



TRINITY TIMES

The Newsletter of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Hampstead, NC
www.holytrinityhampstead.com

May 2020

EDITOR'S NOTE: Activities outlined in this newsletter are subject to change due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Easter Proclaims "Plus Ultra"

By Father Ron

In his book "Message from an Empty Tomb," D. James Kennedy tells the story of the famous explorer Christopher Columbus and his journey to the New World in 1492. Though Italian by birth, Columbus set sail under the banner of Spain, a land with the motto "*Non Plus Ultra*," meaning, "*There is nothing beyond.*"

After his adventures in the New World Columbus returned to Spain with wondrous stories and treasures. King Ferdinand was so excited with what he heard and seen that he changed the Spanish national motto to "*Plus Ultra*," meaning "*There is more beyond!*"

On Good Friday Jesus took the journey into death. On Easter morning, though, he burst from the grave and declared to all humanity, "*There is more beyond!*" Jesus went from the dark, cold tomb of Friday to the bright morning glow of Sunday to demonstrate to us that death is not the end. Easter is not only God's gift of eternal life in the future, but also the assurance of new potential and hope each and every day of our lives.



As Christians it is important that we celebrate and live into the fifty days of the Easter season (April 12- May 30) because it is a reminder that beyond the disappointments and failures, the heartbreak and chaos of

our world and sometimes our lives, there is something more God is giving to us.

The gospel lessons from the first two Sundays in May illustrate this. On May 3rd the lessons appointed are for **Good Shepherd Sunday**. The gospel (*John 10: 1-10*) reassures us that Jesus is the Good Shepherd who can lead us back home to God when we have gone astray. On May 10th we hear the wonderful funeral gospel (*John 14: 1-14*) which reminds us that Jesus goes before us to prepare a place for us in heaven.

Not only is the Easter season a time in which God promises us something beyond the present challenges of our lives, but also a time God expects something from us beyond the present. Easter is the season in which we are called to be instruments of new life for those in need around us.



During this time of isolation and anxiety brought on by the Coronavirus, I have been touched by the medical professionals offering new life through the gift of music. Doctors and

nurses, technicians and first responders singing from their souls in hospitals, nursing homes and parking lots in order to bring hope and joy to their patients, their families and each other. They are sharing gifts beyond their chosen vocations. This is what being an Easter people is all about.

Let Easter be for us not just a one-day a year celebration, but let it be the daily center of our words and actions, our love and hope, our joys and blessings. For in doing so, we will assist ourselves and others in seeing beyond the present in order to embrace greater things that are yet to come.

Stewardship and COVID-19

The news is full of scary medical predictions, the store shelves are empty of toilet paper, and we're all trying to figure out what "social distancing" means. What does any of that have to do with Stewardship?

In the Episcopal Church we have a bad habit of equating Stewardship with the annual pledge campaign, as in "How'd we do with Stewardship this year?" when what we really mean is did we get the same number of pledges as last year.

That is not Stewardship: that is the annual pledge campaign. Pretending that Stewardship is just about the annual pledge campaign is a lazy use of language and it cheats us out of something meaningful. Something meaningful that can actually help us in anxious times like these.

Stewardship is the act of being a steward. A steward is a person given responsibility to care for something of value, something we treasure. Stewardship is about taking care of something considered worth caring for and preserving. The word goes back to Old English, and it has retained through all those years the sense of taking care of something that we feel is valuable, something we treasure.

Stewardship starts with the Steward. To be good Stewards, we need to take care of ourselves. That means that when we are going through stressful health events – like the current coronavirus – we need to listen to our doctors and health experts and follow their advice to help keep ourselves safe. Washing our hands, for a start. Remember when you were on an airplane (when we used to fly!) and you heard, "put the mask on yourself first before trying to assist others"? You are no good to anyone else if you get sick, so wash your hands, get enough sleep, keep yourself safe. First things first.

Once we've committed to taking care of the Steward, let's think about the people and communities that are important to us. Let's go back to that definition of Stewardship: *the responsible overseeing and protection of something considered worth caring for and preserving.* Who is that in your life? What is it? Who and what is something worth caring for and preserving?



	Month Ended Mar. 31, 2020	Year to Date Mar. 31, 2020	Annual Budget 2020
Pledged Offerings	\$ 10,652.50	\$ 26,588.50	\$118,000.00
Total Income	\$ 11,078.85	\$ 29,998.31	\$131,660.00
Total Expenses	\$ 17,619.12*	\$ 39,479.81	\$131,660.00
CASH FLOW	(\$ 6,540.27)*	(\$ 9,481.50)*	\$ 0
NOTE: Includes Investment Income/(Loss) of:			
	(\$ 5,746.50)	(\$ 9,148.59)	

Stewardship is about caring for our families, close in and farther out. That includes our church families.

How can we be good Stewards in a time of great anxiety? The specific things you decide to do as a Steward of your church family will vary to the person, but here are a few ideas:

- This is a great time to check in on each other – especially those who might fall into a higher risk group. Give them a call. We have a phone directory. Look through it. Who do you think might appreciate a call?
- How might you show your caring for your church family through helping out, through "time and talent?" Perhaps there's a task that another church member is no longer able to take on that you could help with.
- Maybe there's someone you've meant to thank for the work they do. Why not drop a note or email just sharing your appreciation?
- What about your own pledge? Are you on schedule? In times of anxiety people can forget to get their pledge payments in and that can run havoc with a church budget. Bills still need to be paid, and ministries still need to be funded.
- Caring for the caregivers. Sometimes we expect our clergy to shoulder the worry and anxiety all themselves. But they need self-care and your concern (and prayers) too. Maybe a call or email to let them know you're thinking about them?

We all hope we will get back to some sort of normal soon enough, but in the meantime, let's practice strengthening our "Stewardship muscles." We'll all feel a little bit better as a result.



If you helped to maintain the grounds last year, we need to start up again for the spring growth. Our wonderful ladies, Bobbi and Joy, have been hard at work maintaining the flower beds and mowing the grounds. BUT THEY NEED SOME HELP!

If you know how to operate the lawn equipment and have some time, please consider helping to keep the church grounds in good shape. In the past we have had a signup sheet, but since we are not able to worship, we need to improvise a schedule of sorts. My suggestion would be to check with those you worked with last year and decide who will do what and when. Coordinate with Bobbi Crawford. Thank you in advance for your continued service to our church.

Jackie Redington, Junior Warden

Vestry Update

First, we hope that you are well and practicing “safe distancing.” Personally, my hair is the length I had in the 60’s; however, the color has not returned. Secondly, we have never had as many meals at home in the last several weeks for as long as I can remember!

Father Ron continues to have the church building open on Sunday and Tuesday mornings for individual prayer and meditation. Ron continues to be available to all who wish to come by in person, Sunday through Tuesday, or contact him by phone or email at any time. In addition, Jeanne Rick has been emailing the weekly scripture readings and Ron’s sermon. It is also posted on our website.

The vestry has been trying to check in on our parishioners via a phone call. If no one has contacted you, please let a vestry member know. Their contact information is in our directory, as well as on Holy Trinity’s website.

The vestry continues to meet on a regular monthly basis, this month via ZOOM. Hampstead Electric

has finished the new lighting by the choir and all ceiling lights are now working. Bobbi Crawford and Joy Ball have been maintaining the landscape of the church but need help (see Jackie’s note). **THANK YOU.**

The building has been checked daily by Father Ron, Roger Rick, Roger Kersey, David Mahoney, and me. The vestry is working on guidelines to follow when we can once again worship together and guidelines for all organizations internally and externally that will be using our facilities in the future.

Bishop Skirving has been holding weekly meetings with the clergy and another meeting with Senior Wardens of the Diocese. The Bishop reminded us that Trinity Center employs 35 people and the Farmworkers Ministry also has a paid staff with no income currently.

In addition, Good Shepherd in Wilmington has been overwhelmed with people in need. Many local food banks have been serving more people than ever. If you have received stimulus money and are fortunate enough not to need it all, please consider a donation to one of these areas or any local food bank. Father Ron is happy to assist anyone who wishes to contribute to any of these organizations.

The vestry thanks our parish family for continuing to meet their pledges. This has enabled the bills to be paid. Please stay safe until we are able to worship together again.

Norm Gopsill, Senior Warden

News from the Outreach Ministry

The Outreach Ministry is collecting new and gently used **baseball caps** and **men’s long-sleeved shirts** (sizes S, M, L) to help protect farmworkers from the relentless hot North Carolina sun as they plant and harvest the crops we eat each day and to protect them from the chemicals they are in contact with on a daily basis.



We will collect these items for the coming months. Just place the caps and shirts in the designated bin by the Outreach bulletin board. They will be delivered to the Episcopal Farmworkers Ministry in Newton Grove.

We are able to enjoy the abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables provided to us on a daily basis because of the hard work of these farmers and farmworkers. Thank you for your support and generosity!

Past Acolyte Festivals

Holy Trinity's youth have always enjoyed participating in the annual Acolyte Festival in Nags Head each April. In honor of that, and since the 2020 Festival was cancelled, here are some blasts from the past!





While we are fighting our battle against the coronavirus here at home, our troops are fighting both COVID and the enemy overseas. Our own Major Shannon Mawson (kneeling) is shown with her unit in Afghanistan. Thank you for your service, Shannon, and safe travels home!

Message from the Treasurer

Today is Thursday, April 23, 2020, and these are, indeed, strange times. Thursdays are my day to visit Holy Trinity and report back to the Senior Warden that all seems in order. Our Priest in Charge, the Rev. Ronald Abrams, comes in Sunday mornings, and is also there on Mondays and Tuesdays. He is there to open the church for private prayer and meditation, and to consult and console. He is doing an outstanding job and we are blessed to have him.

On the other days, when he is not there, another of us is assigned to stop by, walk the grounds, and go inside for a quick inspection. It is spring. The building, freshly painted, looks inviting and the grounds are lovely. Those in our flock who have always been dedicated to maintaining the lawn and landscaping continue to do so. We are blessed to have them.

On these Thursdays, it is empty inside. I have often been in the church when no one else was there. It always just seemed that the facility was taking a

brief respite amid the bustling activity of a busy parish. The feeling is different now. There will be no Brigade children this week, no AA meetings, no ministry gatherings, no Sunday School, no voices lifted in song, no resounding corporate prayer, no inspiring sermon delivered to a rapt congregation. The Parish Administrator's desk sits lonely. Her doctor has advised her to self-quarantine, so she keeps the parish informed from home. We are blessed to have her.

I will go into the Sanctuary today, by myself, and kneel at the altar. On behalf of the parish I will thank God for these and the many, many other blessings we share as the Body of Christ. I will especially thank God for those parishioners who continue their financial support. The staff is paid, the bills are up to date. You are a blessing.

Finally, I will pray that soon, through the wisdom of the CDC, the Governor, and the Bishop, we can gather once again, safely, as a congregation.

The lights are off, check. No one has left the water running, check. The doors are locked, check. I can report to the Senior Warden all is well. Not OK, but well. These are strange times.

Roger Rick, Treasurer

CARES Charitable Giving

There is a new charitable deduction for taxpayers who do not itemize. Beginning in 2020, individuals can deduct \$300 in charitable contributions from their gross income even if they do not itemize their deductions. Donations must be made in cash to a charity. Gifts of appreciated securities, and gifts to a donor advised fund or supporting organization, do not qualify. Although the permissible amount is modest, it is a new benefit available to many donors.

Donors who itemize their deductions can usually deduct cash contributions up to 60% of their adjusted gross income. For 2020, that cap is lifted, and donors contributing cash to charity may deduct up to 100% of their income, a significant tax savings for anyone able to contribute larger amounts. Again, this is only for gifts of cash, and only for gifts made directly to charity (not to donor-advised funds or supporting organizations).

The CARES Act eliminates required minimum distributions (RMDs) from many retirement plans in 2020. Some donors have been using their RMDs for tax-advantaged charitable gifts by making a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) directly to charity. Under the CARES Act it is still possible for donors who are 70½ or over to contribute up to \$100,000 directly to a charity without paying tax on the distribution.

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



May's Wacky Holiday:

May 2nd – National Herb Day

According to the creators of *Herb Day*, this holiday is an international celebration of herbs and herbal products. That covers a whole lot of plants, applications, and products. The purpose of this day is to encourage us to learn more about herbs and their uses. Armed with this knowledge, there is a

whole lot of things that you can do with them, much more than you ever imagined. So, let the celebration begin!

There are hundreds of varieties of herbs, which can be used in a seemingly unlimited number of uses. The herb family consists of the following types: aromatic, cosmetic, culinary, ornamental, and medicinal plants. After learning more about the different kinds of herbs, we should pick a couple and grow them. May is the perfect month for planting and growing herbs. You can grow them in an herb garden or in the flower garden. Many varieties are easy to grow in containers on your patio or deck.

Today is also a great day to use herbs as you cook. Try a recipe that uses an herb that you have never cooked with before. Herbs are a great substitute for salt, making for healthier meals. Today is also a good time to try a few herbal products. You can choose from lavender soaps, cachets, dried flower arrangements, medicinal herbs, and much more.

Did you know? Many cultures worshipped one herb or another. I won't go that far. But, I do admit these versatile plants are pretty impressive. Herb Day was created in 2006 by the Herb Day Coalition. This group of five non-profit organizations includes: the American Botanical Council, United Plant Savers, the American Herbal Products Association, the American Herbal Pharmacopoeia, and the American Herbalists Guild.

However you choose to delve into the world of herbs today, we hope you have a very aromatic and tasteful *Herb Day!!!*

◆◆◆◆ Public Worship has been cancelled until further notice ◆◆◆◆

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church
107 Deerfield Road
Hampstead, NC 28443

Holy Trinity is a Christ-centered community. We are dedicated to reaching and helping people seeking to know God and to serve God.