



The Messenger

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2025

You are Loved



It ain't much,
but it's all I got.

It's all I
ever wanted.



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FROM THE PASTOR

What's Love Got to Do With It?



What's Love Got to Do With It?

Remember that song?

The iconic 80's hit by Tina Turner?

I clearly remember belting out that lyrical question- my young teenage self -singing this with my friends- (or.. maybe ... actually...it was by myself...with a hairbrush as a mic...yeah...don't judge...) It's a catchy song (and Tina-with her amazing hair and makeup-did a wonderful job).

Now, the content of this particular song may- in fact- be rather questionable (I know I had no idea what the song was actually about). But the query is valid- and timely (Perhaps especially in this week where we celebrate all things love. Perhaps especially in this season we are currently in as a country.)

What does love have to do with it?

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I remember being part of a group of Christians (a long, long time ago- in a galaxy far, far away) who were split over many things. It was mentioned, during one particular meeting, that the group needed to love one another better to which one of the members said: "Love them- I hardly know them!"

Is knowing someone a prerequisite for love? Maybe?

Tina sang about love being "a second-hand emotion". Second hand- no- but an emotion- yes- at least to one degree. Love can be (and often is) an emotion. We may feel love toward another human being (friends, family members, etc..) or even toward our pets. And feeling love is a beautiful thing.

Jesus had a thing or two to say about love.

When Jesus was asked what the greatest command was His reply was 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On

these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40)

You have most likely heard this passage before (probably many times before).

But, what does it mean exactly? What is love (anyway)? (this is another song reference for those of you listening- this one by Howard Jones- but I digress...)

What does Scripture tell us about love?

The Old Testament Hebrew (the original language used to write the Old Testament) has two words for love. The first is ahava (ah-ha-vah) and the other is khesed(heh-sed).

Ahava is used to describe an affectionate, caring love (like the sort of love felt for family, friends, and pets). It's an emotion we feel, but it's more than that. In the pages of Scripture we discover this affectionate love is also an action. It's an encompassing love that leads to action. For example, it's the word used in the Shema. The Jewish prayer that encompasses the command that Israel is to love God with all that they are: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord is

our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.’ (Deuteronomy 6:4-5) They are to ‘ahava’ God with all that they are. Another example is God’s love expressed to Israel “It was not because you were more numerous than any other people that the Lord set his heart on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples. It was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath that he swore to your ancestors that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. (Deuteronomy 7:7-8) God’s love was transformed into action.

(fun fact- Deuteronomy speaks of love more than any of the other books of the Torah- which are the first 5 books of the Bible).

The other word, khessed, is related to ahava, but is different. It speaks of loyal love- of generosity and commitment from one person to another. Such as Ruth’s commitment to her mother-in-law Naomi (that

story can be found in the book of Ruth)

The New Testament also has several words for love: eros (for romantic love), philia (for brotherly love- where we get Philadelphia-the city of ‘brotherly love’), and agape. Agape is the most used word and it’s used to describe a love that is unconditional and self-giving. We’re told that God is this kind of love that God IS agape. It’s the word Jesus used when He said God so loved (so agape’d) the world that God gave us God’s only Son. And it’s the word Jesus used when He said we were to love (agape) God and agape our neighbors as ourselves. Loving God with our whole self leads us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Love, in scripture, is an attitude and an action. It’s more than a feeling (last song reference...Boston anyone?) It’s self-giving. And so when Jesus tells us that the greatest command to love God and love others fulfills all the writings of the law and the prophets it means that we can look back and see that this was God’s intention for

(Continued on page 6)

God's relationship with humanity AND our relationship with each other all along. This seems to especially encompass caring for those on the margins- the poor, the oppressed, and the immigrant. (Lev 19:34, Lev 25:35, Deuteronomy 10:18-19, Proverbs 14:31, Proverbs 31:8-9, Isaiah 1:17, and Micah 6:8 to name a few). The poor are to be provided for, the oppressed lifted up and the immigrants and refugees are to be treated as natives.

Love is an action. It always has been. God's love has been poured out on us abundantly as a gift. There is nothing we can do to make God love us more and there is nothing we can do to lose God's love (in all of creation and beyond- see Romans 8:38-39.) However it's a gift that we are not just to receive, but to live out. God's indictment of the people in the Old Testament and Jesus' indictment of the religious leaders of the time was that they had moved far from God -their hearts had grown cold as demonstrated in how they lived out life with their neighbor. We show God love by loving others. This means those

close to us whose names we know- yes- but also those whose names we don't know. Those who may not look like our neighbor, and yet are the very ones that God told us to consider our neighbor (see the Parable of the Good Samaritan Luke 10:25-37). Knowing someone is not a prerequisite for love. Not as far as God is concerned. As the people of God, we are called to love, care, and seek justice. We've been commanded to do so. A loved people sent out to love.

And often, that is hard. We live in a world- and specifically right now- in a country- that is divided. And so then the question is are we to love one group and not the other?

Paul, in his letter to the church of Corinth, tells us what this love is to look like. The church in Corinth was a church- a people of God- who had become deeply divided. (perhaps we as a nation can relate). Paul was their concerned pastor who couldn't be there to guide them so he wrote them a letter - to remind them of what the greatest command- to love- meant.

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He writes: "Love is patient, it's kind, love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable; it keeps no record of wrongs; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part, but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now, we see only a reflection, as in a mirror, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love remain, these three, and the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:1-13)

In the end, it is love that will remain.

May we seek paths of justice and mercy for all, but especially for those on the margins- the poor, the oppressed, and the immigrant.

May we- with God's help- seek ways of love with those whom we agree with, but especially with those we do not.

And may we love God with every fiber of our being.

What's love got to do with it?
Everything.
Amen.

Pastor Anne



Corinthians 13:1-13

13 If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. ² If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. ³ If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

⁴ Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

⁸ Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰ but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. ¹¹ When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. ¹² For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

¹³ And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.



LOVE IS



Discover the hidden words.

G	V	I	A	M	N	W	F	S	G	G	W	K	E	C
L	K	T	W	E	L	V	E	R	U	O	F	I	S	O
O	Q	F	V	P	A	T	I	E	N	T	D	N	E	R
R	D	E	S	X	M	L	U	Q	J	H	T	D	L	I
I	L	L	S	E	R	L	O	H	T	M	E	N	F	N
F	Q	H	F	X	Y	E	I	K	A	I	N	E	L	T
Y	L	I	S	Z	O	E	N	G	P	A	L	S	E	H
G	Q	E	K	J	K	M	T	L	T	Y	C	S	S	E
G	D	Z	Y	E	X	Y	B	S	Y	L	Y	X	S	E
F	J	T	A	S	J	T	I	F	M	Q	M	O	W	G
K	L	H	V	U	F	R	H	V	Z	T	B	O	Q	I
E	N	J	P	S	H	T	E	R	T	K	A	A	T	F
X	V	P	K	C	S	L	O	V	E	Z	L	V	S	T
K	D	I	J	I	P	T	E	B	B	E	P	B	O	P
F	W	I	C	H	U	R	C	H	L	P	O	M	S	P

Word Bank

LOVE

JESUS

CHRIST

GLORIFY

CORINTH

SELFLESS

PATIENT

KINDNESS

CYMBAL

CHURCH

GIFT

GOD

On Radiance: An Introduction

When Page agreed to marry me back in the day, a mentor of mine shared a bit of wisdom and warning with her...

“Mike is an artist.”

The profundity of that statement has stayed with me since then, and now more than ever I reflect back on it as I look at life choices, relationships, shortcomings, behavioral patterns, non-negotiables and strengths that God uses in me to bless others.

I don't think of it in any sort of lofty way most of the time. To the contrary, I often think of it, in my enneagram “four”ness, as more of a diagnosis for why I make certain incalculable life decisions. But, to be fair, I also ultimately think of it as what part of the body God has ordained that I be to serve the community of believers within which I am blessed to dwell.

God has made each of us uniquely different. No one is just like you. And the depths of each of us are invisible to anyone else save the Lord. Dwelling in our

uniqueness, owning that and allowing Christ to sit with us in that is the wellspring from which we serve Him.

So, that is all a caveat to a series of thoughts, or meditations that I have been considering lately on the topic of radiance which I hope to share over the coming months. And I am finally getting up the nerve to share them as a form of worship and reflection that I think fits the forum of what I usually include in the *Trinity Messenger*.

Maybe these will go into a book someday or maybe they will just be passing fleeting meditations on Christ, what it means to follow Him, and subtle things I see in how the world seems to work for and against us as we try to serve Him as hope bringers in this strange time we live in.

And before I venture down that road, remember, Mike is an artist.

Mike



FROM THE COUNCIL CHAIR

Welcome to February. It's been cold and our church has been as busy as ever.

December and January were filled with music, worship and opportunities for fellowship. We continue to have support groups meeting in our building every week.

Our Annual Meeting was held on Sunday, February 9. Here are some highlights from the meeting:

Cyndy Traverso was re-elected to the council as Treasurer. Thank you to Janice Christofferson for her work on the financial reports with Cyndy.

Jim Traverso was elected for the Nominating Committee.

Lurlee Shutkin was elected as the Auditor. Thank you to Lurlee for working through the auditing process. And to all of our Council members and staff for their work getting the annual report out to the congregation.

The Council announced that we will be forming a Credentialing Committee to administer our new credentialing policy for licensing and ordination and we need volunteers to serve on the



committee. If you are interested, see Chrystal during fellowship or email the church office at trinitychurchlivingston@gmail.com

Pastor Anne will be holding a new members class soon and inviting those who have joined us in worship on Sundays but have yet to become members. Look for information in your email or on our website calendar.

Our missions and outreach this year included the Good Neighbors Mission, Lillian's closet toy and clothing drive, Livingston food pantry support, and

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caring for our congregation.

Thank you to Karen Reichey and all of those who helped Karen with our Good Neighbors mission.

The property development committee reports that the Habitat for Humanity collaboration is on hold and the committee is exploring other possibilities for our property. Thank you to Mary Chu, Pastor Anne, and Rich Holowczak for gathering information for the committee.

We ended 2024 with an \$8,400 deficit. Cyndy highlighted that the approved budget for 2025 has Trinity at a \$34,000 loss, so we need to either increase giving or find other forms of income. We don't have enough savings in the bank to stay open for more than a few years at that rate of loss.

If you did not receive a copy and would like a copy of the 2024 Trinity Church Annual Report, please call or email the church office.

Our next Council meeting will be on February 23. If there is any new business that we should consider please notify a council member.

Please pray for our church that we may continue our mission to be a place of love and grace.

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 Reichey, Missions*

Trinity Reporter

DECEMBER & JANUARY

Welcome to 2025! Here's a look back at December and January at Trinity.

Once again the Trinity toy drive was a huge blessing! Sonya from Lillian's Closet picks up the toys each year and we filled her car again! Thanks to **Karen R** for the handmade doll clothing that she packed in with new dolls. We also had a neighbor drop off brand new baby clothing and we included those with the toy drive.

Trinity joined with other Livingston churches for a carol sing in December at local assisted living and nursing home facilities. Thank you to **Pastor Anne, Cyndy T, Jen O, Hannah O and Henry O** for lending their singing voices to the carol.

The Trinity women's Christmas party (photos below) is an annual tradition at Trinity and



Trinity Women's Christmas Party

this year did not disappoint. The party was complete with delicious food and a white elephant gift exchange. There were several hand-knitted **Nancy O** gnomes, a blanket and a sweater—these are sought-after gifts each year. One gnome looked exactly like Jason Kelce, so I wonder if Nancy is an Eagles fan?! The can of haggis also made a return appearance. The kids had a white elephant gift time of their own before dinner

and a makeup kit was a big hit. They grow up so fast!

After the Flu hit **Yvette, Pastor Anne, Page** and some of the youth game night and the



Trinity Christmas Eve Service

youth retreat had to be canceled. Thankfully everyone was able to rally for the Christmas Eve service and it was beautiful.

Mike M, Abe, Yvette and Rich had a bit of a carol sing around the fire pit before the service. Thank you to **Calvin H** and **Quincy, Rich and Mike** for their musical talents.

Trinity filled 100 Christmas mugs with candy for the Good Neighbor mission to Orange. Thanks to the **Trinity youth group, Karen, Anne, Rebecca W, and Mike.**

After collecting items all year for the Good Neighbor Christmas mission to Orange, it was time to pack up the backpacks with all the good things! Thank you to our Friday night backpack assembly crew: **Mike M, Marty W, Pastor Anne, Kevin, and Andy P.** The packing was quick and the cars were loaded.

Due to the freezing weather and snow, the trip to Orange was postponed a week, but the men were ready for us when we arrived in Orange on Saturday 12/28. We learn something new each time we talk with the men receiving backpacks. This year many of them were eager to tell

us about their children and show us photos. It is such a blessing each year to engage with our neighbors. Thank you to Karen who directs the mission and works tirelessly to bring it all together each year. Thank you to those who helped distribute the backpacks and other items: **Mike M, Kevin, Andy P, Fred P, Rebecca W, Karen R, and Pastor Anne.**

Sue G and John G were able to spend time with family for Christmas and we hear they had a good time with grandson Arlo!

Ralph T and John G battled through illness at the start of the new year and **Sue G** was under the weather too. Trinity gifted them some delicious soup and bread to help in their recovery.

We are happy to offer our Sunday worship services online, especially to those who can't make it in-person due to illness or the weather. Thank you Lord for streaming!

We held the last church council meeting of 2024 in December to finalize the Trinity Annual meeting dates and information. Each of the council

members were busy at the start of January writing their reports. A huge “thank you” to **Janice C** and **Cyndy T** for creating the financial reports.

The youth group has been growing under the supervision of **Mike M.** It has been so much fun having game night with the teens too — it’s great to get to know them! Thank you to **Abby C** for helping out with the teens on Tuesday nights.

Our game night on 1/25 was a lot of fun (and competitive!) we played *Ticket to Ride*. We sure missed our friend **Ralph T**— a usual enthusiastic attendee at game night—and are continuing to pray for his full recovery. We are sure he is in good hands with daughter **Adrienne** taking good care of him!

As bitter cold crept into the area, Trinity’s water heater sprang a leak and had to be replaced. The last replacement was 14 years ago, so it was a good run!

We look forward to the season of Lent which begins on Wednesday, March 5.

As always, you can find a calendar of activities on our website at <https://www.trinitychurchlivingston.org/>



FROM THE TRINITY STAFF

A very big THANK YOU to members and friends of Trinity Church for your generous gifts. We are truly blessed to be part of Trinity’s mission to be a place of love and grace. It means so much to all of the staff that we get to work and worship with you every week. Please continue to pray that the works of our hands and feet always glorify God, and we will continue to pray for you as you journey with Jesus!

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Anne, Mike, Calvin,
and Uvette

FAITH & FELLOWSHIP

Teen Nights: Tuesdays 7 pm and Fridays 6:30 pm

All youth ages 13-17 are welcome to join in a night of fellowship, games and fun. Tuesdays we have snacks, Friday nights we serve pizza. Youth ministries director Mike supervises. Tuesday night we are happy to have the help of Abby C also. All adult participants are background checked. **We are still looking for adult volunteers to help supervise on Friday night. If you are interested, contact Mike.**

Thursday Night Bible Study: 2/13, 2/20, 2/27

In February, we will finish with *The Sermon on the Mount* study.

Game Night Saturday: Friday 2/22 & 3/29

Let's get together for some light-hearted fun one Saturday of the month from 7pm-9pm. We'll play games- bring some snacks to share and just enjoy one another's company. **Please check our website calendar for game night dates as they may change.**

Weekday Prayer Meetings (virtual):

Wednesday 8:30 am & Thursdays 8 pm

All are welcome! Join in on Zoom Wednesday 8:30 am & Thursdays at 8:00 pm. Look for a link in your email. Send your prayer request to Pastor Anne at TrinityLivPastor@gmail.com or give us a call and leave a message.

Mission & Makers: Wednesday, 2/26 & 3/26

Everyone is welcome! We meet 11 am at the church and work on mission related tasks. If you have any questions, ask Karen R or call or email the church office.

Always check our online calendar for updates at
<http://www.trinitychurchlivingston.org>



Ash Wednesday Open House: 3/5, 8:30 am-5:30 pm

Lent is right around the corner so mark your calendars for the Ash Wednesday open house. Pastor Anne will be at the church for the imposition of ashes. There will be interactive stations set up in the sanctuary. Feel free to drop in!

Lenten Dinner & Bible Study: Thursdays 3/13, 3/20, 3/27, 4/3, 4/10

We come together in fellowship hall for dinner at 6:30 pm. The Bible study begins at 7 pm. Come for one or both! You may bring a dessert to share if you like. Check your email for updates on the Bible study and zoom link if you need to join virtually.

Palm Sunday Brunch: Sunday 4/13

The youth group and Trinity staff will cook a brunch! This event is a direct fundraiser for the youth summer retreat. Please come and support the youth group.

Maundy Thursday service: 4/17 at 7 pm

Good Friday service: 4/18 at 7 pm

Easter Sunrise Service: 4/20 at 5:45 am

Easter Sunday service: 4/20 at 11 am

MISSIONS & MORE



Trinity offers many opportunities for mission work and this year is no exception. We are looking for a volunteer to contact businesses about donations for our missions. Also, if you are on Buy Nothing Livingston, you can post for donations. See Karen R if you are interested in either of these opportunities.

Please see Karen R during fellowship if you would like more information on mission opportunities or you can email her at karenrei@comcast.net or call the church office.



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***.

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

CLOTHING S-M-L

Coats	Windbreakers
Heavy zipper hoodies	Warm hats & scarves
Gloves	Sweatshirts & Hoodies
Shoes, boots & sneakers sizes 7-8-9	Socks
Thermal underwear	Jeans, slacks & sweatpants
T-shirts: Long sleeve & short sleeve	

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 Lillian'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.



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!

The Livingston food pantry let us know that their shelves often go empty after the holiday season. Please consider donating cooking oil, canned foods, and boxed milk. Please do not donate anything that requires eggs or butter to make (like Macaroni and Cheese boxes or cake mixes), those receiving the food usually do not have access to butter or eggs. 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).



TRINITY CHURCH

a place for love and grace.



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Apply
Passage

And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."

Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." "Revelation 21:5