

# TRINITY TIMES

The Newsletter of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Hampstead, NC  
[www.holytrinityhampstead.com](http://www.holytrinityhampstead.com)

January 2021

## What Luggage Do You Carry?

By Father Ron

Now that Christmas Day is behind us and the year 2021 is beginning, I am sure you might be wondering as I am:

- What will the New Year bring?
- Will the pandemic end?
- What will a new President do?
- Will the economy recover?

One of my more frivolous questions is: "Will I be able to go to a Yankee game this year?" No matter what may be on our minds, one thing is for sure, each of us will bring a lot of emotional, spiritual and relational baggage into the new year.

In his wonderful book Traveling Light, Max Lucado states:



*"Weary Travelers. You've seen them, everything they owned crammed into their luggage. Staggering through terminals and hotel lobbies with overstuffed suitcases, trucks, duffels and back-packs. Backs ache. Feet burn. Eyelids droop. We've*

*all seen people like that. At times, we are people like that – if not with our physical luggage, then at least with our spiritual load. We all lug loads we were never intended to carry. Fear. Worry. Discontent. No wonder we are worn out from carrying excess luggage. Wouldn't it be nice to lose some of those bags?"*

From January 6 through February 16, 2021, we will observe the **season of Epiphany**. During this

liturgical season, the gospel lessons each week manifest different aspects of Jesus' love and light to the world. Epiphany, above all, is about living into Christ's command to love each other. We are reminded that our goal this Epiphany season is to be the light of Christ to each other.

How? How do we become this light to each other? First, we need to recognize the baggage we carry that prevents the light from shining through. Once we acknowledge this baggage, then we need to get rid of it. But where do we turn for help? Max Lucado states that we can find help by looking to an old friend, the twenty-third Psalm.

The first and last sentences of David's greatest Psalm put our faith into proper perspective:

*"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want... Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."*

When our hearts and souls clearly see and feel that God is indeed in the midst of our journey offering us guidance as the Good Shepherd, then we can let go of the pain, the hurt and the anger that distract us from seeing and experiencing the Shepherd.

When we let go, then God fills the void of our souls with goodness and mercy. These are indeed two important aspects of Christ's light that will lead us and others into the house of the Lord, both on a daily basis and for eternity. Then our journey will indeed be traveling light!

## THANK YOU!

We were overwhelmed with your generosity in the Christmas Purses this year. Please know that your support of all we do for Holy Trinity is greatly appreciated. With much love,

*Ron, Catherine and Jeanne*

## Stewardship: Grace, Gratitude and Generosity

It's a new year. It's a time when we take stock of the year past in order to improve the year to come. It's a time when we sit down to plan and implement what we want to accomplish and even change. Part of that is planning our stewardship for the coming year.

Often, we find this difficult, daunting, and even joyless, but it doesn't have to be. In fact, it is really quite simple and full of joy. So, here are some tips to make that planning less stressful. You begin by answering these three questions: Who are you? To whom do I give? And how much?

So, who are you? According to our Catechism, we are part of God's creation, made in the image of God, free to make choices. Are you a hearer of God's Word? Are you a citizen of society? Are you a member of a family? Stewardship covers these three estates: church, society, and family. We don't particularly struggle to give to society or family. Our struggles, our difficulties, and our questions arise in giving to the Church.

According to a resolution adopted at the 2000 General Convention of the national church, *"We believe we are the children of God, and we need to give. In every aspect of our lives, we are entrusted to be stewards of God's creation. God invites us to give freely and to exercise joyfully our gifts through mission and ministry."*

So, what is our duty as members of the Church with regard to giving? Our Episcopal Catechism says that the duty of all Christians is *"to follow Christ; to come together week by week for corporate worship; and to work, pray, and give for the spread of the kingdom of God."* Further, the 2000 resolution continues, *"We commit ourselves to boldly claim God's abundant provision in our lives; to offer extravagantly our time, talent, and money to do God's work; and to practice tithing as a minimum standard of giving."*

Our priest is the one called to preach the Gospel to us and administer the Lord's blessed sacraments to us. Our parish is the place where those things happen. Thus, when God calls us to give to the Church, He has the local congregation in mind.

How much do we give to the local congregation? Our instructions are to give **regularly** (1 Cor. 6:1–2); **proportionally** (1 Cor. 16:1–2; 2 Cor. 8:12); **generously** (2 Cor. 8:20); **of our first fruits** (Gen. 4:4; Prov. 3:9; Lev. 27:30); and **with a spirit of eagerness** (2 Cor. 9:2), **earnestness** (2 Cor. 8:7), **cheerfulness** (2 Cor. 9:7), and **love** (2 Cor. 8:23).

In the final words of the 2000 resolution, *"We challenge members of the Episcopal Church to confront our fears of scarcity; to embrace a new vision of stewardship through a joyful response to God's extravagant gifts; and to empower the mission of Christ through generous giving."*

In other words, giving to the Church is not to be an afterthought, given after everything else is spent. In this way, it is deliberate. We give regularly – weekly, biweekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly – keeping in mind our own strengths, weaknesses, and limitations. We set it aside beforehand – before anything else is spent.

From those first fruits, we set aside a proportionate and generous amount. Ten percent was the standard for the Israelites. This was a command for the ancient Israelites. We can give as much as we want, but ask yourself: Do we really want to be less generous than was commanded of the Israelites? Is the job of the New Testament Church bigger or smaller than the job given to Israel?

And how are we to give it? We give it with eagerness and earnestness. We give it cheerfully and with love, not out of compulsion. For through the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments, God has made us His children, forgiven us all our sins, given us grace upon grace, promised us life everlasting with Him in His kingdom, and filled us with His own Spirit, the Holy Spirit. This makes giving a joy, as Jesus said, "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).



Before stewardship there must be a vision of the abundance of God's love and

provision for our lives. Such a vision emerges when an individual begins to understand that all of life is a gift of God's grace and is nurtured through inspirational liturgy, faithful teaching and preaching, and opportunities for those who give to participate in the life and ministry of the parish they support.

When we start thinking deeply about God's grace, we begin to feel gratitude, which then leads to generosity. It's that easy. And it is joyful. For in stewardship, our gracious and giving Lord invites us to take part in the work that He accomplishes here on earth, providing for the ongoing preaching of the Gospel as well as those who are in need. Taking part in that makes all our work holy – work that is done in service to the Lord as priestly members of His kingdom.

**Economy  
Money  
Budget  
Finance  
Spending**

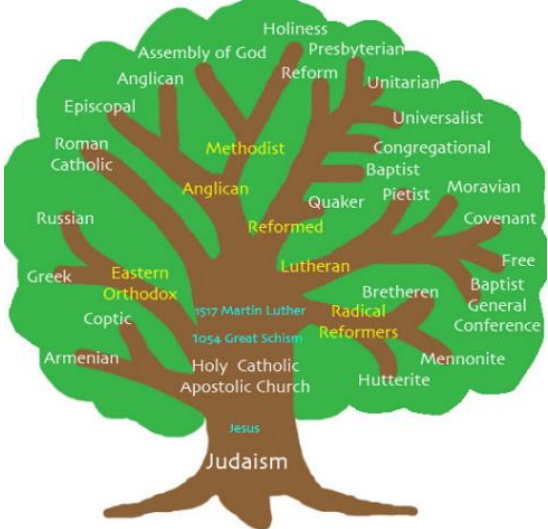
	Month Ended Nov. 30, 2020	Year to Date Nov. 30, 2020	Annual Budget 2020
Pledged Offerings	\$ 8,135.00	\$ 87,065.50	\$118,000.00
Total Income	\$13,533.11	\$ 99,231.59*	\$131,660.00
Total Expenses	\$10,945.03	\$116,332.46	\$131,660.00
<b>CASH FLOW</b>	<b>\$ 2,588.08</b>	<b>(\$ 17,100.87)*</b>	<b>\$ 0.00</b>
<b>*NOTE: Includes Investment Income/(Loss) of:</b>			
	<b>\$ 4,891.44</b>	<b>\$ 4,517.36</b>	

**Christian Formation: The Growth of the Christian Tree**

Several theological resources have described the Christian Church as a tree with strong roots, a mighty trunk with many branches. On Sunday, January 10<sup>th</sup> from 9:00 – 9:40 a.m. Fr. Ron will begin a three-part series exploring the roots, trunk and branches of the over two million Christians in the world. The classes are as follows:

**Sunday, January 10, 2021 –  
From Resurrection to Reformation**

This class will focus on the roots of Christianity and how the mighty trunk, as we know the church today, evolved. We will examine some of the early church leaders, the councils and crises of the church, and look at how the church went off-balance in the Middle Ages, which in turn led to the Reformation.



**Sunday, January 17, 2021 –  
From Reformation to Revolution**

Martin Luther, Henry VIII, The Elizabethan Settlement, John Wesley, The Pilgrims and the missionary movement are all part of the beginning of the various branches that make up the Christian Church today. We will look at how various denominations developed and how they transitioned into the American colonies.

**Sunday, January 24, 2020 –  
From Revolution to The Restoration Church**

We will examine how various forms of Christianity spread around the world. We will also look at the influence Vatican II has had on all of us. In addition, we will focus on the dramatic rise in the non-denominational churches throughout the Western World, especially in America.

**January Birthdays & Anniversaries**



**Birthdays:**

- 5 Gretchen Moore
- 9 Brett Price
- 11 Jennifer Starrett
- 20 Stephanie Clinch
- 31 Catherine Charles

**Anniversaries:**

- 1 Jennifer & Mike Starrett
- 17 Donna & Laura Smith

**News from Your Vestry**

The December meeting of your Vestry was held Sunday, December 13. We welcomed our newly elected members, Roger Kersey, Roger Rick, and Dee Wolfe, and thanked Norm Gopsill, Jackie Redington, and Bob Ronne for their service over the past three years. In addition, the Vestry accepted the resignation of Kris Kirwin and elected Gloria Kirwin to finish out the last year of his 3-year term, 2021-2022.

Officers elected for 2021-2022 are:

- Senior Warden:** Dave Mahoney
- Junior Warden:** Roger Kersey
- Treasurer:** Roger Rick
- Clerk:** Lynn Ruhne

The Vestry Retreat will be held Saturday, January 23, 2021. During this time, we will be reviewing 2020, as well as setting goals for 2021. We are looking forward to the New Year to grow and improve Holy Trinity. If you have any questions or concerns, please address a member of your Vestry.





## 138th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of East Carolina

Saturday, February 13, 2021

With concern for the potential spread of COVID19, the 2021 Annual Convention of the Diocese of East Carolina will be **held virtually**. Bob Muller and Roger Kersey are Holy Trinity's Delegates. Dave Mahoney and Norm Gopsill are our Alternates.

## Episcopal Church Women

**T**his year, the ECW finalized new bylaws which include an organization focused on committees, which spreads responsibility among a larger number of people, rather than just a few. The new bylaws and a list of the committee chairs are posted on our bulletin board, but if you would like to see a copy, just let me know and I can email one to you. Effective January 1, Gloria Kirwin takes over as spokeswoman, Jeanne Rick will act as vice spokeswoman, Gretchen Moore continues as secretary, and I will take on the role of treasurer.

We started the year with \$2,463 and donated \$1,500 of that money to seven different organizations that included the ECW Diocesan Dominican Republic Scholarship program, Thompson Family Focus (in Matthews, NC, a non-profit organization operating since 1886 that cares for children in need), Episcopal Farmworkers, and Episcopal Relief and Development. There were a few other out-of-pocket expenses such as getting our floors cleaned, so we were left with a balance of \$805.

I learned the hard way that this was below our minimum balance, so we closed out that account and moved the balance to the HTEC general account. We hope to begin fundraising again the end of February or the first of March with a Spring yard sale. Planning will start after the first of the year so keep an eye out for details.

We plan to hold our first **Ladies Luncheon** in a while on **Saturday, January 9, at 12 noon** at Nineteen Restaurant at Olde Point Country Club. A signup sheet is on the bulletin board if you would like to attend.

We'll continue to meet as needed on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month beginning at 10:30. We

normally set our budget for the year at our January meeting. The date for that meeting is **January 12**.

The Agenda is as follows:

- ECW Prayer
- Previous Meeting Minutes
- Treasurer's Report
- Prayers for Birthdays and Anniversaries
- Finalize Budget for the Year
- Plans for the February 27<sup>th</sup> Spring Yard Sale
- Members Comments/Concerns
- Closing Prayer

And please remember that ECW doesn't just stand for Episcopal Church Women; it also stands for "Every Church Woman." Every woman who attends church here is automatically a member of this organization. If you are unable to attend a meeting, but there is a church issue that you wish to see addressed by the women of the church, please speak with Gloria, Jeanne, Gretchen, or me. We would love to hear from you.

*Vivian Kersey, ECW Treasurer*

## Bishop Skirving Visitation

**O**ur Diocesan Bishop will make his official visitation to Holy Trinity Church on **Sunday, June 6, 2021**. This is the Bishop's opportunity to engage with our parish, as well as our opportunity to share our thoughts, concerns and blessings with him.

This is also a time for those wishing to be officially confirmed or received into the Episcopal Church to do so. In **Confirmation**, baptized persons are "confirmed" in the Christian faith with a laying on of hands by the bishop. A preliminary Confirmation Course is required.

**Reception** is a way for individuals who have been confirmed in the Roman Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or Eastern Orthodox Church to be received into the Episcopal Church by our bishop.

Worshippers who have been baptized and confirmed in the Episcopal Church (or any member church in the Anglican Communion) may choose to **reaffirm** their baptism covenant with the bishop.

**If you have not been confirmed by an Apostolic Bishop or received into the Episcopal Church, or wish to reaffirm your covenant, please speak to our Priest-in-Charge for more information.**

Mark your calendars and plan to be with us on June 6<sup>th</sup> as we celebrate with our Bishop.

Dear Friends in Christ,

Please allow me to thank you for your thoughtfulness to me during the past year. We have had so much to deal with during these COVID-19 days, and yet you took the time to think about me. I could never express how happy you made me with your cards, calls and especially your prayers. It has been so gratifying knowing my church has been with me during the trying times I've been through.

A very special thanks to the blessed Daughters of the King for your keeping me in God's circle of love. I want you to know that prayer changes things.

The good news is that after the multiple doctors' appointments, the surgeries, etc., I am about to receive low vision glasses. I shall look forward to "seeing" all of you very soon, but above all, please accept my heartfelt thanks for your generous love and kindnesses.

*Joanne Muller*



ABOVE: The Daughters of the King recently held their Annual Christmas Lunch and Chinese Gift Exchange at the Highlander Bar & Grill at Castle Bay Country Club. Shown above are Dolores Phillips, Linda Cavanaugh, Jackie Redington, Lynn Ruhnke, Carolyn Beddow, Pat Gopsill, Jeanne Rick, Vivian Kersey and Rev. Ron Abrams.

BELOW: Bags of Christmas clothing and toys await pickup from our "adopted" families.

## News and Notes from Outreach

**T**hanks to everyone who participated in our **Holiday Baskets Program**. The 4C's Food Pantry provided names of local families who could use some help at Thanksgiving and Christmas. We provided turkeys and a box of groceries at Thanksgiving and Christmas to 5 families with 15 children and one senior household.

Our **Angel Tree** was another success, giving all the children we "adopted" toys and clothing. The parish was especially generous this year, and the recipients were overwhelmed with the outpouring of love.

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church has made an important difference in the lives of others. Best wishes to you and yours in 2021!



*O, Holy Night*

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



## January's Wacky Holiday:

### January 25<sup>th</sup> – **Bubble Wrap Appreciation Day**

Feeling a little stressed lately.? Then, this special day is made for you!  
It's *Bubble Wrap Appreciation Day*.

As anyone who has ever come in contact with it knows, bubble wrap is not just a protective wrapping for things. It is also a wonderful stress reliever! Just squeeze the bubbles in the bubble wrap, and feel the stress disappear with each POP...POP...POP.

Allegedly, a radio station in Bloomington, Indiana, received a shipment of microphones wrapped in bubble wrap. While unwrapping and setting up the microphones, the sound of bubble wrap popping was inadvertently broadcast on the radio. And so, Bubble Wrap Appreciation Day was born.

So, grab a piece of bubble wrap today, and go to town!

◆◆◆◆ Worship with Holy Eucharist: 10:00 am ◆◆◆◆

2021  
*Happy New Year*

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