

The Messenger

MARCH/APRIL 2026

The angel said to the women,
"Do not be afraid, for I know that
you are looking for Jesus, who was
crucified. He is not here; he has
risen, just as he said."

Matthew 28:5-6

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Event Calendars can be found online at
TrinityChurchLivingston.org

FROM THE PASTOR

GOD'S HOLY DARKNESS



Daylight Savings Time happened....again...

.....this means we lost an hour of sleep...again

(...mild jet lag and we didn't even go anywhere and always on a Sunday-- of all days—says the Pastor!)

This is not my favorite practice. (at least when we 'fall back' we gain an hour sleep!)

Now, I know, I know, this is to maximize the number of waking hours of daylight. (I get it- sort of...) I understand that

it is now lighter in the evening and I understand that because of this practice of abruptly 'springing ahead' an hour, that this move toward more light happens literally overnight- no waiting. BUT- this also means, for those of us up really early, that it is now a bit darker in the morning. It reminds me of repositioning our almost too small comforter. If I flip it so we have more fabric lengthwise, we are then a bit short width

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wise (which necessitates yanking the covers back from my husband at 3am as he rolls over and takes them with him!) If I flip it so that there is more fabric width wise- his feet stick out the bottom (but only a little bit....this seems like a fair solution to me, but I digress.) My point is that it's the same here- we aren't actually 'adding' (or subtracting) anything- just repositioning time. Now I know, soon it will be lighter in the morning as well. I really do, and I'm looking forward to that (I want ALL the light) And I suppose this is why we do this. We are like plants- we need light. Many of us crave light. It can often make us feel better. When I was pregnant with Rebecca I was stuck on bedrest for the last 2 months of my pregnancy. Every now and again, on a sunny day, I would gently slide off the end of the bed and sit in the sun. Sometimes Marty and I would have a picnic right there on the bedroom floor in our circle of sunlight. Sunlight is warm,

comforting, and packed with vitamin D. It's good for us in many ways. So, I get it. I am in favor of more sun, but still... darkness isn't all bad. It's just as needed as sunlight. Darkness regulates our circadian rhythm which aids in sleep and can reduce the risk of heart attack, cancer, and diabetes (thank you Google). In fact, there are a few places on earth that don't see any darkness for 3-6 months (a phenomenon known as Midnight Sun, Polar Day or White Nights) and in those places human biology suffers. Mental fatigue sets in and some become disoriented. Perhaps darkness is just as needed as light.

In Scripture there are themes of light vs dark throughout. 'Darkness' is largely attributed to separation from God. It is often used as a metaphor for sin and death, for ignorance and evil. John writes- in speaking about Jesus- "The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:5). Jesus is the Light of the

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world- come to light our path and dispel the 'darkness' in our lives and in the world (amen). And one day- it is the presence of God's glory that will light the world (with no need of sun or moon) (Rev 21:23). However, it should be remembered that these themes of light and dark are metaphors and there is good that happens in the dark too (even in Scripture). It was Moses that met God on Mount Sinai in 'thick darkness' (Exodus 20:21), Jesus often went off by Himself specifically at night to pray (Mark 1:35, Luke 6:12), and Nicodemus came to Jesus at night (John 3:1-21). Poor Nicodemus gets a bad rap. There is much ink spilled about how he came to Jesus in the night and didn't step out into the light. Nicodemus, the one who stayed in the shadows and missed following Jesus. But did he? The text doesn't say that and later in John's account it is Nicodemus who is seen trying to ensure that Jesus gets a fair trial (John 7:50-52). And again, later still, it is Nicodemus who is there to aid

in preparing Jesus' body for burial (John 19:39). Also- yes, Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, instead of in the sight of others- specifically the other Pharisees- BUT he came to Jesus! He sought Jesus out! And how often do we come to Jesus in the late night/early morning- in the dark- with our deepest troubles, with the prayer requests we don't say aloud? Coming to Jesus at night, is a good and holy thing.

A couple of years ago I came across a children's book that gave me a new perspective on this light/dark dichotomy. It's titled God's Holy Darkness by Sharei Green and Beckah Selnick- illustrated by Nikki Faison. Throughout the book Scriptural story references are given from the Old and New Testaments to the way that God moves, operates, and is present in the darkness. God's Holy Darkness brings forth new life, in ways that are often not immediate, that hard to detect (like the darkness of a tomb) and yet change everything. From the sky turning dark on the Fri-

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day that Jesus died and was laid in the tomb, until the stone was rolled away in the garden on the third day, the people waited, but God was doing something in that darkness. God still is.

During Lent, we are reminded once more, through the stories of Scripture, that we too wait in the darkness. We too journey from captivity to freedom, in the darkness. But we are reminded that we do not occupy this space alone. God is with us in the darkness. And it's been my experience, that it is in this Holy Darkness that we often sense God's presence the most. It's the place where we wrestle, like Nicodemus, with our questions, and it becomes the place that our faith grows (even if it's not visible quite yet). God creates in the darkness. And God continues to create-within each one of us (as we slowly die to self and are reborn to new life).

My prayer for each of us is that we would continue to seek God- in the light- in the darkness- with all the things on our hearts. That we would

be found hidden in God as we-like so many seeds planted in the spring- grow in God's Holy Darkness.

Peace to you as we continue our Lenten journey to the cross, to the tomb, to new life.
Amen

Pastor Anne



YOUTH MINISTRIES

SUBMISSION TO CHRIST ISN'T SAFETY



“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well.”

Matthew. 5:39-40

I started a new job this month as the project manager for a non-profit music program in Orange, NJ. As part of my orientation I am taking a course in security initiatives as they relate to community arts programming. It is a zoom

class where representatives from art-focused nonprofits learn approaches to defining and solving the security risks that are unique to their work.

The diversity of the organizations and the challenges they face is both interesting and revealing. Some deal with open door policies and have to consider ways to permit or prohibit access to certain areas of their facility in ways that don't choke out the life of their art center because of too many rules. Other groups deal with online doxing, harass-

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ment and threats because their brand of theater is too political or platforms a marginalized group in a region of the country that doesn't like "their kind."

For my part, we are building outdoor free music programming across the city and throughout the year that celebrates and brings attention to Orange's diverse population including multiple immigrant communities. Because our events are in public spaces we are in danger of being used as bait for particular federal actors that might be looking to add to their undocumented detention numbers in the area. Just last week, my first on the job, we went outside because we were alerted that I.C.E. agents were on the block. In the eight minutes it took us to go outside, they had abducted the undocumented parents of a girl roughly Bella's age, leaving their truck in the middle of the road to be towed by the city.

In the security training the host offered a quote that struck me.

"Submission is not safety."

I cannot find who the quote

is attributed to, but it was offered specifically in the context of human rights and how they relate to organizational security around initiatives that work in hostile environments for certain marginalized groups. The host, Zia of Mazorca Facilitation, then offered how this idea grounds their approach to organizational security. They propose the following...

- Security is a collective matter.
- Security work is care work.
- Security is relational.
- Security work impacts us in different ways.
- Security work requires us to take ownership of the process.

I found all of this very intriguing from my vantage point of a Christian whose fundamental ethos is largely about surrender. Is there a difference between surrender and submission? I don't think so in the context of following Christ. And He commands us himself to turn the other cheek when faced with the lashing hand of our enemies.

The larger point that Zia made in her presentation was

that by backing away from groups or individuals that threaten the human rights of others, even if they present authority and aren't threatening our rights, we are at risk for losing ground for our own beliefs and freedoms in the future.

It reminds me of how Christ warns us that we sin already if we think adulterous or murderous thoughts. To me the important part of Christ's word isn't the admonition or judgement in this proclamation, it is a warning to not pay attention to such thoughts without surrendering them to Christ.

It's about attentiveness and action. We can get lulled into complacency and miss the alarm bells in our own hearts and in the lives of our neighbors.

I dare say I think it is Christ-like to reflect on the following.

Submission to Christ isn't safety.

It is not about hiding away. Jesus tells us to turn the other cheek, but that involves being in striking range in the first place. He tells us the work of

following Him is risky. We are too quick to silo ourselves, as individuals, churches, denominations and an entire faith, away from discomfort. Shame on me for needing to hear this from those who do not give Him the glory I claim to give.

I am struck by the fact that our work as followers of Christ—despite the fact that we must each work out our own faith, and can follow Christ's teaching and example to pray quietly and seek solitude—is largely collective and relational. Our work as Christians is care work. It is risky, and it asks us, as individuals as flawed as we are, to take ownership of the process.

Mike



FROM THE COUNCIL CHAIR



The Trinity Church Council sends you best wishes for a happy Spring. We are happy that the weather is getting warmer. As we journey through Lent towards Easter at Trinity, we look forward to seeing you in person or on Zoom.

At our March 8th council meeting, the first meeting since our 2025 Annual meeting in February, we unanimously agreed that the 2025 officers would retain their positions in 2026 as follows:

Chair – Chrystal Veazey-Watson
Vice Chair – Mary Chu

Secretary – Jennifer Otterbine Yoo
Treasurer – Cyndy Traverso
Financial Secretary & Properties – Rich Holowczak
Missions - Karen Reichey

We are working toward completing ordination process with Pastor Anne. As our process requires, she has completed the CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) course and has submitted her paper. We intend to complete her paper review and interview in time to ordain her on Pentecost Sunday, May 24th.

Mike M. reported that the Youth group will be host-

ing their Palm Sunday fund-raising brunch on March 29th after service.

In response to a motion by Rich H we approved repairs by Scott's Roofing needed to the vent pipe, ceiling fan, gutters, fascia, and siding at the Manse.

Cyndy T presented the financial statements for 1/31/26 and 2/28/26. Of concern to the council is that our envelope and loose offering income is 6% below budget. Also, due to the snowstorms we spent 77% of our snow removal budget before the last snowstorm.

We have been meeting with MCC our new building partners both parties agree that the arrangement has been working very well. We are in the process of amending the agreement to address issues that we have identified.

Our next meeting will be April 19th, if there is anything that you think the council should discuss, please contact a council member.

I thank the staff, volunteers,

and council members for everything you do to make Trinity "A place for love and grace".

I close with my favorite verse, Galatians 5:22-23 ". . . the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things."

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

JANUARY-FEBRUARY

New Jersey had a lot of snow. We are still digging out from 20+ inches of snow as we write this Messenger.

In between storms, we sent **Bella M** off to Italy on her study abroad adventure with prayers and good cheer!

The Trinity annual meeting was held on Sunday, 2/8 where we discussed our new building partnership, snow removal costs, the 2026 budget and elected council members. Thank you to everyone who attended and asked questions. This is YOUR church and it is important to hear your voice! Thank you to **Chrystal V-W** (Council Chair), **Rich H** (Financial Secretary), and **Jen Y** (Recording Secretary) for standing for reelection to the council. Your service is much appreciated. If you are interested in service on the council, please talk to a council member.

The Lunar New Year lunch is always so fun with

lots of fellowship and food! Thank you to our building partners, the Taiwanese Presbyterian Church for hosting us.

The Lenten Thursday night dinner and Bible study led by **Pastor Anne** launched on Thursday, 2/19 and it promises to be a really interesting study. We will journey through the book, *Why Did Jesus Have to Die*, by Adam Hamilton. You can join in person or on Zoom!

On 2/22, we said farewell to **Robert L** as he moves back to North Carolina this month. Robert joined Trinity last year and has been a wonderful member of the Trinity family. There were tears, and prayers, and a celebration of God's good grace. We will miss him, but he promises to keep in touch!

Trinity gathered on Tuesday, 2/24 to make

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sandwiches and pack a meal bag for local soup kitchens. Thank you to **Pastor Anne, Jerry V, Mike M., Malachi, Abe M, Rich and Yvette H** for making and packing sandwiches. We made over 100 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and packed them up with a fruit cup and snacks. **Livingston Neighbors Helping Neighbors** provides pick up and delivery of the meal bags. Thank you to **Nick Santelli** for picking

up and delivering the meals to the soup kitchen in Newark. There are several soup kitchens in Newark, Irvington and Montclair where Nick delivers and he said, “People line up at 4 am. There are people who will not get a meal today, even with all the donations.” We thank God for Nick and his ministry and for the opportunity to help.

Our February game night was an epic game of Pirateer! Thanks to **Mike M, Abe M, Malachi, Ralph T and Adrienne T.** Go forward we will have an all ages game night the last Saturday of the month. Thank you to **Mike M** for hosting the game nights! Our next game night in Saturday, 3/28. All ages are welcome.

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A memorial service was held for Justine Weinberg who passed on December 30. Justine is a former Trinity member, former Trinity office secretary, and sister to **Janice C.** Justine was a beloved sister, wife, mother and grandmother. It was a wonder-filled celebration of life and it was good to hear so many stories about Justine's life. We prayed with and for the family and hold them close as they grieve their loss.

Pastor Anne's mother-in-law Nadine passed from this life on January 26 after a long illness. To say she was beloved is an understatement as anyone who spent any time with Nadine would remember. A few folks from Trinity were able to attend the memorial service and hear from **Pastor Anne, Marty W, Rebecca W** and other family members about Nadine's life. We continue to pray for the Weinberg family as they grieve.

We are just beginning the season of Lent and it promises to bring many opportunities for fellowship at Trinity. For up-to-date Trinity event calendars, scan the QR code below or visit our website at TrinityChurchLivingston.org.



FAITH & FELLOWSHIP



THURSDAY NIGHT DINNER & BIBLE STUDY

All are welcome! We meet in fellowship hall (and online for those far away). Dinner is at 6:30 pm with the Bible study beginning at 7 pm, and closing with prayer at 8 pm. For Lent, we will journey through the book, *Why Did Jesus Have to Die* by Adam Hamilton. Call or email Pastor Anne if you would like to be on the email list for updates and Zoom links.

PALM SUNDAY BRUNCH, 3/29 AFTER WORSHIP

The youth group and Trinity staff will cook a brunch! This event is a direct fundraiser for the youth summer retreat, but also a great time of fellowship! Please come and support the youth group. All are welcome.

MAUNDY THURSDAY DINNER, 4/2 AT 6:30 PM

We'll meet in fellowship hall to share dinner at 6:30 pm followed by a short service at 7 pm including music, scripture and Communion. All are welcome.

GOOD FRIDAY COMMUNITY SERVICE, 4/3 AT NOON

This is a joint service with other Livingston churches. We meet in the sanctuary for to hear from clergy about the Good Friday story.

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GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE, 4/3 AT 7 PM

This is a solemn service with music, prayer and Gospel readings in the sanctuary. All are welcome.

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE: 4/5 AT 5:45 AM

Yes, it's early! We meet outside the church around the fire, sing songs and hear from the Gospel (you can wear your PJs!). Don't miss this time of reflection and praise as we bring the light back into the sanctuary to mark Easter morning.

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICE: 4/5 AT 11 AM

He is risen, indeed! Come sing praise songs and hear the good news! Please note there is no Sunday School on Easter.

GAME NIGHT: SATURDAY: 3/28 (ALL AGES)

Let's get together in fellowship hall for some light-hearted fun 7pm-9pm. We'll play games and have snacks!

SANDWICHES FOR THE SOUP KITCHEN, 4/14 STARTING AT 6:30 PM

We will meet in fellowship hall on Tuesday, 4/14 to make PB&J sandwiches for local soup kitchens. Our goal is 150 sandwiches. The sandwiches will be packed into paper bags along with snacks. This project is in partnership with Livingston Neighbors Helping Neighbors which runs the Livingston food bank.

PRAYER MEETINGS (VIRTUAL): WEDNESDAYS 8:30 AM, AND THURSDAYS 8 PM

Look for a link in your weekly Trinity email for these online prayer meetings. Send your prayer request to Pastor Anne at TrinityLivPastor@gmail.com.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL: 10 AM

All adults ages 18 and over are welcome! We meet in the library (Room 2) from 10 am to 10:45 am. If you have any questions, please contact the church office or Pastor Anne.

YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL: 10 AM

All youth are welcome! The youth meet in Room 9 from 10 am to 10:45 am. Our Youth director, Mike M. leads the study. If you have any questions or would like more information, please email Mike at TrinityLivingstonYouth@gmail.com.

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL: 10 AM

Kids pre-k through 5th grade can join Sunday School at 10 am—10:55 am in room 7. We will follow the lectionary with fun activities and learning. We have a rotating list of adult volunteers. If you can help, please sign up on the server worksheet. All volunteers for children's church must be background checked.

TEEN NIGHTS: TUESDAYS & FRIDAYS 6:30 PM

Brawling Hamsters?! God's Monsters?! What's it all about? All youth ages 13-17 are welcome to join the Trinity youth group. We provide a safe space for fellowship, games and fun. Tuesdays we have snacks, Friday nights we serve pizza. Youth ministries director Mike M. supervises. **We are looking for adult volunteers to help supervise on Tuesday and/or Friday nights. If you are interested, contact Mike at TrinityLivingstonYouth@gmail.com.** All adult participants are background checked.

YOUTH BIBLE STUDY: TUESDAYS 8:30 PM-10 PM AFTER YOUTH GROUP

All youth ages 13-17 are welcome to join in! Please email Mike if you would like more information. TrinityLivingstonYouth@gmail.com

MISSIONS & MORE



Trinity is happy to receive donations for its missions. There are several ways to donate. Please reference the lists below. Drop off donations Sundays 10 am—1 pm in the donation boxes near the kitchen or donations can be dropped off any time in the gray outdoor bin near the handicap ramp by the side door.

SOUP KITCHEN BAGGED MEALS

Please consider donating jars of creamy peanut butter, jam (preferable strawberry or grape), and small individually wrapped snacks. Our next sandwich making day is scheduled for Tuesday, April 14. All donations can be left in the food bank donation bin outside fellowship hall.

LIVINGSTON FOOD PANTRY

Please consider donating cooking oil, canned foods, canned tuna, crackers, paper towels, tissues, toilet paper, and boxed milk. The pantry also needs \$50 gift cards to fill in where needed. 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!

FOR MISSION TO MEN

Please consider donating warm gloves (work gloves are best), backpacks (new or gently used).

FOR 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. For check or PayPal donations, please include "MISSIONS—BABY" in the memo.

FOR NEW PARENTS

Laundry detergent/pods, toilet paper, toothpaste, and shampoo. These items are not covered under SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and are greatly needed. This mission is in partnership with Renew Life Center in Paterson, NJ.

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. Keep track of these donations; they are not reported on your year-end letter from the financial secretary.

ADDITIONAL DONATION BINS

All other clothing (women's, men's, children and teens), shoes and used (not broken) small toys can be placed in plastic bags and put into the white donation bins in our parking lot near the playground. Trinity receives a donation from Millennium Textiles for the use of the parking lot space. They do not shred clothing, but their goal is to provide inexpensive, good quality clothing and to keep it out of landfills. This is a woman-owned business working to keep landfills free of useable clothing, shoes, toys and accessories.



a place for love and grace.



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

Join us at 11 AM at 3443 E. Cedar St., Livingston or on Zoom.

Rev. Anne Weinberg, Pastor

(TrinityLivPastor@gmail.com)

Jerry Vargo, Music Director

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Mike Malbrough, Youth Ministries Director

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Apply

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