

TRINITY NEWS

April, 2008

TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

MT. POCONO PA

Mission Statement: Share God's unconditional love with everyone.

Telling my story

Bill Cosby does a delightful piece which opens with "I started out as a child." And so I begin here with "I started out in the rectory." Life in the Church is in my DNA. I want to share some of my story with you here as I have been doing in some recent sermons. As much as you have heard me talk about the importance of our sharing our stories, you may have noticed that I have invited yours rather than telling mine. This was well intentioned as I seek not to have you focus on me but on our Lord and our ministry together in his name. I cannot take credit for the idea of my placing my story before you. It came from discussion at the most recent meeting of the Evangelism Commission of the Diocese. We were talking about the importance of sharing the stories of our spiritual journeys. Around the table people spoke about how important it is for clergy to do that too. And then at the Chrism Mass Bishop Jack, who is a member of the commission, did a magnificent job of telling some of his story, modeling what we all need to do.

My father died on April 26, 1975. Between the years when I lived in the rectory and his death I had wandered in and out of the church. I find that lots of folks do that during college years and young adulthood. I never did, nor do I now, feel guilty about that. Daddy never said anything to make me feel guilty about it either. That was not in the understanding of God's love that I grew up with. Through that time, as tumultuous as my life often was, I always knew that God was there. I just was not worshipping him as I knew I should. I was so busy with my earthly life that I was neglecting the larger reality of the implications of my Baptism. During those years a lot of changes were taking place in the church. I heard about them of course, but their power did not immediately impact me. That would come later, much later, when I finally acknowledged my call to be a priest.

On the previous Monday Daddy had his first heart attack. I was five months pregnant with my daughter and living in south Florida. The doctors had every expectation that Daddy would survive, so I did not make the trip to Cape Cod. And then the call came Saturday night that he had had a second massive heart attack and died instantly. I was so angry - not at God, but at my father. How could he do this to me! And within moments I gave God thanks that Daddy hadn't suffered, that he had had a full and wonderful life, and that many people had learned of God's love for them through my father's ministry.

My faith, my living into it, and my spiritual life had an awakening that evening. It may sound strange to say that my father's death restored my faith, but that is the truth. He died knowing that I was finally, at 34, pregnant and that he would have another grandchild to baptize in the fall. But he would not baptize Ann after all. Sadly, for me, he died not knowing Charley or the events that would unfold in my life as my children grew. He died before I could grapple with him face to face about my vocation. But I did talk to him a lot when God's expectations of me were made so clear that I could no longer look the other way. Was he there through that struggle? Oh yes. Was he there through the years of seminary? Is he here with me now? Oh yes. And all of that is hugely important for me and my story.

Please understand. My father was not God. I know that because he made it abundantly clear to me. In my office you will see a piece of calligraphy which says, "Help me, O Lord, to keep my mind fixed on thee and not on me." This mantra helped my father through many rough places in his ministry. The calligraphy was done for him by a parishioner at the cathedral in Cleveland during one of those times. She was a woman in a wheel chair who suffered the effects of a debilitating nerve disorder. The fact that she could do this work was a testimony to her faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. She knew that it was through his grace that it was possible for her to make this gift for her beloved priest.

There are many folks who bring the love of God as we know it through our Lord Jesus Christ into our lives. Those encounters are hugely significant in our stories. This journey is not one we take alone, but in companionship with one another. Who has touched your life with their story? Whose life have you touched with your story? May you continue to know God's blessing along your way.

Ginny+



APRIL/MAY, 2008

April 2 - 8:30-11:30am Trinity at Food Pantry
April 3, 10, 17 & 24 - 9:30-11am Bible Study, Library
April 6, 13, 20 & 27 - 11:30am Choir Rehearsal, Library
April 8 - 7pm Vestry, Library
April 13 & 27 - 9am Teen Time with the Rector, Youth Room
April 18 - Newsletter Deadline
April 20 - 11:30am Ryan Connell Forum, Parish Hall
April 25 - Newsletter Mailing
April 26 - 9am Pastoral Care Team, Library
May 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29 - 9:30-11am Bible Study, Library
May 4, 11, 18 & 25 - 11:30am Choir Rehearsal, Library
May 7 - 8:30-11:30am Trinity at Food Pantry
May 13 - 7pm Vestry, Library
May 18 - 9am Teen Time with the Rector, Youth Room
May 23 - Newsletter Deadline
May 30 - Newsletter Mailing

**Save The Date - Saturday, August 2, 2008 Trinity Episcopal Church
Summer Music Festival at "The Roof" Paradise Township Park**

Pastoral Care News

First of all, let me apologize for having a date printed in the December Newsletter for a meeting in January and then completely forgetting about it. (Have any of the rest of you ever done that?) I have to say there was not a huge line of people waiting at the church that day, but for any of you who were inconvenienced, I'm so sorry.

Having said that, I will now give a date for a meeting in April and I'll write it in my daily calendar right away. We'll gather on Saturday, April 26, starting with Morning Prayer in the church at 9 a.m., meeting following in the library. The Pastoral Care team consists of home visitors, Eucharistic ministers, the Prayer Chain and Healing Ministry. We'll be getting together to check in with each other on procedures and suggestions as to how to improve our efforts at looking after our fellow parishioners, particularly those who can't get out and about.

We've been having some success with phone contacts and we extend thanks to all who provided meals for some of our shut-ins. I look forward to seeing all of the team members on the 26th and I invite any who might wish to join us in this ministry to come to the meeting also.

Kathie Herling

APRIL CELEBRATIONS

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

9 Jeremy Baboolal
16 Joseph Ayers
16 Barbara Gessner
17 Linda Salmon
17 Kathie Herling
28 Gwen Hacker
28 Margot Atherton

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

11 Vernon & Inga Yeich
19 Chris & Heather Holman
26 Tom & Kelly Johnson
30 Dick & Janet Orner

Trinity Episcopal Church Mission Statement:
Share Gods Unconditional Love
With Everyone.

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Our Prayers have been requested for:

Ed Benintende
Steve Clark
Joyce DeGasperi
Bob Dexter
Al Eisenecker
Bill Killpatrick
Jon Ross
Ester Stein
Rhonda Treible

Marion Braithwaite
Lauren Boyadis
Deborah Gower
Mary Baker
Jeff Landi
Anita Rivera
Alex Boehm
Victoria Forstein
Lynn Tinsley
Ann Curry
Lois Rothrock

Dick Orner
Alistair Stewart
Penny Clark
Merrill Nanton
The Yurchak Family
Ron Leone
Marilyn Croneberger
Elaine Tanis
Thanksgiving for the well being of Karen Kern

Book of the Month

Anne Rice is known among many for her vampire stories. Not long ago, she had a conversion experience and returned to the Christian faith of her childhood. In *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt* she offers the story of our Lord's growing up years. It comes from the pen of a writer of fiction who does extensive research. The context she describes is accurate based on what we know about that part of the world at the time. The story she has woven around Jesus fleeing to Egypt with his parents, growing up there, and finally returning home has a ring of truth to it because of that. When you read the book, remember that it is a fictional account of years in our Lord's life that we know little about.

Recipe of the Month

Blueberry Stuffed French Toast

This recipe comes from Carriage Way Bed & Breakfast in St. Augustine, Florida. It was served at the annual Altar Guild brunch on March 15, 2008

10 slices of bakery-type bread cubed (I use sour dough bread)
2 - 8 oz. packages of cream cheese cubed
1 ½ cup blueberries - fresh or frozen (depending on the season)
10 eggs beaten
2 cups whole milk
1 tsp. vanilla
½ cup maple syrup
(Next time I would add some cinnamon or some nutmeg)

In a 9 x 13 inch dish layer ½ of the bread, then the cheese, then the blueberries, then the rest of the bread. Mix the remaining ingredients and pour over layered dish. Cover with saran and refrigerate overnight. Remove saran and cover with foil. Bake at 350 for 45 minutes. Remove foil and continue baking for 30 minutes more. Let set 15 minutes before serving.

Topping:

1 cup sugar mixed with 2 tbsp. cornstarch and 1 cup water. Bring to boil. Add 1 ½ cup blueberries and simmer 5 minutes.

Alternative toppings used at the brunch:

Plain blueberries.

Blueberries heated in maple syrup

Sunday April 20 ... Save The Date !

When we are going through a difficult time, we may hesitate to call even our best friends because we don't want to burden them with our troubles. This can be especially true if we've been going through a series of challenges, and we're starting to feel as if we sound like a broken record. Often, we may feel the urge to withdraw from life. It may seem like remaining withdrawn will keep us protected from the world, but during these times it is important to reach out to those trusted and precious people who care about us the most. Even with our best information and reasoning, we never know when someone else's experience or perspective can give us additional information that we need. God speaks to us through many channels, and when we open ourselves up to receive His messages, we also receive nurturing care from a loving partner in life's journey.

Ryan Connell, a graduate of Stroudsburg High School's Class of 2007, visited the West Bank of Israel, where he met with Arab and Israeli peace activists and entered the tents of Bedouins and the homes of Jewish settlers to listen to their stories and see the injustices they suffer first-hand. He reached out to experience the stories of people who might feel as though they sound like a broken record and have withdrawn. Having some frightening experiences while going through security checkpoints and viewing the walls of separation, rock throwing, machine guns and suicide bombings in the area where Jesus once walked, Ryan asked himself "How would Jesus feel about all this? Would he just go pray or would he go listen to people's stories?"

Ryan will be visiting Trinity Church at the invitation of the Evangelism leadership Team on Sunday April 20 to share with us his stories of what he learned from those whom he visited. Lunch will be served in the Parish Hall after the 10:00 worship and Ryan will be available to answer our questions and for conversation.

This amazing young man did exactly what we've been learning to do by listening to others tell their stories, which is a key piece of evangelism. In Ryan's own words, "Jesus talks about how faith without works is dead. Your first concern is who can we help? Who can we feed? It's so much more important to lift someone up for a day than to make our patio look nice. It's all dust – it's nothing."

We invite you to please join us in welcoming Ryan to listen with our hearts to what he has to share with us on Sunday April 20. Please also invite your friends and neighbors to share in what promises to be an enlightening experience. Perhaps God has a message for us in what Ryan has to bring to us.

Will you come and listen?

With love & light,

Rob McMahan

Chair, Evangelism Leadership Team

REFLECTIONS.....

Do you ever consider what our lives would be like if we didn't have God's grace in the world. Suppose God's grace was withdrawn and God said, OK folks - no more grace - what kind of a world would we live in? what kind of people would we be? I haven't heard very many sermons preached on God's grace and I sometimes wonder if we appreciate, or even try to understand the mystery of what "God's divine grace" really is.

I suppose when John Newton penned the words to the hymn "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me" in 1742, he certainly knew that God's grace is truly amazing because he had experienced it first hand. He had been changed almost overnight, from a rough, murderous slave ship captain, to a follower of Jesus and a believer. He eventually became an Anglican priest and his grave is in a country churchyard 70 miles north west of London.

When we look back over the last few decades of our own short existence here on earth, do we see the effect of God's grace in our own life?, I know that I do in mine. "There but for the grace of God go I", you will have heard that phrase a thousand times.

Recently my wife and I were privileged to view the film Amazing Grace; among other things it deals primarily with William Wilberforce and the abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. John Newton had influence on Wilberforce, so perhaps there is a thread between Newton's "conversion", the end of the slave trade, man's inhumanity to man and God's divine grace.

On the polished black granite of Newton's tomb in that country churchyard I mentioned, are engraved these words, "I am a great sinner, but Christ is a great Saviour", an apt comment to his appreciation of God's amazing grace. "To an unbeliever, an explanation is not possible and for those that believe, an explanation is not required."

M.J.G

Social Concerns

Think Globally - Eat Locally

As we approach the annual observance of Earth Day, the Episcopal Policy Network asks us to take action to reduce the negative effects of global warming. Although some people still question the size of the problem, I think we can all agree that it makes sense, for the environment and for our family budgets, to "live more lightly on the earth". One way to do this is suggested in the following column from the Pocono Record by our own Kathryn Ritter-Vicich. Thanks to Kathryn and the Record for permission to reprint it. Peter Salmon

Book Review: "Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: a Year of Food Life" by Barbara Kingsolver

There has been a flurry of attention paid, of late, to the "locavore" movement - the attempt to find food sources closer to home, by shopping at local farm stands or by raising it ourselves. At the top of the list of books, blogs and magazine articles is Barbara Kingsolver's "Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: a Year of Food Life".

At a time when the problems of obesity, environmental cancers, antibiotic-resistant disease, genetically modified foods and numerous childhood disorders, from autism to premature adolescence, loom large in the news, the suggestion that a return to our distant (for most of us) connection to the land may offer some solutions has captured the imagination of a growing audience. Rising costs as well as risks associated with transportation, packaging, and the projected burden on health care and the environment make this much more than a local issue.

Kingsolver's focus is, first and foremost, on her family's experience. While she doesn't preach, she does not miss the opportunity to inform: theirs was a conscious family commitment to becoming farmers. Kingsolver and her husband, Stephen Hopp, already understood the implications of their commitment - hard work, careful planning, lots of cooking and canning, and studying soils and seasons in a balanced plan for an entire year, from harvest to harvest.

Kingsolver has done her research well, and the reader is drawn into the experience and educated in the bargain. We learn the downside to mass production by huge agri-corporations, and the real costs of consumer demand for food that may, in fact, be contributing to disease and malnutrition (not to mention its virtual tastelessness compared to real foods) - and how we can thoughtfully alter our entire approach to food.

Next to some of the grimmer speculations, there is much more that is positive here: by taking a careful look at our consumer habits and recognizing that "we are what we eat", and demanding better, we can nudge the corporate powers in a more creative direction. In addition, support for local farming business can build communities, as evidenced by the success of thriving farm markets, organic growers and smart land-use practices. The "festival-like" character of this movement in the midst of cities like New York, Philadelphia and Boston has also encouraged consumers to pay better attention.

Eating well and eating healthy is a good thing, as is the opportunity to teach kids that food is more than the packaged hamburger at the fast food joint three times a week, or the processed and over-processed meals that cost 80 cents on the dollar in transportation costs.

"Animal, Vegetable, Miracle" is chock-full of amusing anecdotes, recipes and resources, making it an appealing as well as a "nourishing" read. Maybe we can break some bad habits. This book is a good way to start.

- Kathryn Ritter-Vicich, Staff Librarian, Pocono Mountain Public Library

ANYONE FOR PARABLES?

On Wednesday evenings during April and May, we will be studying the parables of Jesus. What is a parable, anyhow? Why did Jesus use them? And what do they mean? We will research these and other questions. There is a wealth of information online about parables. Alternatively, check out the church library or your local library.

You will determine the agenda. Pick out the parables you would like to discuss, and notify me by word, phone (842-6460) or e-mail (TCSayer@cs.com). We'll study the parables that get the most votes. A list of the parables will be found on the table in the parish hall.

We'll meet on Wednesday from April 23 through May 28. As usual, we'll start with a covered-dish dinner at 6:30, followed by study, ending with Compline at 8:30. Everyone is welcome!

Tom Sayer