



TRINITY TIMES

The Newsletter of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Hampstead, NC

www.holytrinityhampstead.com

March 2017

The Passion

from Pamela †

We will have a new and different Lenten program this year. On **Wednesdays at 6:30 pm**, we will listen to a Cantata of the Passion by musician and composer Marcus Hummon, commissioned by Christ Church Cathedral in Nashville, TN. (Note: A "cantata" is a piece of music for singers and instruments that usually has several parts – called movements – and often has a religious subject.)



There is a short book which accompanies the music co-authored by Marcus' wife, Becca Stevens. Becca is an Episcopal priest and founder of Thistle Farms, a ministry that works with women who have been abused, trafficked and addicted. The mission statement for the ministry is "Love Heals."

Marcus wrote these words about his work:

"I looked at writing the 'Passion' as a love song to Jesus. Jesus's story is my story. It is the tale I have been told again and again from as far back as I can remember. It is my heritage and my family heirloom. I cannot think of a nobler, more divine soul than the Jesus I have grown to love. Given the opportunity to set a chapter of his story to music I decided to jump on it!"

And as for the question of whether or not I should write a new cantata, on a subject that has been so beautifully rendered by no less than J.S. Bach and so many other great composers, I am reminded of a beautiful passage from the first chapter of Ecclesiastes:

All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they continue to flow.

I am simply offering another small stream to the Sea, knowing that the Sea is never full!"

Appeal for 2017

Operating Budget Relief

(A talk given by Roger Rick to the Parish on 19 March)

I attended my first meeting of the Holy Trinity Vestry in January, and on behalf of the Vestry I apologize to you for taking time during worship, but we have a serious problem and we need to talk about it. Your Vestry is charged with handling the temporal affairs of the Parish, meaning they have to figure out how to operate the Parish with the funds available, and the problem we have has to do with money.

I am NOT going to take this time to bring you a stewardship message. You've already heard them. For instance: "Stewardship is everything I do with everything I have after I say 'I believe'."or: "It all comes from God. Everything I have and everything I am comes from God. And the ability to give some of what I have and some of what I am back to God is both a joy and a pleasure." Some of you believe that, and some of you probably don't, but it doesn't matter right now because that's not our immediate problem. Of course, if you would like to discuss stewardship with me you could talk to me, call me, write me, email me, text me, I don't do Twitter, and I'm not on Facebook.

I am NOT going to tell you pithy stories here about the epiphanies I have experienced in my life through giving back to God. And that's too bad, because they're interesting stories. Of course, if you would like to hear about my epiphanies you could always talk to me, call me, write me, email me, text me, I don't do Twitter, and I'm not on Facebook.

Our serious problem is this: Two years ago, this Parish adopted a deficit operating budget. We planned to spend \$7,881 more in operating expenses than we projected to bring in. The fact

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that we adopted a deficit budget is, in itself, indicative of a problem. And I remember that a number of things were reduced or removed from that budget. At the same time, at the beginning of that year, we had enough available unrestricted funds left over from previous years to make up for the projected deficit. So we adopted the deficit operating budget. And the underlying problem? Well, like the metaphorical can, we kicked it down the road.

Last year we adopted another deficit operating budget. We planned to spend \$6,418 more operating the Parish than we projected to bring in. Once again, we cut even more items from our operating budget. Once again, we had enough in unrestricted funds left over from prior years to cover the projected operating deficit, so once again we adopted the deficit operating budget, and once again we kicked that metaphorical can further down the road.

Early in January I sat in a finance committee meeting with our Treasurer Bob Muller, and Gary Miller... Mother Pam was also there. We met to try to construct an operating budget for this year for Bob to propose to the Vestry. It was painful. In the process, we pretty much cut every operating expense we could possibly cut and still have a functioning Parish that looked like the one you are used to.

Here is where we ended up. If you believe the optimistic view of the finance committee as a whole (that's Gary and myself, Norm Gopsill was out of town), the operating deficit this year is projected be about \$7,000 for a totally bare bones budget. Bob Muller feels the actual operating deficit is likely to be closer to \$9,000. He has been doing this a long time and refers to the projected \$7,000 operating deficit as a "faith budget." In either case, what we are projecting is an operating deficit for the third year in a row. The difference this year is that we only have about \$4,300 in unrestricted funds left over from prior years, and that's not nearly enough to cover the projected operating deficit this year.

If we once again do nothing, we will arrive at the end of the year unable to pay for the heat, lights, salaries and the other minimal costs we incur to operate the Parish. If we let it go that far, we will lose our full-time priest. Mother Pam will retire. Her compensation here is already below Diocesan recommendations, and it is quite likely we would not be able to afford to replace her with another full-time

priest. We would be left without a rector. And, if we let it go that far, we will probably be left without a music program.

The Parish would not disappear. We will borrow a priest or bring in a supply priest once in a while, but it won't look or feel like it does today. So, to finish the metaphor, the can has come to the end of the road.

We have a short term cash flow problem and, beyond that, a need to work to turn this Parish into the vibrant community of faith that God calls us to be, bringing the good news of the risen Christ and the nearness of the Kingdom of God to the greater community and to the world.

There are ways to do that, but first things first. **We need to raise somewhere between \$2,700 and \$4,700 in additional funds just to make it to the end of the year. If we raise \$7,000 (and have a little faith) we will meet our operating expenses for the first time in three years.**

I think it is important to the Parish that we resolve the short term cash flow problem now, and let the Treasurer and the Vestry expend their time and energy working on our long term problem. So I was sitting in the Finance Committee meeting and all of this quickly became clear to me. Afterward I went home and I told Jeanne to write a check to Holy Trinity. It certainly wasn't enough to cover the entire operating shortfall, but it was enough to make a difference. I took that check to my very first Vestry meeting in January and gave it to Bob and said "I think you are going to need this."

My appeal to you is that I hope one or two or a dozen (or all) of you will join me and we can cover the projected shortfall for this year, give Bob and the Vestry a small amount of breathing room, and maybe even balance this year's operating budget. A corollary to that is an appeal to **increase your**

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	Month Ended Jan. 31, 2017	Year to Date Jan. 31, 2017	Annual Budget 2017
Pledged Offerings	\$14,580.00	\$14,580.00	\$118,448.00
Total Income	\$18,063.74	\$18,063.74	\$138,058.00
Total Expenses	\$ 9,016.07	\$ 9,016.07	\$144,916.00

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pledge. But, whether or not you do increase your pledge, I appeal to you to **keep up with your pledge.** Historically, according to the Treasurer, this Parish falls short of meeting our pledged giving by somewhere between 6 and 10 percent. Last year the Parish received about \$9,000 less than the amount we had pledged to give. So I appeal to you in this very tight budget year when I am asking folks to contribute additional funds to the operating budget, please, at a minimum, maintain your pledge. It will make a difference.

Finally, I appeal to you to hold us, your Vestry, accountable for dealing with the underlying problem. At the Vestry retreat we agreed to focus on growing the Parish, and expanding the programs for young people. We have a little bit of a fire lit under us right now, and I think you are going to see some results. If you have some ideas, talk to me, call me, write me, email me, text me, I don't do Twitter, and I'm not on Facebook.

Personally, I would like to see a greater focus on our spiritual growth, and I think the membership issues will take care of themselves. I really don't ever want to stand up here and give another talk like this. Jeanne and I have only been here eleven years, but I love this Parish and I love my church family. And remember that can? I want it smashed and trashed. And I promise you that I will work hard toward that end.

A final prayer: *God, I come to you with my brothers and sisters, the Episcopal body of Christ in Hampstead, North Carolina. I ask that you grant us the ability to use the love in our hearts and the collective wisdom of our minds to enable us to do the work here you have given us to do. This I pray in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

Roger Rick, Vestry Liaison to Finance

News & Notes from Outreach

Outreach has a new Chair! Norm Gopsill has agreed to chair this important ministry.

Please join this vital and vibrant part of our life together as a faith community and help those most neglected and needy in our society. **A planning meeting will take place Thursday, March 2nd at 9:30 am.** Please plan to attend and support Norm and the Outreach Ministry. Its rewards are much greater than its responsibilities.



March Birthdays

Birthdays:

4 Baxter Phillips
11 Judy Bradley
15 Gail Boys
Ashley Brown
14 Roger Kersey
19 Joanne Muller
20 Marguerite Ayres



Parish Life

Parish Life Committee recently met to review upcoming events and generate new ideas.

Upcoming events:

March 19, 3:00 pm – Bowling (no experience required)

April 21 – The Duplin Winery's **Murder Mystery Dinner** has been dropped because it sold out before we could get our reservations in.

April 30, 2:00 pm – UNCW Men's Baseball Game vs. Delaware

Early May – Wilmington Water Tour Sunset Cruise with music

May 25, 6:00 pm – Ascension Day Service and Potluck Picnic (Youth Group to provide games)

June 4, 10:00 am – Service and picnic at Topsail Beach, beach house courtesy The Cornettes (TENTATIVE)

July (date TBD) – Dinner at *The Chef and the Farmer* in Kinston, offering creative farm-to-table American fare in an upscale, urban-rustic spot (featured on a PBS series)

September 8-10 – Parish Weekend at Trinity Center

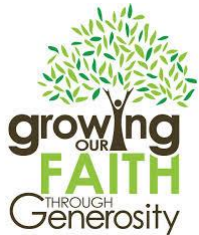
ISO: Responsible adult to schedule and coordinate regular potlucks (after service or on a weekday evening); may or may not include theme or speaker. Contact Pat Gopsill,

Pat Gopsill, Parish Life Ministry

Stewardship: A Matter of the Heart

Most people immediately think of money when they hear the word “stewardship.” But stewardship is so much bigger than finances. It’s really a heart issue – a longing to offer everything we are and have to God. Consider these truths from the Word of God as you prayerfully ask the Lord to make your heart more in tune with His.

Thankfulness: *“In everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus (1 Thessalonians 5:18). A steward’s heart is a thankful heart – but how can we be thankful in everything? It begins with an attitude of gratitude – thanking God for the big and small blessings in our life, and resting on His promises during the difficult times.*



Thoughts: *“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have...” (Hebrews 13:5). Most people think if they had just a little more money, they’d be happier. But contentment isn’t “getting what you want - it’s a mindset of*

wanting what you have.” Contentment comes when we tune out our culture’s relentless pursuit for more, and fix our thoughts and eyes on God who promised to supply all our needs.

Trust: *“Instruct those who are rich in this present world not . . . to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy” (1 Timothy 6:17). Our trust can easily move from God to our bank accounts and abilities. But the only path to peace is to put our trust in God, yielding to His plan and timing for our lives.*

Talk: *“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6: 6-7). Our children may fail to listen, but we know that they seldom fail to imitate us.*

Talents: *“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10). Highly effective stewards see their time and talents as precious gifts from God, and use those gifts to bless others and advance the kingdom of God in their homes, communities, and around the world.*

Treasure: *“Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops” (Proverbs 3:9). When we give, we are demonstrating the depth of our loyalty to Christ and understanding of His grace in our lives. We serve a giving God, and when He lives in our hearts, our love for Him grows, overflowing in generous, sacrificial, and joyful giving to the things He cares about.*



Do you know someone who could use a LAP BLANKET to keep them warm? This would be an excellent gift for an ailing man, someone in a wheelchair, or anyone who needs a hug. If you know of anyone who needs a lap blanket or prayer shawl – sickness, grief, loneliness, new baby – please fill out a form and choose one from the shelf in the Narthex. These were knit or crocheted with love. Please don’t let them sit on the shelf unused. They are blessed and will be a blessing to anyone who receives one. We have special cards to go with them. See Joy Ball or Dolores Phillips.



March 9: *The Woman in Cabin 10* by Ruth Ware
April 13: *Sting* by Sandra Brown
May 11: *Reckless Creed* by Alex Kava

The Book Club meets the second Thursday of each month at 12 Noon at the church.
Pack a lunch and come join us!
Stay for Dominoes after.



Holy Trinity Youth to Attend 2017 Acolyte Festival

Holy Trinity's Youth Group is, once again, heading south to Nags Head to participate in the 2017 Acolyte Festival at **St. Andrew's-by-the-Sea, March 24-25**. The weekend opens Friday with an icebreaker, games, and Compline. On Saturday, the young people attend workshops on key acolyte responsibilities, then participate in a service where they process in vestments with their parish banners and receive a blessing by the Bishop.

Saturday afternoon is the annual **Olympics**, a popular activity testing acolyte skills. The winner receives a Lavabo Bowl trophy. The day ends with the **Bishop's "Beach" Ball**, complete with some rock-n-roll, shag music and boogie-woogie.

Photo Gallery

Souper Bowl of Caring



After performing a clever and thought-provoking skit the Sunday before, our Holy Trinity Youth Group raked in over \$750 on Super Bowl Sunday for the 4 C's Food Pantry. Thanks to Ryan, Sam, Connor, Dominic, Olivia, Sydney, Rachel and Mark! Way to go! Also, you may have seen them in the local papers or on WECT-TV – a testament to their good works.



Our 1st Annual Tailgate Potluck after service in January was a success! There was plenty of food and everyone had a great time.



Those who missed the youth-sponsored Sweets for Your Sweet missed a FANTASTIC candle-lit evening of wine, chocolate, a challenging trivia contest, music, and dancing!



Each month, we will highlight one of the wild and crazy holidays our nation (and the world) celebrates....just for the fun of it!

March's Wacky Holiday: March 31st, World Backup Day

World Backup Day serves as a very important reminder to secure vital files, by making a backup copy.

In today's world, nearly everything is on an electronic file stored in your cell phone or computer. At the same time, life is so busy and fast paced, that many of us do not take the time to backup our files. Just imagine how you'd feel, if you do not have those precious photos stored in a backup file or up in The Cloud. If you don't back up those important files and documents on your computer, a system crash, can cause you many hours in re-creating them. And, when it comes to photos, you just can't recreate them.

So, this special day encourages us to stop and backup all of our files. Yes, do it now. It only takes a few minutes.

◆◆◆◆◆◆◆ Holy Eucharist Begins Sunday at 10:00 a.m. ◆◆◆◆◆◆◆

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
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"Leading, Loving, and Sharing through Christ"