



FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR PAUL



Epiphany: a sudden appearance, especially of divinity; a sudden, intuitive perception of or insight into the essential meaning of something; the season of the Christian church year when Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, is revealed in word and action in the world.

Epiphany doesn't quite ring in the new year, but it gets very close. As the church year progresses beyond the birth of Christ we celebrate Epiphany, a time to reflect on the actions of Jesus, the Incarnate Word, in the world. During this season we once again welcome the Magi, who represent the inclusion of the Gentiles in the gospel message (Gentiles were those not included in the Jewish community and who were thought to be unclean). We meet Jesus around the age of 12, the time of life when a Jewish boy traditionally becomes obligated to live under the teachings in the Torah (the first five books of the Bible and the teachings of Moses given on Mt. Sinai). This is known as bar mitzvah, for which there are now familiar ceremonies for both boys and girls (bat mitzvah). We meet Jesus again at his baptism by John in the Jordan River. It's all about the light becoming visible through concrete, compassionate and healing actions and teachings in the world.

Epiphany, a time of light and discipleship, is also a time to consider mission. Mission-the reason for being of any group-is rooted for us in what Jesus does and says. Everything flows from him. We are centered in him, and become even more deeply centered as we mature. When we say, "rooted in Christ," it means that we are rooted in the Gospel stories (Mark, Matthew, Luke and John), which speak of his life, death, resurrection, teachings and actions. We do this because we accept the testimony that Jesus reveals the very heart of God and God's intentions for the world and that he is the Christ, anointed by God for this very purpose. Like the season of Epiphany itself, mission is putting the light shining in the darkness, that is, Jesus Christ, into observable action in the world. We see Jesus engaging all kinds of people, so we, too, do it in our own locations. We see Jesus healing others, so we also engage in healing actions for others. We see Jesus speaking truth to the power of his time in support of the vulnerable, so we, too, engage the world with the gospel values of compassion for the poor, the sick, the stranger and foreigner, the isolated and rejected. We see Jesus pouring his life into the world, emptying himself, so we also seek to empty ourselves for the sake of others. The table fellowship and welcome we receive at the Lord's Table is the grace that we share with others in our daily lives. We are empowered to do this through the Spirit of Christ dwelling among and within us.

Continues on next page

JANUARY

2017



**All are welcome.
Please join us!**



**SUNDAY
WORSHIP
9:00 am**

**Fellowship Hour
Following Worship**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL
10:40 am**

*"A generous man will himself be blessed, for he shares his food with the poor."
(Proverbs 22:9, NIV)*




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From Pastor Paul, continued from page 1,

It is a grand vision and we do it very imperfectly. One aspect of our imperfection is the difficulty we have when we try to apply these values to our own specific location. We agree in principle that serving the poor is the right thing to do, but identifying the poor in Las Cruces and coming up with a strategy is more difficult. We get it that "welcoming the stranger" is a value we agree on, but how do we welcome and assist the refugees on the border a mere one hour from Las Cruces or right here in town? We know that it is right to help those struggling with mental health issues and their families, but what approach do we take in doing that? That is always the question and it isn't easy. It demands analysis, strategy, organization and energy. It demands a willingness to talk openly about possibilities, realistic and otherwise. But when we do that it also builds a community and a culture of service, which in turn attracts others who want to serve others and explore their faith with us. It builds compassion and compassion spreads, pretty much like the mustard seed in Jesus' parable. When this becomes our primary focus- more than questions of church survival or the latest conflict- we will know that we have turned an important corner.

Transition Team

The Transition Team is now in the final phase of its work. This last phase addresses the important question, "Where are we going?" We have moved from, "Where have we been" to "Where are we now" and finally to this crucial question. Timetables are never perfect, but it is more than likely that the Transition Team's final report will be ready at the end of February. Once that report is submitted, the committee's work is complete and the next task begins: forming a Call Committee and beginning the search for your new pastor. The Call Committee will do their work with the Transition Team report in hand and, if the process is followed as it is intended, that report will truly guide the Call Committee in determining the qualities that will best serve Trinity's community and ministry goals. I know that some of you have wondered if perhaps the interim process might last forever! It doesn't, so take heart.

Though I do it often I want to thank the team publicly once again for their outstanding work over these last months. They have worked hard, efficiently, cooperatively and insightfully and are bringing those same qualities to the last phase as well. It is a pleasure to work with this group of people: Lea Beatty, Joe Dearing, Glenn Kuehn, Al Nunez, Jackie Barnett and Krissy Lerdal. Thank you!

A Light Heart and a Great Potential

One of my favorite cartoon moments from Charles Schultz, the creator of Peanuts, is a frame with Linus holding his crumpled blanket to the side with his left hand while pointing upward to the sky with his right hand index finger, looking serious in his adult-child persona and pronouncing, "There is no heavier burden than a great potential." Trinity is a church with a great potential, a status that is both a burden and a blessing. It possesses many wonderful assets and its people are among them. There is so much to build upon here. I pray that we will participate vigorously in this last creative phase and do so with a positive, creative, open, faithful and light heart. Keep Linus in mind!

Some Housekeeping Items

Note: Our **Annual Congregational Meeting** is **Sunday, January 22nd at 10:30 am.**

I will be spending a few days with my wife, Nancie, in Denver. I will fly from El Paso after the Christmas Day service and return later in the afternoon on Wednesday, January 4.

On Christmas Day Heather Prescott (2 weeks old on December 11, 2016), daughter of Madelyn and Harry Prescott, will be baptized during worship. Both parents are currently studying computer science at DACC. We will also be singing carols that day, sharing communion and, since I gave Seth Christmas Day and New Year's Day off to be with his family in Tularosa, I will be playing the piano for the Christmas Day service.

Kris Hanson will play for the New Year's Day worship service and Ken Truax will give the message. There will be no communion on New Year's Day, as no ordained pastors were available to preside. This will be another chance to sing some Christmas carols at the end of the Christmas Season.

Breaking Bread:**Building Blocks of Lutheran Worship**

While he was reclining at table with them, he took bread, spoke a blessing and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus-and he vanished from their sight-Luke 24:30

For each of the remaining months that I am with you I am sharing some brief words about worship. In such a short time I can merely scratch the surface, but I hope these brief summaries will stimulate you to think about and experience worship more deeply and meaningfully.

The opening Confession and Forgiveness, which has been so central to historical Lutheran worship, has come up for criticism in recent years. Some have become uncomfortable with the traditional language, arguing that it has spoken more meaningfully to prior generations but now sounds archaic and worn out. Others have felt that it carries the message of human sin in a way that doesn't allow for the message of grace to come through. It oversells sin, they say, and beats us up. The Augsburg publication *Sundays and Seasons*, which ELCA churches all over the country use as a primary worship resource, offers an alternative Confession and Forgiveness dialogue for each season of the church year in order to put it in more contemporary language and communicate modern sensibilities. But why do we do it at all?

For me the question is, "What are we confessing?" Let's be clear. We are not saying that we are somehow awful people from birth and God is so holy that we just have to grovel for divine love and attention. That is simply wrong on all counts. That would be the young monk Luther's view before he discovered the meaning and reality of God's grace.

A traditional way of understanding our human condition is to see "sin" (in the Greek language, missing the target's mark) as "the self curving in on itself." We tend to be self-focused, leading to distortions of ethics and all other aspects of life. The evidence for this reality lies in our daily news cycle. Even if and when we do wonderful works of service and act selflessly, which is good without doubt, our tendency is to idolize the gift. The gospel provides a higher calling.

The gospel provides a higher calling. We, in our Christian faith, understand that honestly acknowledging our human condition is a way to tell the truth about ourselves and our world. It's both identifying the problem and seeing it as a problem. Like the light bulb in the well-known joke, in order for change to occur we have to want to change and understand the need for it.

That is what and why we confess and why we need the declaration of forgiveness: to turn our lives towards the source of love that gives and nurtures life and showers us with grace. This is what St. Paul means when he writes that we die and rise each day in order to identify with Christ's death and resurrection. It opens our hearts to God.

There are two places in the worship liturgy where the Confession/Forgiveness can be said. One is at the very beginning of the service; it's the first thing in the bulletin. This opening placement enables us to worship in the freedom of forgiveness. The other location is just before the Sharing of the Peace, at the end of the Prayers. In this instance we confess in order to be ready to greet our neighbor in peace, as people forgiven and empowered in the love of Christ. I like both and prefer the second way, but both places make sense.

The framework for Confession is God's grace in Christ, inviting and reaching out to us in order to get us into the light. The point of Confession is not to over-rehearse sin and fault, but to allow us to dwell in the forgiveness of God's grace in Christ. It is for us to become empty so we can be full of the Spirit. One last thing: the Confession and Forgiveness is not required every week. In the liturgical instructions, called rubrics, it is optional.

Next month I will talk about the Kyrie and the Gloria. May your worship experience continue to deepen and grow.

*Taking worship
to the world,*

Pr Paul



Annual Congregational Meeting - Sunday, Jan. 22nd at 10:30 am

Worship Committee Meeting Summary:



The Worship committee met on December 1st at 6:00 pm. Nine members were in attendance.

The meeting covered some items from the November meeting such as Advent season plans and Christmas preparations. The Christmas trees are to be removed before Epiphany and the new oil filled Christ the King candle will be used for Epiphany Sunday. Pastor suggested that the members of the congregation write up devotional thoughts for the Lenten season; Ann has agreed to put them together into a booklet for Ash Wednesday. Efforts to carol for shut-ins met with a lack of interest and perhaps too short of a notice to congregation members.

The next meeting of the Worship committee will be on January 5th, 2017, at 6:00 pm.

Jan 29: A representative from the National Association for Mental Health (NAMI) will join us for a Temple Talk during worship.

Jan 29: Pr Paul will offer another presentation on the Reformation as part of the 500th anniversary Reformation celebration. 10:30 am following worship in the sanctuary.

Fellowship Committee



For quite a while, Bob Barnett has been folding a dollar bill in the shape of a bow tie and putting it in the coffee donation container on Sunday before he starts playing the organ. Our committee decided to present him with a real bow tie that looks like a \$100.00 bill to thank him for all he does.

We plan on having a "Fat Tuesday" celebration this year with pancakes and sausages on Tuesday, February 28th. That is the day before Ash Wednesday. There won't be a charge for the meal, but we do need to know how many will be attending so we can have enough food. Look for a sign-up sheet sometime in late January.

"Jan's Lending Library" is getting full –Don't forget to check out the good books and magazines on the cart. There is a good selection and I am sure you will something you would enjoy reading.

We meet on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 10:00. We would love to see some new faces and new ideas at our meetings!

Tama Garski, 405-1018, rtg1965@yahoo.com

Ladies of Luther and Fellowship Committee

Once again, we joined together to make plates of cookies to give to our homebound. As you can see, we had a wonderful selection of cookies to give out and of course we had fun working together on this special festive ministry!

A huge thank you to Russ and Ellen Fox for donating the new refrigerator for our kitchen. We were able to "recycle" the old one by giving it to the Food Pantry.



When we don't see things the same way, how should we communicate?

Our country is facing a crisis in communication. The church tends to reflect national patterns, so we can see these same patterns in local congregations. Years of divisive political rhetoric have gotten under our skin and weakened our ability and willingness to talk with one another. Over many years we have learned to isolate and separate from each other and to blame others instead of listening and trying to understand and resolve serious issues. Contributing to this state of affairs are news programs beginning in the 1970's that incorporated yelling, blaming and bullying to gain higher ratings, not to mention political "shock jocks" on radio and TV (these are personalities who say intentionally controversial things to gain ratings and a following), but however it began incivility, name calling and finger pointing are fully present today across the political spectrum. Though our 2009 ELCA Assembly was prayerful and respectful thanks largely to Bishop Mark Hansen's leadership, the months and years leading up to it were contentious and full of harsh words, accusations and threats. Our discourse has been infected and our humanity has been diminished in the process. Our Christian values include respecting the dignity of all people created in the image of God. We need to work to reflect this and other biblical values that seek life for all people, and that includes one another.

I have been influenced as well and it bothers me. I will not go along with it and I will speak out against it whenever I have that opportunity (often on Facebook, it seems). In response to all this I have been learning an approach to communication and community building developed by the late psychologist Marshall Rosenberg. He was a down to earth human being who was not content with his graduate psychology training. So he developed what he thought was a more humane way to deal with conflict. You might guess that he did a lot of family therapy as he explored his new approach!

The theory of this kind of communication, called non-violent communication, is simple, but the practice of it can be hard. Here is the basic idea: each of us, in our humanity and thus at a fundamental human level, have very basic human needs. Here are some examples of human needs: a need for acceptance, order, love, being heard, meaning, joy, peace of mind, contribution, support, empathy, belonging, health, clarity and even natural physical needs like food and air. There are many more. When we experience negative feelings, our emotions are telling us that some needs are not being met. On the other hand, when we experience positive feelings, it is clear that our needs are being met and we feel satisfied.

So far it's pretty simple. In order to communicate lovingly and respectfully with one another, then, we need to be tuned in to two basic things-our basic human needs and the basic human needs of others. It is a mutual process. It has to be mutual in order to work. Once we truly hear the needs of the other person, and they truly hear our needs, we can communicate. But there is a challenge. The process requires vulnerability, which can be emotionally scary. Resistance to it is natural, nor are we always able to articulate our own needs. This takes practice.

Jesus saw into the hearts of people and what he saw, I expect, were the deep human needs of people that others missed. Scripture tells us that he felt compassion-a powerful sense of love- according to the original Greek, from deep down in his intestines, his bowels. He heard at a spiritual level far beyond any words that might be spoken. We call ourselves disciples, learners in Jesus' way of being in the world, so we are called to listen to the needs of others as well, and to our own deep needs, too.

When we react angrily, impulsively and judgmentally, we know in that moment that our needs are not being met. At that point we need to pause and listen carefully to our personal needs (ask, "Why am I reacting this way?"), then empty ourselves so that we can simply, clearly hear without judgment what the other person is trying to say. So that our agendas are absent and we are fully present to the other. When a person knows that they are being heard and listened to they naturally relax and a human connection is opened up. When they in turn allow us to be heard in the same way, the circle of human connection is complete. We are no longer arguing. It is at this point that we can find possible solutions that suit everyone. We have to decide, though, if we want to be "right" or if we want to establish genuine relationship with another person. Do we want to argue and create more distance or do we want to connect? When it comes to impulsive responses, "Don't push send" is good advice for us all. Wait, listen to your own unexpressed needs, empty yourself so that you can listen intently to what is alive in the other person.

I hope you will read this more than once and think about it. I pray for a community that is willing to learn to communicate in this way, by listening first to the deep needs and life present in another person and to be sensitive to it in themselves as well. I pray that whomever you choose as your next pastor will find a community already on the path to communicating in a way that brings life and not division. We are not a talk show. We are church, "better together." ~Pr Paul

Trinity Lutheran Church

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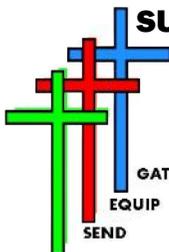
2016 COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ken Truax, Council Pres.
Eric Sletten, Vice Pres.
Richard Rakoff, Secretary
Ann Steinhoff, Treasurer
Ellen Fox
Carl Hagle
Tre Hooks
Bill Lohr
Marlin Schmidt
George Timmerman

Rev. Paul Carlson, Interim Pastor
Pam Crume, Office Manager
Jonathan Crume, Sexton

Trinity Lutheran Church is an ELCA Congregation. We are a community given life by God to:

- † GATHER people to faith in the forgiving and transforming "Presence of God"
- † EQUIP people for a dynamic role in the "Body of Christ"
- † SEND people into the world, driven by the Spirit, to "Share the Grace" of our living God



SUNDAY WORSHIP
9:00 am

SUNDAY SCHOOL
10:40 am

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:30 AM

How To Find Us:

We are located at 2900 Elks Drive, just north of the intersection at North Main St. (US 70) and Elks Drive. From I-25 take the US 70/Main St. exit, turn west to first stop light, turn north one block.

Web Site: www.trinitylutheranlc.org
Email: office@trinitylutheranlc.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/trinitylutheranlc

PRAYER REQUESTS



Please remember these family and friends in our prayers for wholeness and healing: Brandon Allen, Natalie & Tony Anthony, Cynthia Griffee Antone, June Bauer, John Bozzell, Lynn Brandt, Landon Chavez, Karen Dahmer, Al Davis, Michael Deliberto, Carl Duderstadt, Wilba Duggan, Maria Dupre, Jorge & Irene Esaynder, Debbie Fisher, Delores & Jack Fleming, Bill Harlan, Yolanda Hernandez, Christy Hileman, Carla Holzerland, Ted & Stella Jones, Jann K., Juanita Kiss, Kerri MacPherson, Hannalore Maddox, Jesus Marquez, Jaki McCollum, Janet Michael, Anne Miller, Jan Myers, Adeline Nowodworski, David Nunez, Sandra Ogonowski, Richard & Kelly Penc, Harvey Pickrel, Alta Price, Sheila Riedel, Lilliam Rivera, Marcos Rodriguez, Miriam Shouman, Rick Shreffler, Janet Smith, Rosalie Spangler, Joyce Szablinski, Dolly Tellez, Austin Sean Williams, Gary Williams, Lorie Yurcic, Cindy Zediker. Military: Chris Brown/RAF Mildenhall, UK, Edward Fongellaz/South Korea, Colin & Jason Purvis.

Please let the office know if there are changes/additions needed to prayer requests.

CELEBRATIONS

Members celebrating an anniversary:

Rich & Ruth Rakoff 1/25/1969



Members celebrating a birthday:



Maria Dupre	1/04	Bill Boyd	1/15
Emilie Steinhoff	1/04	James Benzie	1/15
Lynn Ernst	1/11	Alia Hussain	1/21
Eric Sletten	1/12	Rozzie Lucy	1/24
Teresa Sletten	1/12	Bill Lohr	1/31
Sid Graft	1/13		

Please let us know if we inadvertently missed your birthday or anniversary!

**HAPPY
NEW YEAR!
2017**

**Working
Better
Together**

The editor of the Crossbeams newsletter is Pamela Crume, TLC Office Manager. The Crossbeams is a monthly publication of Trinity Lutheran Church, Las Cruces, New Mexico.

If you would like to submit information for the newsletter, please e-mail it to the office by the 20th of the month at office@trinitylutheranlc.org. Information for the Sunday bulletin must be submitted no later than Wednesday of each week.

Please notify the office manager if you have any changes to your address, email, etc.

