

Time Together

While We are Apart

Trinity and St. Mary's Whitechapel Episcopal Churches

Wednesday,
November 25, 2020



Good day, dear church communities, And Thanksgiving blessings! You will receive this newsletter right around the Thanksgiving holiday, and perhaps, like Tim and me, your holiday will look very different this year. For the past ten years we have spent Thanksgiving at Topsail Beach, North Carolina celebrating with our children and grandchildren. We love this tradition and the time we get to walk on the beach together, play lots of games, do jigsaw puzzles, catch up, and of course, eat lots of holiday food together, especially my favorite, pie time!

We all talked over these past months about whether we were comfortable gathering this year in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in October we decided yes, we would gather. But as the COVID numbers have risen sharply all over the country in

the past few weeks, we have finally decided we must cancel our trip. Thus, Tim and I will be home for this beloved holiday for the first time in years, missing our family and that special time and restful holiday. A fellow priest gave me an idea recently to combat the understandable sadness and yes, even self pity, that we might be tempted to indulge in as our holiday changed so much. My friend suggested for this time that we invite our congregations to establish a “Gratitude Container” on Thanksgiving Day. The container would be used to hold one piece of paper each day, with something we are grateful for written on it, a blessing, large or small. Each person in a household would have their own container. My friend suggested we continue this practice of writing down one blessing a day and depositing it in the container, until we reach January 6th, the Day of Epiphany, when we remember the arrival of the Wise Men, bringing their gifts to the Christ Child.

On January 6th we will open our jars and read all that we have been blessed with from Thanksgiving to Epiphany, reminders in this time of early sundown and quick darkness, that yes, “Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given...”. I know I need to be nudged to not wallow in all that is changed this year, all that I am missing, and instead look to the blessings, look to the light. Who knows, maybe I’ll even be nudged then to provide the light for another, to be a vessel of God’s love and light in the darkness. I’m going to look for a container now! I invite you to join me.

And now onward to a little more “Time Together,”

Megan

Prayer Notes:

We will include our prayer lists in each Wednesday Newsletter and in our worship services. Please continue to let us know of folks you would like to have on our prayer lists.

Please keep Sandra Walker, Trinity, and her family, in your prayers. Her mother, Essia Gill, died last week at age 92.

O God, whose mercies cannot be numbered: Accept our prayers on behalf of your servant Essia, and grant her an entrance into the land of light and joy, in the fellowship of your saints; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

The family of Janice Shanks has decided to have a graveside service for Janice, for family only, after Thanksgiving. Janice and her late husband lived in Mathews for years and Janice maintained her church membership there at Kingston Parish. The graveside service will be in Mathews and conducted by the Rector of Kingston Parish, The Reverend Gary Barker. After COVID restrictions ease the family plans to have a Celebration of Life service.

Please continue to keep Janice's family in your prayers in this time of grief.

Trinity: Faye Wright, Sherri Carter, Terri, R. W. Courtney, Frances Bush, Delford Walthall, Glenn Courtney, Steve, Rick Bateman, Earline Tomlin Kelley, Ed Borer, Dean Haine, Donna Alexander, Mary and Karen Jackson, Berkeley Kellum, Preston Bryant, Michael, Mel and Frances Ercelino, Hilda Courtney, Robert, Karen Woodruff, Joey Coker, Michael Dunaway, Brad Quillen, Ian Larmore, Brandon Dunaway.

Armed Forces: Giovanni Elhordoy, Ward Gavin, Paul Price and Michael Stout.

St. Mary's Whitechapel: Agnes Robbie, Don DeFilippo, George Clowser, Jori Keckman, Alexa Frisbee, R.W. Courtney, Tammy, Dorsey Ficklin, Glenn Courtney, Terry Thompson, Wendy Burnett, Lin Greene, Jake Cobb, Dave Petersen, Dan Ficklin, Marie Beringer, Donna Alexander, Mimi Chace, Donna Brayton, Hilda Courtney, Robert, Howard Hanchey, Jennifer Cassell Cole, Karen Woodruff, Roger Fortin, Gina Adams, Brad Quillen, Jessica, Joanne and Michael.

Nursing Home Resident: Lancashire - Mary Sue Courtney

Armed Forces: Jacob Sensenig, Joshua Green, Aimee Budzinski, Kathryn McCormack Akacem, Mehdi Akacem, Thomas Mackie, Pia Mackie, Tate Young, Spencer Fortin.

November and December Birthdays and Anniversaries

Trinity Birthdays: Tim Limburg, November 1st; Charlie Spencer, November 1st; Joseph Berkeley Kellum, November 13th; Matthew Brent, November 21st; Peter Cammarata, November 24th; Lorraine Jett, November 26th; Catherine James, December 2nd; Stuart Dunaway, December 3rd; Malcolm Jett, December 6th; Aaron Rowland, December 8th; Susan Whitlow, December 10th; Dorothy Keyser, December 16th; Chase Christopher, December 17th; Elizabeth Berube, December 24th; Taryn Brice-Rowland, December 24th; Audrey Catherine Christopher, December 24th; Lella Lee Edwards, December 26th; Charlotte Self, December 26th; Michael Christopher, December 30th

Trinity Anniversaries: Jane and Stuart Jane Dunaway, November 27th; Lorraine and Malcolm Jett, November 27th; Chris and Peter Cammarata, December 18th

SMWC Birthdays: Tim Limburg, November 1; Lin Greene, November 3; Pete Ransone, November 4; Leroy Ransone, November 4; Carol Schroeder, November 6; Rick Johnson, November 12; Richard Gill, November 20; Alexa McGrath, November 30; Ann Muse, November 30; William Pennell III, December 4; Blanchette Jones, December 5; Paulette Payne, December 5; Pat Dennis, December 13; Mary Ann Olsen, December 13; Connie Horne, December 15; Torrence Harman, December 16; Jean Jones, December 19; Marsha Sitnik, December 23



Announcements:

Congratulations to Trinity Church! Trinity received a grant of \$389,586 from the duPont Fund to make significant improvements to the Pavilion, to allow it to become the new home for the River Road Food Pantry, and a year-round venue for church and community events. The Vestry is working with our contractor, Trinity Contracting (Great name! No relation!) on the plans. The Pavilion will close in late December to prepare for construction to begin. The hope is for the project to take 4-6 months to complete. Prayers are much appreciated as we go forward with this exciting project!

Our Bishops have decided that the churches of the Diocese will be following the Governor's recent order limiting gatherings indoors or outside to 25 people. Though the Governor exempted houses of worship from this order, the Bishops noted that if it is not safe to gather at a restaurant, a gym or a house with more than 25 people, it is not safe to do so at church. Consequently, we have ended our in-person services at the Pavilion, and have moved to one Zoom service on Sunday mornings at 10am. The bulletin and link will be sent each week early Sunday morning. Please join us! (pajamas allowed!)

You are invited to join in the fun of our "Recipe Roundtable"! Ann Kingsbury offered a grand crab recipe, an old family favorite, for our last Newsletter. Do you have a treasured recipe to share? Send the recipe and any story that goes with it to Megan by email or snail mail.

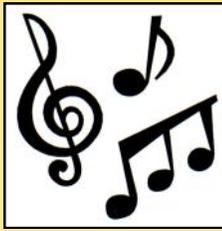
Do you need help getting trash to the dump or picking up prescriptions or an occasional grocery item? Please know that we have folks ready to help in our joint churches community. Contact Megan for connection to a volunteer.

Washington National Cathedral continues to offer beautiful and moving worship daily. They can be found at cathedral.org

You can continue to mail pledges and donations to Rector's Discretionary Fund to each church:

Trinity Church
PO Box 208
Lancaster, VA 22503

SMWC
5940 Whitechapel Rd
Lancaster, VA 22503



Thoughts from the Organ Bench
by Glenn Courtney, Organist
SMWC and Trinity

The Old Rugged Cross is probably the most popular gospel hymn of all the twentieth century hymns. It is a sentimental favorite of Christians and unsaved as well, and was written by George Bennard in 1913.

George Bennard was born in Youngstown, Ohio in 1873. His family moved to Lucas, Iowa, where young George made his personal acceptance of Christ as his Savior. Following his father's death when George was sixteen, he entered the Salvation Army, where he and his wife served as officers.

Later, Bennard was ordained by the Methodist Episcopal Church. He conducted revival services in New York and Michigan. A trying experience during this period of his life caused him to reflect seriously about the significance of the cross and what the Apostle Paul meant when he spoke of entering into the fellowship of Christ's suffering. Bennard became convinced that the cross is more than just a religious symbol but rather the very heart of the gospel.

Bennard stated that the inspiration for the hymn came to him while staying in Albion, Michigan. He wrote the melody first, then the words. The hymn was introduced to the public in special meetings in 1913, then to a large convention at the Chicago Evangelistic Institute. Soon it became extremely popular throughout the country. George Bennard sent a manuscript copy to Charles Gabriel, one of the leading gospel hymn composers of that era. With his help, the hymn became one of the most widely published songs, either sacred or secular, in this country.

Bennard continued his ministries for forty additional years, and he wrote other gospel hymns. He spent his last years by the "side of the road" a few miles north of Reed City, Michigan. Near this home there still stands a twelve foot high cross with the words, "The Old Rugged Cross – Home of George Bennard, composer of this beloved hymn." Although we do not worship the cross, but rather the Christ on the cross, we remember the role of the cross in God's plan of redemption for lost mankind.

Georged Bennard, on October 9, 1958, at the age of eighty-five, exchanged his cross for a crown.
"Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."
I Peter 2:24



The Old Rugged Cross

1. On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross,
The emblem of suffering and shame;
And I love that old cross where the dearest and best
For a world of lost sinners was slain.

Chorus: So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
Till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
And exchange it some day for a crown.

2. O that old rugged cross, so despised by
the world,
Has a wondrous attraction for me;
For the dear Lamb of God left His glory
above
To bear it to dark Calvary.

Chorus: So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
Till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
And exchange it some day for a crown.

3. In that old rugged cross, stained with
blood so divine,
A wondrous beauty I see,
For 'twas on that old cross Jesus suffered
and died,
To pardon and sanctify me.

Chorus: So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
Till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
And exchange it some day for a crown.

4. To the old rugged cross I will ever be
true;
Its shame and reproach gladly bear;
Then He'll call me some day to my home far
away,
Where His glory forever I'll share.

Chorus: So I'll cherish the old rugged cross,
Till my trophies at last I lay down;
I will cling to the old rugged cross,
And exchange it some day for a crown.

Please enjoy these arrangements of The Old Rugged Cross:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I8lEv7NMKzI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UelPLqK4Vr4&pbjreload=101>

Source: 101 Hymn Stories, by Kenneth W. Osbeck. Kregal publications, 1982

Reflection

Our reflection this week comes from The Reverend Talitha Arnold, Senior Minister at United Church of Santa Fe (UCC) in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I chose this reflection to share as it reminds us that our two churches are among thousands of churches all over our country, all over our world, that struggle in this time of pandemic, and that yearn to return to life together in our sanctuaries. I appreciate that this reflection offers comfort, not in empty promises as to when we can return to our church buildings, but offers comfort in the remembrance that no matter where we pray, no matter how we gather, “We belong to God.”

Somos del buen

Pueblo suyo somos y ovejas de su prado. - Salmo 100:3b (BLA)

We are your people and the sheep of your pasture. - Psalm 100:3b (NRSV)

On the front row of our church’s sanctuary sits a small whiteboard with the words to the hymn, Pues si vivimos (In All Our Living). The hymn echoes the assurance of today’s psalm that we are God’s people, held in God’s love and care. “Pues si vivimos,” sings the first line, “para Dios vivimos y si morimos, para Dios morimos.” (“In all our living, we belong to God, and in our dying, we are still with God.”)

The white board is from our final service before we suspended in-person worship last March. Our children’s choir planned to sing the hymn as our call to worship throughout Lent. They (and we) only made it to the third Sunday. The sentences are a bit smudged, and the handwriting wasn’t neat to begin with. Whenever the children’s choir sings again, whoever is leading them will undoubtedly wipe the board clean and start anew. I should probably do it myself. The whiteboard hymn serves no purpose. Even if we were gathering for worship, no one should be singing.

But I can’t erase those words. They remind me of seven-year-olds singing about belonging to God, in their living and in their dying. That’s quite a statement at any age, and it’s taken on new meaning as this year has unfolded. I hope somehow this hymn has helped sustain our children and their families since last they sang together. I hope they still remember its last line: “Somos del buen Dios.” “We belong to God” or literally, “We are of a good God,” which sounds a lot like Psalm 100’s pueblo suyo somos.

Prayer:

Even if we can’t join together in song, help us remember pues si vivimos, somos del buen Dios. We belong to you. Amen.

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