Melanie Hepburn, Atlee, Phebe); Anne Pimm; Robert & Arney Pulford; Rebecca & Gordon Scruton; the Watson family (Kirk, Tracey, Hayes); John & Diane Zarillo

Saturday: Sal & Mimi Basile; Donna Brown; Darryl Burke; Nancy & Paul Buttaro; Ray & Denise Colburn; Theo Fitzgerald; the Gebhardt family (Patrick, Jennifer, Hannah, Lily); Rob Jensen & Mitch Grayson; Tina LaMorte & Peter Spangenberg; Paula & Arthur Massa; Barbara Napolitano; Carl Rafala & Sue Krupenevich-Rafala; Judith Shaw; the Stavola family (Jerry, Ann Marie, Elizabeth, Catherine, Pete); Linda & Tom Traue; Xavier Family (Brooke, Fred, Lulu, Za)

A Prayer for Putting on a Mask

*By Bishop Richard Bott
Moderator of the United Church of Canada*

Creator,
as I prepare to go into the world,
help me to see the sacrament
in the wearing of this cloth –
let it be “an outward sign
of an inward grace” –
a tangible and visible way
of living love for my neighbours,
as I love myself.

Christ,
since my lips will be covered,
uncover my heart,
that people would see my smile
in the crinkles around my eyes.
Since my voice may be muffled,
help me to speak clearly,
not only with my words,
but with my actions.

Holy Spirit,
as the elastic touches my ears,
remind me to listen carefully –
and full of care –
to all those I meet.
May this simple piece of cloth
be shield and banner,
and each breath that it holds,
be filled with your love.

In your Name
and in that love,
I pray.

May it be so.
May it be so.



*Guatemalan Mother and Child,
Father John Giuliani*

Zoom Discussion on the Meditations of Richard Rohr

Do you read (or at least receive) the daily meditations from Richard Rohr at the Center for Action and Contemplation (CAC)? Are you interested in a weekly discussion group on Zoom on Saturday mornings at 8 am? Several of us in the parish who try to read the daily meditations thought it might be a great way to further our church community by visiting with one another each week to discuss the meditations. If you are interested, please email Garth Myers at garth.myers@trincoll.edu. If you are curious about Rohr and the CAC, here is the link for receiving the daily meditations: <https://cac.org/category/daily-meditations/>

A Prayer for Parish Mission

Dear and Gracious God,

Please send us the people we need in order to become the church You want us to be, and please send us the people who need us in order to become the people You want them to be. Help us to respond with love to those You send, making room for them at our table and in our hearts so that together we can share Your love with our neighbors in need both locally and around the world. We ask this in the name of Jesus, who met people where they were, loved and cared for them, and invited them into a deeper relationship with You.

Amen



The Belfry

The Belfry is a monthly publication of Trinity Episcopal Church, 300 Main Street, Wethersfield, CT. Send articles and photographs to lesliejonesie@gmail.com

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If you prefer to receive The Belfry by email, please contact the office at operations@trinityepiscopalweth.org or 860-529-6825.