



A Place to Belong

June 2020

Words from Our Pastor



Jim Rauch
Interim Pastor

It looks as if some of the “stay-home” restrictions imposed by civil authorities are being gradually lifted as we move from May into June. As restrictions on houses of worship are lifted, we will be facing the challenging task of figuring out what worship will look like as we continue to live with the risks of infection from Covid-19. Though your session has not yet adopted a “reopening” plan, we hope to do so as soon as possible. One thing that other pastors and I have expressed to each other is that we envision keeping our online worship experience available into the foreseeable future

since we recognize that many of our church members will choose the online option for various reasons during the coming months.

Another interesting development is that the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC) will quite likely be introducing a candidate to you this summer who can serve as the next installed pastor for Trinity Church. The timing is very challenging since most of us envisioned a pastoral transition that would happen “in person” rather than “online” – however we will trust that God’s timing is perfect. What may look to us like a very strange pastoral transition may well be God’s exact plan for everyone involved. The PNC, the Session, the staff, and I appreciate your prayers and understanding as we attempt to lead the way forward with so many peculiar challenges.

A final thought I want to share with you is related to the unity of the church in the midst of a lot of social upheaval created by the closing and reopening of businesses, schools, and churches. In my scripture reading today, I encountered this portion of Jesus’ prayer for his disciples:

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. John 17:20-21

From our study of church history, we know that the followers of Jesus have split from one another many times for many different reasons. Sometimes these divisions were over important issues, such as the nature of Jesus Christ (Chalcedon, A.D. 451), or the means of salvation (Reformation, 16th century).

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REMEMBER! You can see this publication in color. Just go to the Trinity Church website, click on “Ministries” in the navigation bar and go to the last item on the list, “Newsletter.”

Next Press Deadline
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Words from Our Pastor

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One interesting conflict is called the Donatist Controversy which occurred toward the end of the third century. The conflict was not so much over theology as it was over the church's response to persecution under Emperor Diocletian. During this persecution, some Christians, various priests, and bishops suffered death due to their refusal to renounce faith in Jesus Christ. Other Christians were able to survive the persecution by denying their faith in Christ. After the persecution subsided, some of the priests and bishops who had renounced Christ underwent a process of penitence and restoration. When they began to serve in church leadership, people within the churches questioned their suitability. These "purist" Christians believed it was an insult to the martyrs who gave their lives during the Diocletian persecution to allow "lapsed" priests and bishops (who had renounced their faith and then been restored) to serve in church leadership. The question arose as to whether communion, baptisms, ordinations, and marriage ceremonies conducted by these lapsed clergy were valid. The Donatist Controversy got its name from a purist bishop of Carthage named Donatus who declared that sacraments administered by lapsed clergy were illegitimate. The Donatists asserted that Christians who had been

baptized under the authority of the lapsed clergy were seen as "not really Christians" because their baptism had been performed by a priest who was "not really a priest." Those on the other side of the conflict felt that a reasonable measure of grace should be extended to these clergy who



Charles-André van Loo's 18th-century painting, Augustine arguing with Donatists

were theologically faithful, but who, in a season of persecution, showed a lack of courage to die for their faith.

This dispute carried on for several centuries, causing large divisions in the church, particularly in North Africa. In the seventh century, the Muslims invasion wiped out Christianity in those regions impacted by the Donatist Controversy. As a footnote, this conflict was never resolved.

I want to call this church conflict to your attention because we can learn from it today as we navigate the

journey of church during Covid-19 pandemic. It appears to me that Christians in our nation and region tend to fall into two categories – let's call them the "mask-wearers" and the "anti-mask" groups. The categories may be fairly obvious to you, and you probably know which category you fall into. Some see wearing the mask as an irrational fear-based compliance with unjust government power-mongers. Others see wearing the mask as a sign of care for people who are at-risk from Covid-19 and a way to live with appropriate caution and compliance with government guidelines. There are devout followers of Jesus on all sides of this issue. My main concern is to remind Trinity Church that this matter is not one that is central to the Christian faith. In areas that are non-essential to the core tenets of the faith, we are called to love one another, to avoid divisions, and to find ways to express care and respect for those who see things differently than we do. As Jesus prayed for his followers "that they may all be one," so Trinity Church is called to do our part in order that the prayer of Jesus will be fulfilled in our fellowship with one another.

May the Lord Jesus continue to guide us through this season of amazing challenges and opportunities to grow in service to God and one another.

In Christ,
Interim Pastor Jim Rauch

Happy Father's Day!

A Time of Mourning; a Time of Prayer

I mourned so many events over this past month. One tragedy that brought me to tears happened in Kabul, Afghanistan. Sunni gunmen from the Taliban attacked a hospital that houses a Shi'ite maternity clinic, killing at least 16 people including two newborn babies. Soldiers raced out of the hospital carrying infants wrapped in bloodstained blankets to waiting ambulances, after the attackers rampaged their way through the wards. The images of men waiting to find out if wives and children had survived still haunt me.



An Afghan soldier carries a newborn baby to safety. The mother had died in the attack.

Then I found myself inundated on social media with the conflict surrounding the Covid-19 virus. I understood the frustration of having been quarantined for these last two months. What I couldn't understand was the anger directed at people for their opinions – and among Christians. I never would have imagined that my brothers and sisters in Jesus would use a time like this to “shout” such divisive words through social media to each other. I cried out, “God, where is our love and grace for one another? Help us!”

As the pandemic restrictions began to loosen, I thought the worst was over. I



George Floyd

watched the video and my heart sank. After further research, I no longer held back the tears. A man who impacted his community for good died horribly. I wanted to scream – “Where are you, God, in all of this? What can I do with this anger?” I mourned the loss of this man that came to symbolize the racism that still pervades our nation.

On Saturday, May 30th, protesters stormed La Mesa, my hometown and where I live even now. A peaceful protest about the death of George Floyd along with the ill-treatment of another African American man by the local police department began that

was wrong. A flurry of deaths of black men at the hands of police hit the news, including the death of George Floyd. I

afternoon. By late that night, it had turned into a frenzy of burning and looting of businesses. A friend of mine spent the night guarding his friend's bookstore. He described the fear and horror of seeing so much destruction. I sat shocked as he described what happened in our sleepy, little town.

In an attempt to be useful, I went down the next morning, Sunday, to help clean up. Hundreds of people had already swept and cleared out the mess. Only a few windows still needed to be boarded up. I headed up Palm Avenue to see a burned-out building, Randall Lamb Associates. I saw flames still burning what was left of the once-beautiful structure. I mourned for my town.

I headed home in time to meet with many of you – Trinity Church – over Zoom. Afterwards, I listened to a few other pastors I respect.

God is at work even when we don't see him, when we can't imagine

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The burned-out Randall Lamb Associates building, just one example of the destruction in downtown La Mesa.

School Year 2019-2020 Comes to an End

Here we are at the end of a most unusual school year! “God has made a way when it seemed there was no way.” He is faithful and is in control. Our memory verse this year was Ephesians 2:8, *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is a gift of God.”* We certainly have felt his grace throughout this historical event and will continue to rely on him as we go forward. We are grateful for his faithful gift-giving.

We are hosting the eighth grade Blessing Dinner on June 2nd. Our middle school teachers and the principals, Jimmie Drummond and Sharon Axe, will personally deliver each family their catered dinner with instructions for “The Blessing”. The middle school teachers have written a letter to each student about what they see as strengths in the student’s lives and include a Bible verse as well. They also will write something fun that each student has exemplified during their years here at Trinity Christian

School (TCS). The students will read the letter that they have been asked to write to their parents, thanking them for what they have done and express what their parents mean to them. The parents are then given the opportunity to read the letter they have been asked to write to their son or daughter expressing their appreciation of their students hard work and achievement. Of course, they will want to express their love and hope for their students’ future.

On June 8th, TCS will host its last drop-off/pick-up drive-through. Students will return their completed work, library books, textbooks, and NED tickets (Never give up/ Encourage others/ Do your best). Parents were empowered to hand out NED tickets to encourage students to never give up and do their best on their school work at home, help and encourage family members, and never give up. These tickets are used throughout the year at school and winners are drawn to choose a prize from the prize box.

We received good news that we can host graduation in the sanctuary as is our tradition. We have been in close contact with the San Diego County Department of Health and Human Services. It will not look like other graduations we’ve had, but it will provide an opportunity for the students, some of whom have been together since preschool (eleven years) a chance to say good-bye. They will have matching face masks and robes. Seating will be designated by household members only. Social distancing requirements will be adhered to. (The head of epidemiology and second in command at the department of health will be attending because his son is graduating from TCS this year.)

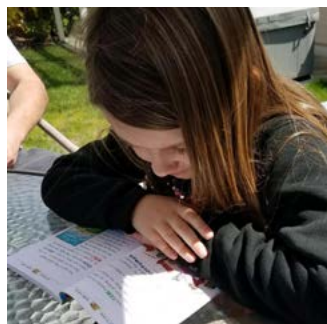
Sharon Axe
Principal

Jimmie Drummond
Principal



Left: Nearing the end – principals delivered appreciation yard signs to all 24 staff members (178 miles in seven hours to accomplish this ... hit the pillow at midnight)

Right & below: Distance learning – family point of view





Above and above right: Distance learning – family point of view

Above: Middle school service projects under pandemic conditions

A Time of Mourning; a Time of Prayer

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how he could bring justice. I have to believe that this is true.

Our enemy, the devil, knows God's ways. He knows that God is moving and he will try and stop God in every way possible. He sews hatred and division among people, especially in the Body of Christ. Yet, even in environments where we are sure God couldn't work, God does.

We can see this in recent history. In the early 20th century, the Chinese government threw out all missionaries, and imprisoned hundreds of Chinese believers, often torturing them horrifically. The western church believed this would be the end of the church of Jesus Christ in China. Instead God brought about a revival that is still going on today.

More recently God is moving in the Middle East, particularly in Iran, a country ruled by Sharia law and a heavy-handed Ayatollah. A revival is sweeping through the cities especially. Hundreds of house churches, much like those in China, have sprung up. The military police arrest these new believers daily, yet, according to Operation World, Iran has the fastest growing church in the world. Who would have thought? But that's what God does.

And God will not stop moving. My prayer is that as the enemy sows hatred; we will sow the love of Jesus, that we will stand with our brothers and sisters in Christ who face injustice here in the United States and abroad. Many of us have no way to understand the injustice we see happening around us, but we can listen to their stories and refuse to remain complacent.

I pray that we will love like the Apostle Paul encouraged the early church to love. People from so many nations, all walks of life, Jews and Gentiles, came together as one body to share the amazing news of Jesus to a world that had never seen real love.

I pray that we will see ourselves as part of the Body of Christ first – our full allegiance and devotion given to Jesus even more fully. I pray revival comes to the United States, and with it, the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to bring healing and reconciliation to a world filled with hurt and pain and desperate to know real love.

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Presbyterian Women

Zoom has been a blessing, but we have certainly missed being together.

It does seem that we may be able to see each other face to face sooner rather than later.

Circle Leaders, if you have not been in touch, I encourage you to reach out to one or two of your ladies every day after you read this.

Also, keep saving for the Rummage Sale.

God bless, keep safe, and stay well!

Ardis Rowland



Clippers

Ahoy mates!

The Clipper Ship is still adrift amidst all of this confusion and uncertainty. If we are allowed to dock at Trinity Church in June, we will have a board meeting the first Tuesday and our auction and potluck the third Saturday.

The crew captains should be prepared to contact their shipmates and everyone should prepare their items for the auction. As the holy scripture says, "And it came to pass." This too will eventually pass. May we have fair winds and calm seas until then.

Signalman Jack, the ancient mariner

"The Lord himself watches over you! The Lord stands beside you as your protective shade." Psalm 121:5 (NLT)

Dear Trinity Family-

It is good news indeed that the Lord stands watch over us and stands beside us as protective shade. The Lord not only watches over the Trinity Church family, but he is ever present and on guard on the property we all love. This year is proving to be a deeper measure of trust and faith that

the Lord will provide in our homes and in our churches. We are grateful that our God is never surprised by earthly issues.

We know it takes extra effort right now to send in your tithes and gifts, thank you for continuing to be faithful partners in the day to day operation of Trinity Church. We have been blessed

to meet our financial obligations up to this point, and we remain thankful for what the Lord provides.

Rebecca Casey
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	April Final	May (As of 05/18/2020)	Year to Date (As of 05/18/2020)
BUDGETED INCOME	\$29,874.64	\$29,874.64	\$149,373.52
ACTUAL INCOME	\$ 27,793.63	\$16,266.88	\$129,838.89
DIFFERENCE	- \$ 2,081.09	- \$13,607.84	- \$ 19,534.63
CURRENT EXPENSE	\$ 17,016.18	\$33,039.79	\$ 138,155.31
INCOME - EXPENSE	\$ 10,777.45	-\$ 16,772.91	- \$ 8,316.42

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The Fall Festival is Coming



November 7th is our planned Fall Festival.

Now is also a great time to bake and freeze goods, as well as continue our crafting, knitting, cross-stitching, sewing skills to create items for this wonderful annual event that provides funds to help support our missionaries.

To the left is the Opportunity Quilt created by Peggy Watkins. Talk to Sue Walters to purchase tickets.

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