

Trinity Connections

To Know Christ. To Share
Christ.

March 1, 2021

Pastor's Message

I am excited to partner with you to offer my knowledge and experience as you journey through this time in between. I have been actively serving in interim ministry for more than ten years, some of that right here at Trinity, and bring all that I have learned from my work with other congregations to bear here. This time is a unique opportunity for the congregation to reflect on your ministry and your future.

There will be a lot happening during this time. Of course, all of the everyday ministries such as worship, education, community outreach, and care of members will all carry on. We will also add other things into the mix. During this time in between, I will work closely with the council and other leaders to take the congregation through a self-study. With this we will look at the history of the congregation and reflect on its strengths and weaknesses, shortcomings and accomplishments. It is important to understand where you have come from. We will look at who you are now and who are your neighbors.

Through all of this process, we are seeking to understand and discern where God is calling Bethel for the future. To do this, we all need to be active in prayer.

This is an inspiring time in the life of this congregation and I am anxious to get started. This work will involve the whole congregation. There will be time to tell your stories about what this congregation has meant to you, how you have grown through the life of this community. I love to hear these stories. It is a true joy of this ministry.

In the coming months, I will ask you all to participate in some small group meetings to share about your experience at Trinity. Your input will be very important. And of course, hold in prayer, this congregation, your leaders, and the synod staff who will work with you in calling your next settled pastor.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at (559) 904-1686. I am excited to see where God is leading you.

USING VANCO FOR OFFERINGS

Many people are preferring to use online payments with their computers or their smart phones instead of paying with a check.

We are making a service available for online giving to the church, even if you don't use online banking.

If you want to do your giving online, you may make payments with your credit/debit card or with information from your checking account through a company many churches use called VANCO.

To use Vanco online (from a computer), go to: <https://secure.myvanco.com/YJ0M>

To use the Vanco app on your phone download the VANCO app called "VANCO Mobile Faith Engagement."

Once you are on the website or have downloaded the app, find our church by searching for Trinity Lutheran Church of Porterville. The rest is self-explanatory. They will ask for address information in order that you can get accurate tax documents.

There is a small fee the church will pay for the service (1% for ACH bank information, 2.75% for debit/credit cards). You will be given the choice to increase your giving by that amount in order to cover the service charges. This is only if you feel led to do so.

You are still welcome to support the church in the regular way you are accustomed to. We are just providing this service to those who prefer it.

Bibles, Books and Beyond

New Lenten Bible Study (Email or Postal Delivery) has begun through email. If you would like to join us, contact Ann Marie or Lisa at the office to have it mailed. All are welcome!

Building a Biblical Library in Your Home—Part 2

In December's newsletter I mentioned the three biblical resources that I find "indispensable" in a home biblical library:

1) a Bible atlas, 2) a Bible dictionary, and 3) *The Dictionary of Biblical Images*.

In Part 1 of this series I introduced at some length *The Dictionary of Biblical Images*. If you have not yet run out and bought yours, you are forgiven—but don't be surprised if I don't find other ways to introduce you to this unique resource in the future. Also, I am trying to locate a source for used copies that would be a little less expensive.

Today in Part 2, I want to recommend a very handy and inexpensive Bible atlas—*The Student Bible Atlas* (Revised Edition) created by Tim Dowley and published by Fortress Press. There are many atlases that are more comprehensive and include a great deal more commentary, so it may not be the one for you. But if you would like a biblical atlas that is up-to-date, inexpensive (approx. \$12), portable (32 page paperback), and designed for general readers, I recommend *The Student Bible Atlas*. The Introduction describes the purpose for the book: "We have not attempted to produce a book for university professors and research students—they have plenty readily available—but a clear straight-forward set of maps (30) that will provide an accessible backdrop to the biblical narrative." This atlas is widely available for purchase online or through order from your favorite bookstore.

You may not be able to travel this year—but maybe maps can whet your curiosity and help satisfy your wanderlust.

Update on Valley Adult Day Services (VADS)/Service Opportunity

Michael Carley

I have been working with Valley Adult Day Services (VADS) and serving on their Board of Directors since last August. This organization has been invaluable to the community in general, and our family in particular. Because of the services they provide—a place to be during the day for adults with dementia or other needs who cannot be home alone—I was able to get another year and a half with my wife at home.

I mentioned (in a previous Trinity newsletter) that VADS has some challenges and we've been working on them. I am happy to report that while we aren't flush with funding, we are now likely solvent through June. In addition, our Executive Director recently retired, but we have a new person in that role who was able to get licensing approval.

Most importantly, as of Monday, February 22nd, VADS is back open, providing respite care for its participants.

We have another need now. We've had some resignations from the board recently and could use new members. There are no special talents or skills required, just a desire to serve an important organization in the community. We meet once a month.

If you would like to put forward your name for consideration, or if you have questions about serving, please contact Richard Eckhoff at wildgoose@ocsnet.net

Lutheran Disaster Response Help Needed

The last year has been full of changes and challenges for all of us. Now we are again witnessing a devastating disaster amid the ongoing pandemic. As neighbors in Christ, we have an opportunity to share God's hope, healing and renewal with each other.

Beginning Feb. 14, a polar vortex descended over the United States. Subfreezing temperatures and heavy snow swept across the country, impacting millions of people. The harsh conditions severely impacted Southern states, such as Texas, which lack the infrastructure to handle the freezing temperatures and record-setting snow and ice. This has led to power, food and water shortages throughout the region. At its peak, 4.5 million homes and businesses in Texas were without power. With bursting pipes and broken water systems, around 10 million Texans are facing water disruptions. As temperatures rise, melting ice and snow is expected to cause more water damage.

Lutheran Disaster Response is collaborating with the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod, the Southwestern Texas Synod, the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod, and Lutheran Social Services Disaster Response. Congregations are already conducting relief efforts such as supplying water, food and generators to those in need and opening their doors to serve as shelters. Long-term recovery may include repairing water-damaged homes, disaster case management and supporting vulnerable populations.

Please give today. Your gifts ensure that our church will be able to provide help and hope for those whose lives have been devastated by the severe storms in Texas. Gifts designated for "U.S. Severe Storms" will be used entirely (100%) for direct response.

Together, we can help provide immediate and long-lasting support for those whose lives have been impacted by severe winter storms and subfreezing temperatures in Texas. Doing this we reflect Christ's light and hope to our neighbors in their time of need. For updates on this and other disasters, follow Lutheran Disaster Response on Facebook.

Go here to donate:

<https://community.elca.org/us-storms?erid=3d79b9ec-3e25-4582-b26f-dfb374f3574c&trid=3d79b9ec-3e25-4582-b26f-dfb374f3574c>

From Pastor Jodi:

I would like to invite each of you to a weekly Bible study where we will look at the text that I will be preaching on the following week. This study will happen each Sunday on Zoom at 4 p.m. I would love to have you join me.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88973018764?pwd=RE9UT2wybGNMOUITQmNIM3dmRDkvUT09>



New Prayer Concerns

Muriel Josten - for healing of her knee replacement surgery

June Mowles - congratulations on the birth of her first GREAT Great Grandson!

Continuing Prayer Concern

Gloria Miller - for continued healing

Peggy Holt - for healing and comfort due to health problems

Julie Elston - for continued health concerns

Brian Nelson - for continuing health concerns

La Vida Nueva UMC - for God to prosper our partnership in the gospel

The Sierra-Pacific Synod - for wisdom and a spirit of true fellowship in our shared ministries

Those unable to worship with us:

June Mowles - Sierra Hills

Avis Lindroos - North Dakota

Phyllis Rengstorff - Kaweah Manor, Visalia

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Walk-Thru Communion

March 14th 1:00pm-2:00pm

Weekly Lenten Worship

You Tube Channel - Every Wednesday through March 24th

EASTER CELEBRATION APRIL 4TH!!

This year we will be having an outside service for Easter. Our service will begin at 11:00am. Please bring your mask and a chair if you wish you wish.

EASTER DAY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We will need help setting up and cleaning up after our Easter service on Sunday, April 4th. If you would like to help please contact either Julie or Lisa.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Julie McIntosh	March 1
June Mowles	March 25
Bob Johnson	March 27
Linn & Karin Wiseman	March 1
Art & Karen Cardell	March 25