

# The Messenger

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2024



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

From the Pastor .....	2-5
Dear Trinity Kids .....	6-7
Youth .....	8
From The Council Chair .....	11-13
Trinity Reporter .....	12
Missions & More .....	14-16
Fellowship & Discipleship .....	17-18

# FROM THE PASTOR

## Prone to Wander



Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
prone to leave the God I love...

You may recognize those words from the hymn “Come Thou Fount”. And- as with many of the hymns- there is a story behind the song.

The song was written by a man named Robert Robinson. Robinson lost his father as a young boy of 8 and was then sent, at age 14, to learn a trade as a barber’s apprentice. His mother had hopes that he would one day be a priest however, Robinson fell in with a

rough crowd and began to live a life far from those hopes and dreams. One day- with the intent of disrupting a church gathering- Robinson was touched by a sermon he heard at that gathering. It was a sermon on “the coming wrath of God” delivered by George Whitfield (one of the founders of Methodism). Robinson felt that God was directly speaking to him and soon after gave his life over to God. Robinson then became a preacher himself and, at the tender age of 23, wrote

*(Continued on page 3)*

this now-famous hymn. However, that's not the end of the story.

Many years later it's reported that Robinson once again returned to previous behaviors and wandered away from Christ. (And I can't help but wonder if the story wouldn't have been different had the message he heard that day been one of hope and love. If instead of "wrath" he had been met with the truth that God deeply loved him. But I digress...)

One day, during this time, he found himself on a stage-coach. We're told that the only other passenger was a woman who began singing the hymn Come Thou Fount, the very hymn Robinson had written. She began to talk to him about how this hymn spoke to her heart, but Robinson didn't want to talk about it. He didn't want to enter into a discussion of this hymn penned by a younger man whose faith was on fire. It was a painful reminder. But the woman persisted. Finally, Robinson broke down into tears and told the woman that he was the one who wrote the song. He said:

"Madam, I am the poor un-

happy man who wrote that hymn many years ago, and I would give a thousand worlds, if I had them, to enjoy the feelings I had then." Gently, she replied, "Sir, the 'streams of mercy' are still flowing."

"streams of mercy are still flowing" Having come face to face with God's grace (and please note that God's grace is often delivered through human agents) Robinson turned back to Jesus that day and his ministry continued. You could even say that it continues to this day in the form of this hymn that was left to us.

The words in this song are something we can all relate to. We strive to follow Jesus, but sometimes it feels like we're driving a car that is out of alignment. Even Paul says (in his letter to the Romans) "I do not understand what I do. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." (Romans 7:15)

Prone to wander Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love...

As we journey with Jesus this Lent, we will do so in the

*(Continued on page 4)*

company of our friend and brother, Peter We'll explore the highs and lows of Peter's journey with Jesus.

It seems that Peter and Robinson had a lot in common with each other and truly- with us as well. Our journey with Jesus has 'mountain top' experiences as well as time spent wandering in the valley. We too have, at some point, said 'yes' to following Christ and yet have found ourselves denying the very One whom we have committed to following. This is part of the very real life of faith that we lead. It is part of the journey we find ourselves on. But it's only when we acknowledge our difficulties that we can be strengthened all over again. And it's only when we are honest about these within community that we can strengthen one another. Remember when Jesus predicted Peter's denial He said: "... but I have prayed for you that your own faith may not fail, and you, when once you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." (Luke 22:32)

Each week we'll look at a different snapshot of Peter's

journey with Jesus and, as we do this, 'Come Thou Fount' will be 'playing in the background.' (so to speak)

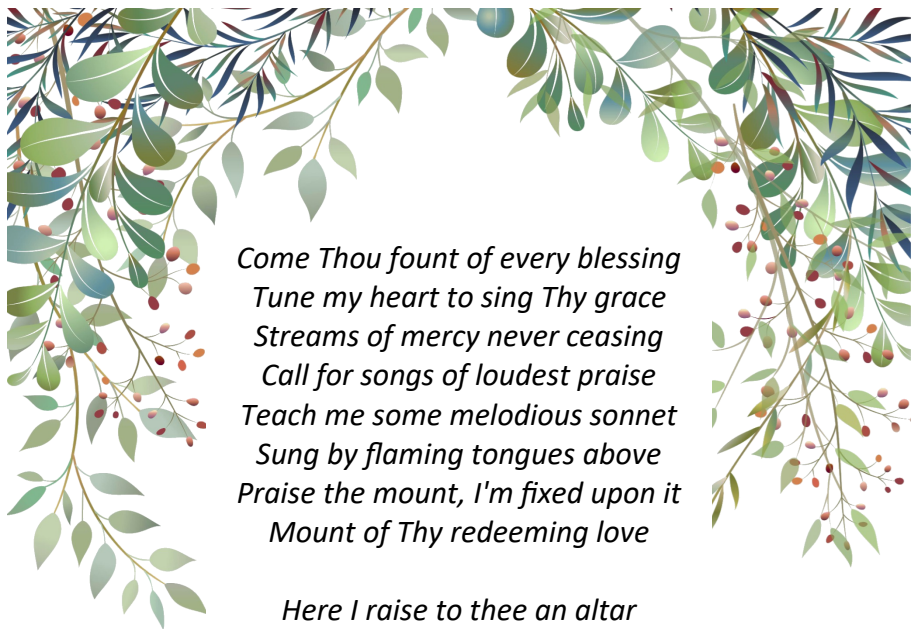
Peter's journey as well as this hymn resonate with us because they are true. They are real. We praise, we wander, we hope, and- in the end, surrender our hearts to God. Because truly, God has been holding on to them for us the whole time just as God held Peter, and Robinson, and all who have gone before us and who will forever come after us. "Streams of mercy, never ceasing."

May you know the depth and breadth and height of God's love for you. May you carry that knowledge with you on this journey.

See you on the road,

***Pastor Anne***





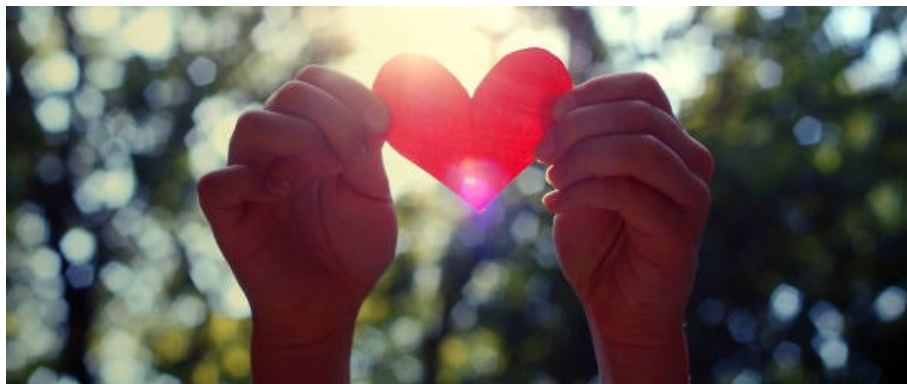
*Come Thou fount of every blessing  
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace  
Streams of mercy never ceasing  
Call for songs of loudest praise  
Teach me some melodious sonnet  
Sung by flaming tongues above  
Praise the mount, I'm fixed upon it  
Mount of Thy redeeming love*

*Here I raise to thee an altar  
Here by Thy great help I've come  
And I hope by Thy good pleasure  
Safely to arrive at home  
Jesus sought me when a stranger  
Wandering from the fold of God  
He to rescue me from danger  
Interposed His precious blood*

*Oh, to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be  
Let Thy goodness like a fetter  
Bind my wandering heart to Thee  
Prone to wander, Lord I feel it  
Prone to leave the God I love  
Here's my heart, oh take and seal it  
Seal it for Thy courts above  
Here's my heart  
Oh take and seal it  
Seal it for Thy courts above*



# CHILDRENS & FAMILY MINISTRY



Dear Trinity Kids,

Happy Valentine's Day!

It's Valentine's Day on the day that I'm writing this.

It's not Valentine's Day on the day you are reading this.

That's ok. I still wish you a Happy Valentine's Day.

This year Valentine's Day is the same day as the start of the church season of Lent. (What is Lent?) Lent is the church season (40 days not counting Sundays) leading up to Easter. (Why don't we count Sundays?) so glad you asked... Sundays aren't counted in Lent because each Sunday IS like a mini-Easter. Each Sunday we celebrate that Jesus is alive. We give thanks that even though Jesus died (and that was sad) He was resurrected and

lives now.

(But what does Valentine's Day have to do with this?)... well...Usually nothing. BUT every now and again (roughly 3 times a century) Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday (the start of Lent) fall on the same day. And that is pretty cool because both those days have a lot to do with love.

On Valentine's Day, we celebrate love between people. Very often people will give one another Valentine's cards and/or flowers or sweet treats as a way to say 'I love you' or at least 'I really like you and I want to be your friend.' It's so nice to be reminded that others around us want to know us

*(Continued on page 7)*

and want us to know them as well. This is what it means to be in a relationship with someone else. It means you want to spend time with that person getting to know them and for them to know you!

Now the amazing thing is that this is true of God as well. God wants to spend time with us and wants to be our friend and when Valentine's Day falls on the first day of Lent, it is a good reminder to us of God's love for us and not just us, but the whole entire world! God loves all of us because God made us. We belong to God and God wants to be our friend-our very best friend. This is why God gave us Jesus. The Bible says that God so loved us that God gave us Jesus. Jesus shows us what God is like. All of Jesus' life (including the tough part about Jesus dying- and the wonderful good news that Jesus rose from the dead and lives even now) is a reminder to us that God loves us. Like really, really loves us. YOU- who are reading this now- are crazy loved by God. And we know that God is kind and forgiving because Jesus showed that to us in everything He did. Jesus showed us that we can go to God when

we're happy or sad, when we're angry or scared, when all is going well, and even in those times when we've done something wrong. Because God wants to be near us. God sent us a 'valentine'. God sent us Jesus!

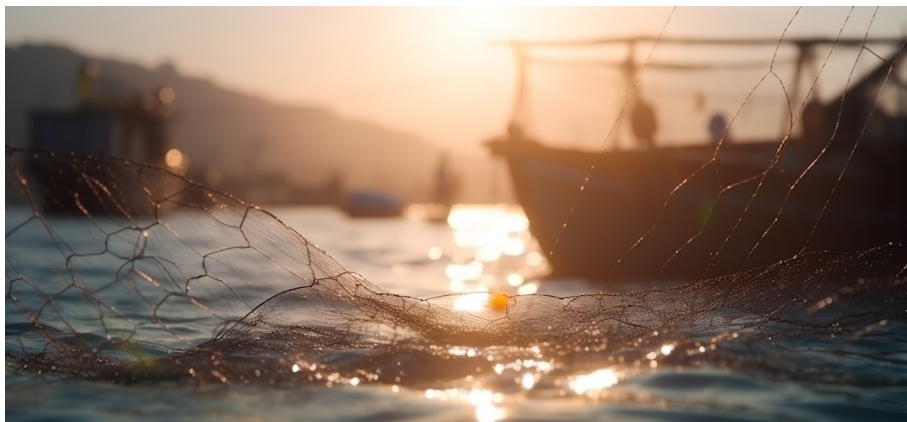
May you know you are loved!!

I am always around if you want to talk!

***Pastor Anne***



## Cast Your Net



### John 21:3-18 NLT

Simon Peter said, “I’m going fishing.” “We’ll come, too,” they all said. So they went out in the boat, but they caught nothing all night. At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn’t see who he was. He called out, “Fellows, have you caught any fish?” “No,” they replied. Then he said, “Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you’ll get some!” So they did, and they couldn’t haul in the net because there were so many fish in it. Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, “It’s the Lord!”

Youth work can feel a lot like fishing. You desperately try to

be cool and create a space that you think is going to be right on the spiritual pulse of what God intends for a community of young people based on all of the experience and research you bring to the table. And even when you do everything right, things often don’t work.

I hear a lot about how much of a gift it is to be able to relate to teens, but it is really not that hard. All you have to do is listen and love. And even those two “skills” aren’t these lofty cerebral qualities prepared over time. All you need to do is be in the moment,

*(Continued on page 13)*



# FROM THE COUNCIL CHAIR

Greetings from the Trinity Council. In February 2024 Ash Wednesday and Valentine's Day were on the same day. This reminds us that it's our Creator that loves us the most.

Our annual meeting was held on Sunday, 2/11 after the worship service. All of the reports were accepted and the budget was passed unanimously. Thank you to all of the staff and council members and to Janice C and John G for their help.

Some of the highlights include a continuing growth of our missions ministries with the day laborers in Orange, Lilian's Closet and Renew Life Center in Paterson.

We came in under budget for many operating areas and the council worked to adjust budgets for 2024 accordingly. Our giving increased, which helped us keep within our budget and grow our ministries at the same time.

Our youth program continues to grow with new teens attending Tuesday and Friday



## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

FEBRUARY 11, 2024

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'*  
*There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:30-31*



youth nights. We thank Mike M for all of his hard work in running these events every week. And thanks to Pastor Anne and the congregation for their support.

The members unanimously voted to elect Eileen F as our nominating committee chair. Mary Chu and Karen R were unanimously elected to the council

*(Continued on page 13)*

# Trinity Reporter

January was a relatively quiet month at Trinity. We started out with some snow and cold weather. Pastor Anne wisely decided the Psalm Bible study would be on Zoom so everyone could stay warm and cozy in their homes. The study was fascinating and we are happy to be joined by Pat and Beth all the way from Rhode Island. It's so nice to be able to stay connected with friends near and far.

'Tis the season for colds and viruses and our staff and some in the congregation battled various illnesses for a few weeks. We continue to pray for everyone dealing with illnesses and look forward to better weather and the end of the season.

It was great to have Bella join us during her break from college. We heard Rebecca W started a new job teaching Spanish at a high school. Way to go Rebecca!

We grieve with the Malbrough family in the loss of Page's father, with the Chu family in the loss of Mary's and Alice's father and with Robin W in



the loss of his grandmother. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

The staff and council members worked hard all January to make sure the Trinity Annual Reports were done and distributed to the congregation two weeks ahead of the meeting. Thank you to Cyndy and Janice for organizing all of the financials and to John G for agreeing to be our Auditor this year! Thank you to all of the staff and council members for submitting their reports.

(Continued from page 10)

Our annual congregational meeting was held on February 11. The annual report for 2023 was given to all members two weeks prior to the meeting. Our budget for 2024 was approved. Unanimously!

Speaking of members... if you have been attending Trinity and would like to become a member, please speak with Pastor Anne.

After the annual meeting, we were blessed to have the Taiwanese Church invite us to their Lunar New Year luncheon. In tradition, it is the year of the dragon. The food was good and the company was great.

Pastor Anne continues to appear on Clergy Corner, which includes clergy from many faith traditions in Livingston who gather to share views on current topics. You can view Clergy Corner episodes at Livingston TV, go to <https://reflect-livingstonnj-ltv.cablecast.tv/CablecastPublicSite/?channel=1>

Ash Wednesday this year fell on Valentine's Day. Trinity offered an open house so people could drop in when it was

convenient for them. Pastor Anne had activity centers set up in the sanctuary.

Our monthly Trinity council meeting was held February 25. The council voted to continue to Property Development Committee and for officers on the council. The Trinity Church Council Members are as follows:

Chrystal Veazey-Watson, Chair. Mary Chu, Vice Chair, Cyndy Traverso, Treasurer. Rich Holowczak, Financial Secretary. Jennifer Yoo, Secretary. Karen Reichey, council member. We thank all of the council members for their service. If you are a member of Trinity Church and would like to serve on the council, please see any council member for information.

Mike M reports that the youth group has a few new teens attending! The group is growing and we thank God that Trinity can provide a safe place for teens to meet. Mike is looking for an other adult who can help with teen nights on Tuesdays and/or Fridays. All adults must be background checked and the process is very simple. If you are over 18 years old and

(Continued on page 12)

would like to help with youth nights, please see Mike or call Yvette in the church office. Youth nights are Tuesdays at 7:00 pm—9 pm and Fridays 6:30 pm—9 pm.



Spread the word! As a fundraising effort, Trinity has placed clothing and shoes collection bins in our parking lot. Please pack used clothing and shoes in plastic bags before putting them in the bins. Remember that Trinity collects new and gently used men's clothing (size S-L only), coats and boots as well as scarves, gloves and socks so please don't put those in the bins. You can drop them by Room 5 or by the church office.

Lent is here and Easter is quickly approaching. Pastor Anne has planned a Thursday night Lenten Dinner and Bible Study series which began 2/15 and continues on Thursdays through Maundy Thursday on 3/28. Even if you have not attended the first two sessions, please do come. Mike M and the youth group are planning the Palm Sunday Brunch — our annual fundraising event for the youth group—so mark your calendars for Sunday, 3/24 and plan to attend. Invite a friend!

We finish Holy week with the Good Friday evening service on 3/29, the Easter Sunrise Vigil at 6 am and Easter worship at 11 am on 3/31.

Daylight savings time begins on Sunday, 3/10 at 2 am. Remember to turn your clocks AHEAD one hour Saturday night.



# FROM THE TRINITY COUNCIL

(continued from page 9)

for three-year terms and John G was elected auditor for next year. We thank John G for agreeing to step into the role of auditor at the last minute this year.

The council asks for your continued prayers that we make wise decisions that help grow our congregation and its ministries.

Your Sister in Christ,

*Chrystal*  
Trinity Church



# CAST YOUR NET

(Continued from page 8)

open to a little less comfort and a little more chaos, and willing to have unexpected conversations while things don't go according to plan.

Peter and the boys knew how to fish and nothing went as expected that night until the Lord showed them the way he wanted it done and they were rewarded with abundance.

Our Youth Nights grow because despite my efforts to continually try to do things the "right" way God has steadily prepare a community of young people that need us at this moment. And as we grow I ask you to consider volunteering to spend a Tuesday or Friday just hanging out with our growing group.

Can you play video games? Can you play Dungeons and Dragons? Can you paint or draw with teens? Or watch them perform Karaoke? Or just sit around and get snacks from the fridge? Then I need your help and maybe God is asking you to cast your net into the water.

*Mike*



# MISSIONS & MORE



We are called to love our neighbors and we invite you to join together in Our Good Neighbors Mission with us. If you have questions about any of our missions, please email [TrinityChurchLivingston@gmail.com](mailto:TrinityChurchLivingston@gmail.com).



## COLLECTIONS FOR MEN

**We collect ALL YEAR LONG for missions** so please donate if you can. Monetary donations are also accepted. Please be sure the write “MISSIONS—MENS” on the memo line of checks, on envelopes for cash and in the memo section is donating via PayPal on our website at ***TrinityChurchLivingston.org***.

### **MEN’S HIKING OR WORK BOOTS—MEN’S SIZES 7—10**

#### **MEN’S CLOTHING S-M-L**

Coats

Heavy zipper hoodies

Gloves

Shoes, boots & sneakers sizes 7-8-9

Thermal underwear

T-shirts: Long sleeve & short sleeve

Windbreakers

Warm hats & scarves

Sweatshirts & Hoodies

Socks

Jeans, slacks & sweatpants

*(Continued on page 15)*



## MEN'S ACCESSORIES & TOILETRIES

Backpacks

Toothbrushes & toothpaste\*

Hand lotion\*

Greeting cards\*

Notepads\*

Drawstring packs

Lip balm\*

Hotel size toiletry samples\*

Calendars\*

Hand warmers\*

## HOUSEHOLD NEEDS

Mugs

Throws

Kitchen towels

Leak-proof reusable water bottles

Blankets: twin-full-queen

Towels: beach-bath-hand

Washcloths

## SEWING KITS

Buttons, Sewing needles, Safety pins



## COLLECTION FOR NEW PARENTS AND BABIES

Baby clothing, shoes and coats. New, unwrapped toys. This mission is in partnership with St. Matthews Lilian's Closet in East Orange, a mission to provide new parents in need with baby supplies. **Donations can be put in our Donations box located outside the kitchen or outside Room 5.** For check or PayPal donations, please include "MISSIONS—BABY" in the memo.



## COLLECTION FORT RENEW CENTER

Laundry detergent/pods, toilet paper, toothpaste, and shampoo. These items are not covered under SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and are greatly needed. **Donations can be put in our Donations box located outside the kitchen.** For check or PayPal donations, please include "MISSIONS—RENEW" in the memo.

*(Continued on page 16)*



## COLLECTION FOR THE LIVINGSTON FOOD PANTRY

Cooking oil for our local food pantry. The local food pantries always run low on cooking oil. You can donate cooking oil at Shop Rite of Livingston CHOW donation box, at Livingston Town Hall in their CHOW donation box or at Trinity **in our Donations box located outside the kitchen.** THANK YOU!



## COLLECTION FOR CARE AND SHARE FUND

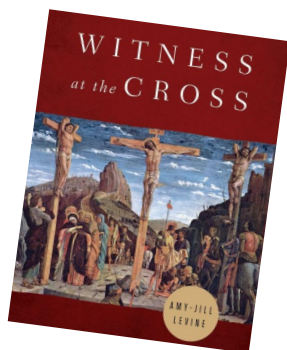
Our Pastor maintains a fund to provide emergency help to Trinity congregation members and friends in emergency need. Recently, we have helped with rent, gas and food. **You can donate with cash or check in a Care & Share envelope and place in the offering basket or vie PayPal on our website.** Please include “Care & Share” on the memo line or as a comment in PayPal or on your check. We can’t “split” checks, so any money donated to Care & Share must be on a separate check with “Care & Share” on the memo line. (keep track of these donations; they are not reported on your year-end letter from the financial secretary).



# FELLOWSHIP & DISCIPLESHIP

## Lenten Dinner & Bible Study. Thursdays in person and on Zoom.

For the Thursday Night Dinner and Bible Study, we're going through the study by Amy Jill Levine- *Witness at the Cross*. This study looks at Jesus' crucifixion from the perspective of those who were there as reported in the four gospel accounts. Each gospel account gives us a different viewpoint and each one reports different individuals being present. We'll look at the meaning behind that and what their stories are saying to us today.



Each evening we'll join together for dinner, watch a video segment, and then enter into a study/discussion of the text.

## Lent Sunday School & Worship

For SS (all ages) and Worship we'll be using the curriculum *Wandering Heart by Sanctified Art*. This will take us through the life and faith of Peter as Peter learned to walk with Jesus. Devotional materials will be available.



## Weekday Prayer Meetings (virtual): Tuesdays 2:30 pm & Thursdays 8 pm

All are welcome! Join in on Zoom Tuesdays 2:30 pm & Thursdays at 8:00 pm. Look for a link in your email. Send your prayer request to Pastor Anne at [TrinityLivingstonPastor@gmail.com](mailto:TrinityLivingstonPastor@gmail.com) or give us a call and leave a message.

## Youth Nights: Tuesdays 7 pm & Fridays at 6:30 pm

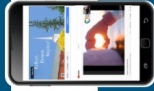


All teens are welcomed to join the fun and fellowship at Youth Night, every Friday from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Youth Director Mike leads the group and Pastor Anne provides assistance. Please RSVP to Mike at [TrinityLivingstonYouth@gmail.com](mailto:TrinityLivingstonYouth@gmail.com) or leave a message for Mike at 973-992-4044 #5.

## Confirmation Classes (Zoom)

Confirmation classes continue Wednesdays, 4:30 pm on Zoom. Pastor Anne leads this class. If you have questions, please reach out to Pastor Anne at 973-992-4044 #1 or [TrinityLivPastor@gmail.com](mailto:TrinityLivPastor@gmail.com).





**WE ARE IN-PERSON AND ONLINE AND YOU ARE WELCOME!**  
Join us at 11 AM at 343 E. Cedar St., Livingston or on Zoom  
or join the live stream on YouTube @Trinity Livingston Music

**343 East Cedar St., Livingston, NJ 07039**

**Rev. Anne Weinberg, Pastor**

**(TrinityLiviPastor@gmail.com)**

**Calvin Hitchcock, Music Director**

**(TrinityLivingstonMusic@gmail.com)**

**Mike Malbrough, Youth Ministries Director**

**(TrinityLivingstonYouth@gmail.com)**

**Yvette Holowczak, Office Manager & Messenger Editor**

**(TrinityChurchLivingston@gmail.com)**

**Phone: (973) 992-4044 TrinityChurchLivingston.org**

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