

# The Messenger

APRIL 2024



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# FROM THE PASTOR

## A Resurrection People



He is risen!

As I write this article I'm sitting outside in our prayer garden (thank you Luke Traverso).

I'm on the bench, by Pastor John Mark's tree. At my feet are big fat pinecones strewn all about. The daffodils are in full bloom and little purple crocuses have poked through the dirt. Even the dandelions seem to be joining in as they speckle newly green grass. Spring has begun and there is new life everywhere!

It seems so fitting that Easter is observed in the spring. Don't you think?

Many have commented this year that Easter was 'early'. That is very true. It was earlier than it was last year (by about a week), but not as early as it could be (or has been in the past). Easter moves about and is determined as the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox. (did you get that?). Spring is important because we know Jesus

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was crucified around Passover which is held in the spring.

Jesus' resurrection is celebrated as the cycle of new life in nature is just beginning again.

...At least in most of the world- some areas like Australia - celebrate Easter in fall-like weather, but still incorporate the symbols of spring and new life such as bunnies and eggs.

Still, we know it's not about the eggs or the bunnies (cute as they may be).

It's about Jesus.

And Jesus' resurrection is at the center of our faith.

But what does it mean?

And what did this look like for those in the early church?

Has the 'meaning' somewhat changed over time?

Our adult Sunday School Class has spent some time looking at this using a study by NT Wright. Here are some things from that study that we talked about (think of it as everything you need to know about the resurrection...no-not really...but read on anyway...)

In first century Israel Jesus' resurrection was a scandal. It wasn't just that Jesus rose from the dead (and people don't normally do that) It was also that

Jesus was the only one that was raised.

Generally speaking, the Greeks at the time did not believe in the resurrection of the body. Their goal was to leave this body behind. They felt the true essence of the person was the soul and the body was a sort of 'tomb'. Why would anyone want this body back?

The Jewish people were split. They all believed that God was the creator and the God of life. However, they differed as to how that would work out in the end. The Sanhedrin, who were Jewish leaders mainly comprised of the aristocracy didn't believe in resurrection. This group was heavily influenced by the Greek culture around them and wasn't interested in an afterlife. This life was just fine (thank you very much).

The Pharisees, Jewish leaders comprised of the 'common people', believed there would be a resurrection of the dead. However, they believed that this would not come about until the 'end time' when the Messiah came at which time ALL would bodily rise from the

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dead. It was something they believed God would do for all of God's people. They believed that keeping holy would hasten the coming of the Messiah (a Messiah who would conquer the oppressive systems and not be oppressed and killed by them).

And so when Jesus rose from the dead it was (as Paul said) a stumbling block to the Jewish people and foolishness to the Gentiles.

And yet, the tomb that a very dead Jesus was placed in that Friday was empty by Sunday morning. We have numerous accounts of people seeing the bodily resurrected Jesus. Paul tells us that at one point Jesus appeared to 500 people at once!

At first, everyone was confused.

The tomb was empty. Jesus was alive? Jesus was alive!

But the early church soon became a resurrection movement. A people thoroughly convinced that Jesus had died and that Jesus bodily rose from the dead and that because of this-everything had changed.

Based on Hebrew scrip-

tures (the Old Testament writings) that were now read differently- read in light of what God had done in Jesus- the early church saw this as the beginning of a new creation. They saw this as the fulfillment of the ancient promises but in a completely new and unexpected way.

The prophets spoke of a time when there would be a return from exile- a new exodus - a rescue from slavery when the oppressive empires of this world would be overthrown. After Jesus' resurrection, the apostle Paul, in his letters (which by the way were written before the gospel accounts were written down), saw sin as the ultimate oppressive system. The one by which held sway over all other oppressive and unjust systems. Sin leads to death and so Paul saw Jesus' resurrection as leading God's people out of sin and death into places of holiness and new life as they followed Jesus.

It had always been understood through scripture that Israel's Messiah would lead the way out of oppression and would ultimately be Lord of all.

That he would rule over the nations. That he would be the true King over and above any other empire ruling in power. But in Jesus it became clear that the power in which Christ (the anointed one) would rule would not be the power of death (which is the power that oppressive systems use). It would be the power of life.

It would be the power of love.

The love of God had won and the early church witnessed to the fact that God's saving love had changed everything. It wasn't what they had expected. It wasn't a kingdom by oppressive force, but instead one of self-giving love. And one in which Jesus was Lord of all.

And so here we are 2,000 years later and we've somehow boiled down Jesus' resurrection to mean that it's all about us going to heaven when we die. That salvation is about a personal ticket so that I get to my eternal destination.

But it's so much more than life with Jesus in the new heavens and new earth and wonderfully new resurrected bodies that won't decay (as wonderful

as that all is). Yes, we believe that because of Jesus' resurrection- because of the fact that 'Jesus is the firstborn of the dead' that we too will bodily live in a state where there will be no more sin or death or tears. We all await that glorious day. But this good news of the kingdom of God brought about by Jesus' death and resurrection isn't just good news for a day in the future but was meant to be life-changing news for the life we live today. A kingdom-building movement right now.

We are a resurrection people.

We are a people who believe that Jesus rose from the dead and that everything has changed because of that. We believe that Christ, by His Spirit (a topic for next month) is making all things new in us and in the world. And because Jesus is making us new, we in turn are to be part of God's bigger recreation project of making things new within the world in which we live (the one God so loved). We are to aid in resurrecting the world (so to speak). Our

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# CHILDRENS & FAMILY MINISTRY

Dear Trinity Kids,  
I have a question for you.  
Well, several actually.

Do you help to clean up your house?

How about your room?

If you don't – who cleans up your home?

What would happen if they (or you) stopped doing that?

....and why might that be a problem?

OK- new question:

Let's pretend you have a really large bucket filled with nice clean water and you wouldn't be able to get more water (from anywhere) once that bucket ran out. How would you treat the water in that bucket?

(feel free to send me your answers or thoughts about those, but do read on!)

We all need safe and healthy spaces in which to play, work, and grow. Humans need this, animals need this, insects, and

flowers, trees, and plants all need a clean space to live. All of us need the things in our environment that have been placed here for us to live like air, food, and water

The problem is that very often we don't think about the environment of the world in the same way we think of the other environments we need each day. Sometimes we look at

the messes in our world (like pollution of all kinds) and think that someone else will clean it up or someone else will take care of the Earth to make sure our air is clean and we all have enough clean water. But

what if everyone thinks that someone else will do these things? Then it could be that no one will do it. And that's a problem because this beautiful world belongs to all of us.

In 1970 Senator Nelson (from WI) was concerned about these things and instituted the very



first Earth Day. Earth Day happens every April 22nd. He did this as a way to raise awareness about the importance of keeping our environment on Earth (and all the creatures in it) healthy and safe.

Our Earth is a gift that God's given to us. It's a beautiful and life-sustaining gift. But it's a gift that comes with the responsibility of caring for it and all in it.

And so here is another question - how can we (including you) care for the Earth?

Here are some ideas:

- Picking up garbage at a park (with gloves and an adult present) as well as around your house or at the beach
- Planting a tree or flowers or vegetables
- Being careful about leaving the water running when you're not using it at home
- Starting a compost pile
- Learning about how to take care of the Earth through books and videos, etc..
- Visit a farm and ask how they take care of the Earth
- Create a special garden for butterflies or bees

What else can you think of?

*Pastor Anne*

*(Continued from page 5)*

part is to put into practice all that Jesus taught us in scripture and all that Jesus teaches us as we pray and study. Our part is to raise others up (especially the marginalized). To speak life into others. To offer the same grace, and love, and mercy that has been offered to us. To seek justice and care for the world.

Because the resurrection of Christ means that Jesus is king. That the empires of this world (no matter how they've been branded) will not prevail over the love of God in Christ Jesus. There is only one kingdom and there is only one King.

A living King whose empire is built on love. And so we follow. Because He's risen indeed.

Amen.

See you on the road,

*Pastor Anne*





## Par For the Course



### *1 Peter 3:17-18*

“For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the Spirit...”

The phrase “par for the course” has come up a lot recently. I have a tendency to pick up random sayings and incorporate them into my vocabulary for a time. Right now I am mostly on a “this, that and the third” kick, but the above golf term is a close second.

I’ve noticed that I say it often because several teens have asked me what it means.

Normal under these conditions.

It’s par for the course to think about suffering during the lead up to the Easter season, but once we celebrate the Risen Lord, that might begin to fade as we celebrate new life in Christ. Happy times abound as the weather gets warm and the sun shines.

But Christ’s resurrection is the proof that our faith was not in vain. His promises en-

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ture and we believe. So it is the time to borrow another contemporary phrase and “buy in.” The Way of Christ works. What he promised came to pass and the method of showing love to a fallen world and leading them to the promises of God is laid out for us.

We suffer?

Yes. But what does that really mean?

I could quote all of the scriptures that talk about this, but we know them. The more interesting thing to contemplate is what suffering looks like for us right now as individuals in our faith community. Suffering is a big word that can feel a little icky. I don’t want to suffer, suffer. And to claim that word as a descriptor for mundane acts seems a bit over the top.

But here’s the truth as far as I am concerned. We are engaging in an act of worship and following Christ when we actively do a thing that is counter to our best interests for the sake of others. It’s

that simple. And it is all the better when there is no good reason to do it. Perhaps it’s not deserved, or goes unnoticed, or someone else gets the credit.

Little losses or deaths for the sake of others are literal life in the Spirit.

It’s par for the course.

*Mike*



# FROM THE COUNCIL CHAIR

Greetings from your Trinity Church Council. Welcome to Easter season at Trinity that ends on Pentecost. It has been great to celebrate the Resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ with you at church in person or on Zoom.

On Sunday, April 7, the Council had the pleasure to meet with three member applicants from the recent new members inquirers class held by Pastor Anne.

The Council voted unanimously to recommend Lurlee S., Diane D. and Jimmy Y. to the congregation for membership. The congregation will receive the new members on Sunday, April 21, 2024, Good Shephard Sunday, for acceptance.

In March, we were able to have several floodlights around the outside of our building repaired. Speaking of our building, our Spring clean up day is scheduled for Saturday, April 13 starting at 9 AM.

The Council and the Prop-

erty Development Committee met with Habitat in March to receive an update on the status of their proposal for our property. We will discuss this issue at our next Council meeting on April 21. If there are any other issues that the Council should consider at our meeting, please contact any Council member.

The Council is thankful for our staff, members and friends that help Trinity to pursue its vision to be a place for love and grace for everyone.

Enjoy Spring! Don't forget to love your neighbor as yourself!

Yours in Christ,

*Chrystal*



*Trinity Church Council:  
Chrystal Veazey-Watson, Chair;  
Mary Chu, Vice Chair;  
Jen Yoo, Secretary;  
Cyndy Traverso, Treasurer;  
Rich Holowczak, Financial Secretary;  
and Karen Reichy, Missions*

# Trinity Reporter

Easter came early this year and it seems we just finished Christmas and we were getting ready for Ash Wednesday! Why did Lent begin so early this year? Easter is the first Sunday after the full Moon that occurs on or after the spring equinox. If the full Moon falls on a Sunday then Easter is the next Sunday. Ash Wednesday is exactly 46 days before Easter Sunday, a moveable feast based on the cycles of the moon.

Trinity hosted an open house for Ash Wednesday, which happened to fall on Valentine's Day this year, and it was a lovely experience. We hope you were able to drop in and receive ashes and check out all of the activities Pastor Anne set up for reflection.

The Lenten Thursday night dinner and Bible study took participants through *Witness at the Cross*, a study by Amy Jill Levine. Each night we shared dinner together and good fellowship, then watched a video and had discussion about the different

people who appear at the cross through the gospels. There was so much discussion and so many questions too! It was a deep dive into the gospels and a look at how each gospel differs in what the writers highlighted about the crucifixion. Fascinating!

Palm Sunday brought the smell of bacon and a wonderful brunch cooked by the youth, **Mike M** and the staff as well as help from **Page** and **Chrystal, and Diane**. There were pancakes galore, lasagna, French toast bake, baked oatmeal... I'm getting hungry! Needless to say, there was a lot of food. The TPC provided pasta with shrimp. We ate, had great fellowship, and the youth raised over \$1,000 for their youth night budget! Thank you to everyone who helped plan, prepare, shop, set up and serve and for those who donated so generously.

Our youth group continues to grow and we are so grateful to be able to provide a safe

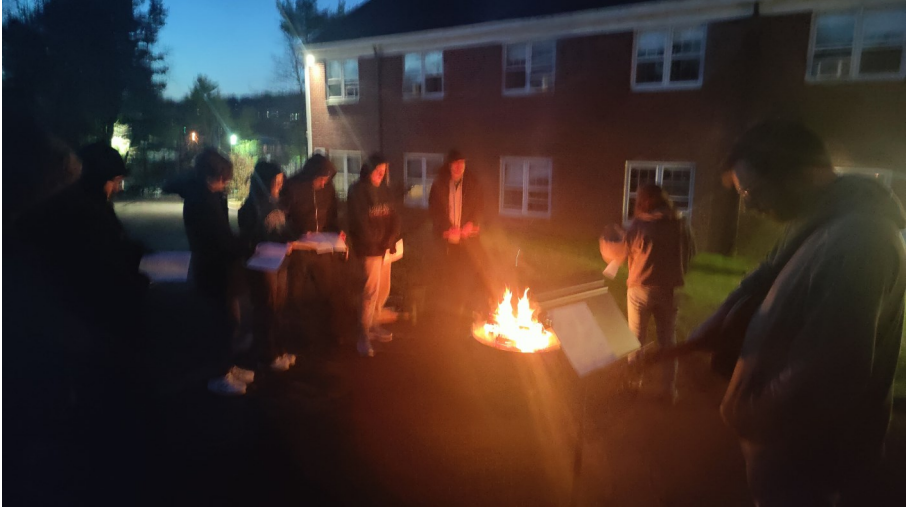
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*Palm Sunday Brunch crew! From top left to bottom: Page, Abe, and Pastor Anne helping to prepare the brunch. Diane doing dishes to help keep everything going. Chrystal V-W pitching in. Chloe, Mike, Abe, and Malachi — the team making pancakes and bacon. Mike, Calvin and Robin enjoying fellowship and good food.*





*From top to bottom: Palm Sunday Brunch — we were thrilled to be joined by our Taiwanese church brothers and sisters. Easter sunrise vigil around the fire. Easter Sunday morning quiet in the sanctuary before the service began.*



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space for the teens. On that note, if you are interested in helping during any teen night (Tuesdays and Fridays), talk to **Mike M.** He could use a few more adults to help supervise. It would be great for more Trinity folks to get to know the teens.

Trinity hosted the Good Friday Livingston community Ecumenical Service “Prayer of Peace”. **Pastor Anne** was joined by Rev. Dan Martian, The Presbyterian Church of Livingston, Rev. Kathy Macdonald, The Full Gospel Church, Rev. Ron DePasquale, The Full Gospel Church, Rev. Dr. Kevin Newburg, Livingston United Methodist Church

Trinity’s Good Friday evening service was well-attended and an important part of the Easter story to share. Thank you to **Calvin, Rich, and Mike** for the music. Thank you to the kids and adults who read scripture and helped with the placement of the flowers.

We gathered early Easter morning for the annual sunrise vigil. **Marty W** had the fire

crackling by 6 AM. Thank you Marty! We opened Easter with song and scripture and we brought the light back into the sanctuary. Thank you to **Rich** for the music. It was great to see **Sue and John G** there and again at the 11 AM service. We are happy to have them back in worship with us. Sue helped Pastor Anne lead the Easter service — it was like old times again.

Our Easter morning service was so much fun! Thank you to **Calvin H, Rich H, Mike M, Page M, and Ethan H** for their expert musicianship and to **Abe M** for his great job manning the slides. The music was beautiful and together we all made a joyful noise!

Easter always brings family together so it was great to see **Rebecca W and Juan, Sue and Peter G along with Tristan and Alice D, and Bella M** also!

Pastor Anne begins a new Thursday night Bible study on April 25. This study is in-person and online. Email Pastor Anne for a link if you would like to join the study online.



# 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

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## 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.

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## 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

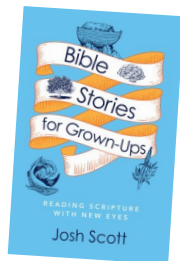
Our Pastor maintains a fund to provide emergency help to Trinity congregation members and friends in emergency need. Recently, we have helped with rent, gas and food. **You can donate with cash or check in a Care & Share envelope and place in the offering basket or via PayPal on our website.** Please 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

## NEW! Thursday Night Bible Study, Begins April 25 at 7:00 pm

All are welcome! This 6-week study *Bible Stories for Grown Ups* will include videos and discussions. This study looks at familiar Bible stories and reveals new details and interpretations for an adult audience including Noah's Ark, the binding of Isaac, Jonah and the big fish, Jesus and Zacchaeus, Jesus healing a blind man, and the parable of the talents.



For more information or for a zoom link, email Pastor Anne at [TrinityLivPastor@gmail.com](mailto:TrinityLivPastor@gmail.com) or give her a call at 973-992-4044.

## Sunday School & Worship

All are welcome! Each age groups participates in their own Bible study every Sunday at 10 AM (September thru June).

## 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. No prayer meetings the week of 4/15-4/19.

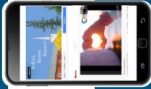
## Youth Nights: Tuesdays 7 pm—9 pm & Fridays at 6:30 pm—9 pm

All teens are welcomed to join the fun and fellowship at Youth Nights. Youth Director Mike leads the group and Pastor Anne provides assistance. Please RSVP to Mike at [TrinityLivingstonYouth@gmail.com](mailto:TrinityLivingstonYouth@gmail.com).



## 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 @TrinityLivingston Music

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