

# The Messenger



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### FROM THE PASTOR

# On The Resurrection of Plants and Other Things



I know I've written about this before.

In fact, it was exactly this time last year.

I know that because the plant on my deck—the pretty purple one I bought in the summer 2 years ago—is now blooming again. When it bloomed again last spring—I was surprised. After that first season was over, I thought it was dead and simply left it on the balcony. Over the winter snow accumulated on it, rain pooled inside the pot and I thought once it thaws out, I'll get rid of it. But

I didn't. I left it right where it had been all year. And then last Memorial Day weekend I went away for a couple of days.
When I returned- voila- all of the pretty purple flowers from the year before were back. I was shocked. I thought it was dead (or at best a weed was growing in its place). But I discovered that it was a perennial-who knew?

When this spring rolled around, I was ready. I even moved it into the sun this year to help it along.

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And because it's been a busy spring, it was the only plant I tended to. Usually, there are more but this year the only plant that was growing (at least for now) was this one.

Or so I thought.

Until I noticed my 'plant graveyard'.

(Doesn't everyone have a plant graveyard?)

Let me explain.

Marty and I live in a condo unit and share the outdoor property with our neighbors. Because of this there isn't any designated place to plant outside. That's already been done with carefully manicured bushes and trees and maintained by the landscapers who come to take care of the grounds. It's all rather lovely.

And because we have no place to plant outside, I have, over the years, created a container garden. (Like a farm of plants). Every spring I line them up on the steps outside my front door and every Fall I 'dismantle' my garden by 'adding' to the vegetation outside. It was my contribution to the grounds. Sort of. You see it

was a bit 'wild', back before they carefully manicured the surrounding property (because it wasn't always like this). Large trees and wild bushes were allowed to grow at will. And so, I confess, at the end of the season, I would dump the remains of the plants back into the earth, and bless them on their way. The following spring I would begin all over again with new plants.

However, one fall, two years ago, they took out all of the wild plants making it a lot harder to 'dispose' of them at the end of the season. And so, I needed to find a new spot to deposit my lifeless plants and the place I found was next to the fence, behind a bush, in the back of our unit. The thought was that there they could simply (quietly) decompose back into the earth. And so, last fall, I dumped out the dead plants, brought the pots into the garage, and settled in for the colder months.

Well- those months went by and this spring came along again, but recently- I noticed something. Next to the fencepopping out through the fence

behind the bush- was an orange flower. First one, then two, then a whole bouquet of orange flowers. Next to them were little violas with their happy faces turned to the sun. And finally, the mint plant hidden way in the back (no pot-just a clump of dirt in pot form) was thriving with its deep green leaves ready to be picked for iced tea. It was amazing! Now, obviously, I'm an amateur at this and didn't realize these were all perennials. I thought they were one and done and I had left all of these for dead. In my defense, they were dead (or so I thought). They were brown and lifeless. And yet- here they were. Life springing up from death- once again.

But God is like that.

And this object lesson, provided by God, was obvious. Even to an amateur gardener.

Over the Easter season (which ended with our Pentecost celebration) it is this very thing that we celebrate. That life came out of a graveyard. That Jesus, who was left for deadand along with Him buried hopes and buried dreams- rose up very much alive.

It is why we come together

to worship on Sundays. Each Sunday is meant to be a 'mini Easter'. A reminder of the resurrection. A celebration that life sprang up from death. Each Sunday we read scripture, sing songs, and pray. We tend to the garden of our faith and we remind each other of this core truth that, in Jesus, life came from death. That our God is a God of resurrection and new life and that this changes things.

But I wonder how often we relegate the truth of resurrection to Sunday mornings. As if resurrection were only a Sunday morning phenomenon.

I looked for, expected, and tended to the new life in that purple plant on the balcony this year, but God surprised me (once again) by bringing life from death in a place where I didn't expect it.

Which made me think.
Where in our lives is God bringing about resurrection where we don't expect to see it?
Where we are not looking for it?

If we believe that in Christ there is healing and wholeness.

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## **CHILDRENS & FAMILY MINISTRY**



#### Hello Trinity Kids!

A few weeks ago, on Pentecost, we met together with some of the adults during Sunday School. We told the story of Pentecost and remembered together that Pentecost is the birthday of the church! One of the activities we did together was to finish the sentence: "I love church because..." (remember that?). If you were not there- I missed you and would love to know your answer! It was fun to hear about what you thought about church and the things that you liked best. It gave me an idea. I think it would be fun to find out what the other adults (who were not there during SS on Pentecost) love about church. And... I think you would all be great reporters.

On Sunday, June 9th, after service, we will have our church picnic and I am giving you an assignment for that afternoon! During the church picnic, I would like you to interview a few of the adults in our church and find out more about them! I've included a short list of questions below to get you started. THEN I want you to find me at the picnic and report back to me ONE thing that you discovered (you do not need to write anything down although you can if you would like.)

- What do you love about church? (about coming to church or about being 'the church' -as people who follow Jesus).
- 2. When did you first come to Trinity?

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- 3. What do you like about church?
- 4. What is your favorite hobby (or thing to do when you are not at Trinity)?
- 5. What is your favorite color?
- 6. Do you have a pet?
- 7. What do you want to be when you grow up?

Happy interviewing! Pastor Anne



(Continued from page 5)

If we believe that in God's presence, there is resurrection. And if we believe that God is present in each one of us by the Holy Spirit. Then perhaps there is new life springing upor waiting to spring up- in places that we've left for dead. In places, we somehow don't expect God to reach.

And yet- that's what God does. Over and over and over again.

I find that comforting. Even when I am unaware, God is bringing new life.

I pray that you find that comforting as well.

That God is present and active in your life in ways you can't see or don't recognize or think are dead.

I pray that you find hope in the truth that the Spirit at work in you and the world is truly making all things new in unexpected ways even when it seems there is no way.

One day there will be the resurrection of our bodies and oh what a day that will be! But for now- on this side of eternity- let's be aware and expectant, and tend to the garden of our faith knowing that all the things we've left for dead God will most definitely bring to new life.

Amen.

Pastor Anne

# **YOUTH MINISTRIES**

## Self Worth Work



"Self love is not selfish; you cannot truly love another until you know how to love yourself."
-unknown

There are a lot of good things about this age of personal growth and care. In 2015, according to the Pew Research Center, more millennials reported making personal improvement commitments than any generation before them. They spend twice as much as boomers on self-care essentials such as workout regimens, diet plans, life coaching, therapy and apps to improve their personal wellbeing. We that are getting older can learn a thing or two about being intentional with such things.

"Who I am and what I need," are mantras sort of ingrained into how young people regularly think of themselves and their place in their community. And there is a lot of good fruit to come from this in terms of facing trauma, addiction, relationship, illness, prejudice and beyond.

The problem comes when we realize that no one is without an idol. The Greek word eidos means "form, type or idea" and leads us to both ideal and idol. The two are very closely related. And then the question is who are we following? The quick answer might

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be, "myself," but not really. We are learning from somewhere. It is in our nature. And more often than not, the ideals and idols presented to us in media and pop culture are vacant. Admittedly vacant. And I am not saying this to put people down, but you will hear artists, athletes and even influencers say "I am not trying to be a role model." Sometimes it seems like only the worst role models are the ones willing to own it.

So what is to be done about this? I think Jesus, as someone worth idolizing, would point to the plank in our own eye. For too long the church has abused power and privilege and caused a generation to recoil at the idea of self-critique. In the mechanism of the church it seems like this was the widget that kept people from speaking up, or questioning, challenging, etc. This is the role we played in the perhaps imbalanced amount of entitlement in our young people. The church as one of many authorities lost the right to speak and so people look to themselves because institutions can't be trusted.

I hear the way our brothers and sisters in our AA meetings

share their stories sometimes. Only pieces as I pass by, but the humility demonstrated is a blessing. A blessing that, for many of them, seems to have come at a cost.

Truly loving ourselves and caring for ourselves means being deeply honest. Humble. Reflective. Not just okay with ourselves. And we shouldn't rely on our own voice to soothe us. I don't think anyone is self-aware enough to give themselves the wisdom and love that they need. I certainly am not capable of it.

But the grace given by God's Son, and the promise that we are okay in the eyes of the Almighty then gives us the freedom to work on ourselves in active love, healing and growth. Jesus demonstrated His love through work. Love is work. Even the love for ourselves.

Self work is not selfish; you cannot truly work on another until you know how to work on yourself.

Mike



## FROM THE COUNCIL CHAIR

Greetings from your Trinity Church Council. The Council, after meeting with the Habitat representative and the Property Development Committee and much discussion, decided not to sign the a letter of intent with Habitat. We have agreed that the Property Development Committee should continue to identify potential partners for a potential future project that would be consistent with our mission.

We look forward to June 9th, which is our annual picnic, the end of Sunday school and the beginning of our summer services in Fellowship Hall, where we have air conditioning. The Council has decided that this year we would not make our summer services earlier but keep them at 11 a.m. This will make it possible for the Taiwanese Presbyterian Church to have their service in Fellowship Hall.

The Council thanks our staff, members and friends

that help Trinity to pursue its vision to be a place for love and grace for everyone.

Enjoy your Summer and remember to always try to love your neighbor as yourself.

Your Sister in Christ,

# Chrystol

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



# Trinity Reporter

## **APRIL/MAY EDITION**

April brought a deluge of rain, an earthquake and a solar eclipse all in the first few weeks!

On April 5, New Jersey experienced a 4.8 earthquake. It was centered in Tewksbury in northern New Jersey so thankfully the church building did not suffer any damage, but we sure felt the shaking!

An eclipse visible to New Jersey got everyone excited and we all broke out the funky sunglasses and awed at the nature God has made.

Rich H headed up the spring clean-up day on Saturday, April 13. Thank you to Pastor Anne, Marty W, Mike M, Page M and Abe M, Chrystal VW, Mary C, Amelia C, Elise C, Eileen F, Cyndy T and Jim T for their hard work. Light bulbs were replaced, closets were cleaned and organized, chairs were cleaned up. Luckily some of the crew was able to get in work on the outside of the building before the rain returned. Amelia and Elise helped Cyndy plant flowers. The

playground (and shed) was cleaned up and sand was added to the sandbox. Everything was power washed and looks so much better. We got a lot done and the building is happier and brighter.



Pastor Anne took a muchneeded trip to see her friend in Texas. While there she visited the gulf coast beaches and learned about poisonous caterpillars and plants that live

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there—God loves all of his creation, even those we can't touch (the caterpillar was so fuzzy!)

On Sunday, April 21 the congregation received three new members, **Diane D, Lurlee S and Jimmy Y.** Members of the Trinity council prayed for our new members and Pastor Anne bestowed a sheep to each as a reminder we are all in the flock together. It's always more fun to travel together!

Rebecca W and Juan took a trip to Orange to distribute t-shirts and other items to the day laborers. Thank you to them for their important mission work!

We published a press release in the West Essex Tribune calling for donation for our missions. We had several Livingston residents call for pick ups of donations!

We revamped our mission item list flyer and Karen R. dis-



Thanks to **Chrystal VW** we were able to share in watching the Moses production by Sight & Sound on Sunday, April 28 after fellowship. It was quite a spectacle to watch!

Karen R, Fred, Pastor Anne,

tributed it around. It was also posted on Facebook and Instagram.

Speaking of missions...We need your help! If you are interested in becoming the co-chair of our Good Neighbor Missions



please see **Karen R.** Many hands make for light work!

May flowers were in full bloom when we celebrated Pentecost on May 19 — the birth of the church. Pastor Anne planned an interactive worship service to celebrate and everyone seemed to enjoy being participants as we waved the "holy spirit wind and fire" streamers and proclaimed "He's alive!" (photo above) It was a great celebration!

Pastor Anne and her family were able to get away for a vacation at the end of May. It was a restful time and they got in some good beach (photo right). Word is that Alice DeNisco enjoyed making her very first s'more and she loved it! Thanks to technology, Pastor Anne was

able to record a sermon that we were able to play during the worship service. Calvin H, Susan G, Chrystal V-W, Mike M, Bella M, Abe M and Yvette H helped during the worship service with Jen Y teaching adult Sunday school. It was a whole congregational effort!



You may have noticed lovely flowers around the outside of the building. **Pastor Anne** nurtures the flowers in the front of the sanctuary and **Cyndy T** planted in the flower boxes and around the property. Thank you to both of them for keeping the property beautiful!

Thank you to
Nancy O for the
amazing prayer
shawls, baby blankets and baby hats
(photo below)!
What an amazing
gift to share. The
baby blankets and
some hats will be
send to Lilian's Closet in Orange, a mis-

sion for new parents. The other baby hats will be giving to St. Barnabas hospital. The prayer shawls will be given to folks who are in need of comfort.

Sunday school is wrapping

up for the year on Sunday, June 9. Thank you to Page M, Yvette H, Mike M for leading the kids and teen Sunday school groups (kids Sunday School photo below). And thank you to Alice C, Mary C, Jennifer and Jimmy Y, and everyone who helped with



children's church and Sunday school this year. We are always looking for volunteers to lead children's church on Sundays. If you are interested, please see Pastor Anne.

Mike M is looking for volunteers for teen nights on Tuesdays and Fridays. If you are interested in helping out with this awesome group see Mike. Everyone volunteering with kids and teens must be background checked.

Bella M is helping in the



church office and with the sharing room this summer. Thank you Bella!

June begins with the Livingston Pride Picnic on Sunday, June 2 at 12 noon. Trinity will have a table set up with giveaways. Pastor Anne will be there and will also say a few words in support of our LGTBQ+ neighbors. We hope you can join!

Our annual Trinity picnic is scheduled for Sunday June 9. We will worship in fellowship hall and then enjoy a picnic with our brothers and sisters form the Taiwanese Presbyterian Church. Please bring a side dish to share!

There's a new Bible study beginning June 20. Check out the Fellowship & Discipleship section of this newsletter and our online calendar for details and dates.

Summer is right around the corner and many people will be away on vacation. Remember, Gus the Cat LOVES to get postcards and emails from folks on vaca-

tion so he can heard about all of the adventures you have!

You can email Gus the Cat at TrinityChurchLiving-ston@gmail.com, mail a postcard or post on Gus the Cat's Facebook page — just search Facebook for "Gus The Cat!"





# **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.



#### **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 *TrinityChurchLiving-ston.org*.

#### MEN'S HIKING OR WORK BOOTS—MEN'S SIZES 7—10

#### **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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#### **ACCESSORIES & TOILETRIES**

Backpacks Drawstring packs

Toothbrushes & toothpaste\* Lip balm\*

Hand lotion\* Hotel size toiletry samples\*

Greeting cards\* Calendars\*
Notepads\* Hand warmers\*

#### **HOUSEHOLD NEEDS**

Mugs Blankets: twin-full-queen Throws Towels: beach-bath-hand

Kitchen towels Washcloths

Leak-proof reusable water bottles

#### **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.



### **DONATION BINS**

For all other clothing, shoes and used small toys that cannot be used by Trinity, we have donation bins in our parking lot for your use. Acceptable items are clothing, shoes and small toys. Items should be used, but in good condition. Trinity receives a donation from Millennium Textiles for the use of the parking lot space.

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#### **COLLECTION FOR 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.



# 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).

# Livingston Pride Picnic: Sunday, June 2 starting at 12 pm

Trinity will host a table at the Livingston Pride Picnic again this year to connect with our neighbors. Pastor Anne will have a chance to offer welcome and blessings to those attending the picnic. Please feel free to join us at the Trinity table, or just come to meet neighbors.



# Livingston National Night Out: Tuesday, August 6, starting at 5:30 pm

This year again, Trinity will host a table at the National Night Out event in Livingston. Get to know some your local first responders in addition to having fun and meeting other members of the community. If you would like to sit at the Trinity table, bring a lawn chair and come join us!

## The Messenger Publishing Schedule Change

The Messenger will now be published every other month. Each issue will still contain all the good news you look forward to! We love to hear from members and friends near and far so send us an email, letter, photos, etc.! Our next issue of *The Messenger* will be a July/August issue that will be published at the beginning of August. If you have any question or want to send us an email, we can be found at TrinityChurchLivingston@gmail.com.

You can also visit Trinity on Facebook and Instagram as well as our website at **TrinityChurchLivingston.org**.

# **FELLOWSHIP & DISCIPLESHIP**

## **Sunday School Update**

Our last Sunday school class will be Sunday, June 9 at 10 AM. Sunday school will resume in September. Check our website for the start date in September. Children's church will run through the summer.

## Worship Time to Remain at 11 AM

During the church council meeting on May 19, the Trinity Church Council voted to keep our Sunday worship time at 11 AM for this summer. For the last few decades, Trinity worshiped at 10 AM in the summer, but Pastor Anne and the council felt staying at the 11 AM worship time would have many benefits. Trinity Sunday worship will be at 11 AM in fellowship hall beginning June 9.

# NEW! Thursday Night Bible Study in 1 & 2 Samuel: Begins 6/20

For more information or for a zoom link, email Pastor Anne at *TrinityLivPastor@gmail.com* or give her a call at 973-992-4044.



## **Confirmation Classes (Hybrid)**

Confirmation classes continue Wednesdays, 4:30 PM. Pastor Anne leads this class. If you have questions, please reach out to Pastor Anne at 973-992-4044 #1 or TrinityLivPastor@gmail.com.

# Youth Nights: Tuesdays 7 - 9 PM &

Fridays 6:30 - 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.



# 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 or give us a call and leave a message.

# **Trinity Church Picnic: Sunday, 6/9**

We will worship at 11 AM in fellowship hall, then enjoy a picnic and games outside (weather permitting). Please bring a side dish to share and a lawn chair to use outside. Many hands make for light work, please help set up and/or clean up.

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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
2 SUNDAY SCHOOL 10 AM WORSHIP 11 AM LIVINGSTON PRIDE PICNIC	m	PRAYER MEETING 2:30 PM TEEN NIGHT 7 PM	•	BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM PRAYER MEETING 8 PM	7 AA Bagel Group 10 am TEEN NIGHT 6:30 PM	8 YOUTH TRIP TO RENAISSANCE FAIR
Hwa Yin Choir 4,30 – 7,30 pm  9 SUNDAY SCHOOL 10 AM WORSHIP 11 AM CHILDREN'S CHURCH CHURCH PICNIC	10	Al-Anon 1 pm, AA 1 pm 11 PRAYER MEETING 2:30 PM TEEN NIGHT 7 PM	AA7pm 12 CONFIRMATION 4:30 PM	AA1pm, AtAnon1pm 13 PRAYER MEETING 8 PM	NA 7:30 pm 14  AA Bagel Group to am TEEN NIGHT 6:30 PM	15
Hwa Vin Choir 4,30 – 7,30 pm 16  WORSHIP 11 AM CHILDREN'S CHURCH FATHER'S DAY Hwa Yin Choir 4,30 – 7,30 pm	17	PRAYER MEETING 2:30 PM TEEN NIGHT 7 PM Al-Anon 1 pm , AA 1 pm	AA7pm 19 CONFIRMATION 4:30 PM AA7pm	AAIDM, AFANONIDM 20 BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM PRAYER MEETING 8 PM AAIDM, AFANONIDM	NA 7:30 pm 21 AA Bagel Group 10 am TEEN NIGHT 6:30 PM NA 7:30 pm	22
23 WORSHIP 11 AM CHILDREN'S CHURCH CONFIRMATION CLASS HWAVIn Choir 430 - 730 pm	24	25 PRAYER MEETING 2:39 PM TEEN NIGHT 7 PM Al-Anon 1 pm , AA 1 pm	26 AA7pm	BIBLE STUDY 7:00 PM PRAYER MEETING 8 PM A4 1pm, A(-Anon 1 pm	28 AA Bagel Group 10 am TEEN NIGHT 6:30 PM NA 7:30 pm	29
30 WORSHIP 11 AM CHILDREN'S CHURCH Hwa Yin Choir 4:30 – 7:30 pm						







VouTube WE ARE IN-PERSON AND ONLINE AND YOU ARE WELCOME!

or join the live stream on YouTube @Trinity Livingston Music Join us at 11 AM at 343 E. Cedar St., Livingston or on Zoom

# 343 East Cedar St., Livingston, NJ 07039

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