

# Trinity Times

A newsletter for the members and friends of Trinity Episcopal Church

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## Easter - Pentecost - May, 2007

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Greetings,

Here we are in the middle of the Easter season and approaching summertime. The flowers in front of the church are blooming and the neighborhood is buzzing with activity.

We've been fortunate to see new faces popping in to Trinity from time to time. Some of the new faces have been young and full of energy. This is always exhilarating for all of us.

The spring season seems to wake up some level of energy in all of us. I'm keeping very busy with the Cub Scouts who appreciate Trinity allowing them to meet at the parish hall.

The Scouts are planning a garage sale to be held at my house on June 2<sup>nd</sup>. If you would like to donate, let me know. Please come to the sale and support the scouts.

I'm also working with a committee of individuals who are setting up an Ecumenical Vacation Bible School, which will be held in Waverly.

Trinity young persons will be attending the vacation Bible School and we hope to recruit other young people to spend their week learning and having fun.

The VBS is planned for July 30<sup>th</sup> through August 3<sup>rd</sup> from 6 p.m. to 8:30 pm. Many of the activities will be outdoors as none of us like to spend lovely summer evenings inside. Please let me know if you would like to volunteer to help out with this project. There will be a banner in front of Trinity at some point this summer to make people aware of the VBS.

It so often occurs that summer comes and goes, with vacations, sports activities and lawn work and

we don't make the time to spend with our church community. There seems to always be a decline in attendance in the summer, which with vacations and other activities, is understandable.

BUT... it becomes a little too easy to prioritize things like the lawn getting mowed. Attendance at church goes a little lower on the list of priorities on Sunday morning.

Is it possible the lawn can be mowed on Sunday afternoon? Who knows, after the hour or so in church, you may even feel better about the task at hand. When you prioritize your activities for the summer, please put attending church at the top of the list. Sports and lawn care are a seasonal activity, but worship is not.

This year, I hope to have the annual picnic on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, Trinity Sunday, with the location to be announced very soon. It may be somewhere on McDuffee Street? The exact plans will be in the bulletins and also in the newspaper.

Summer is perfect for picnics and sports.

Summer is perfect for worship.

Summer is a perfect time to remember all the gifts the season has to offer and how it is we happen to have these gifts in our lives.

How do we do that?

In a community of worship with other thankful, caring Christians.

See you in Church!

God's Peace,

Mother Hollywood

**Can religious ignorance be called bliss? Theology is our attempt to understand, by analogy, the faith we profess. It is continuing inquiry, faith seeking understanding, not faith seeking a warm fuzzy.**

*Canon Bill Lewellis, The Morning Call, 4/28/07*

A heated debate on whether to build seminaries to educate clergy took place at a 19th-century Methodist convention. A bishop rose to oppose. Faith was strongest, he contended, apart from distillation by learning. He would favor a preacher without education over a preacher without passion.

A critic rose to the challenge. He asked whether the bishop was grateful to God for his own ignorance. The bishop proudly said yes. Whereupon, historian Martin Marty says, "the critic moved that the convention sing a *Te Deum* [a hymn of praise to God] since the good bishop had so much for which to be thankful."

This story "encapsulates the 19th-century battle inside American Christianity between piety and learning -- a battle that learning lost," writes Stephen Prothero in *Religious Literacy* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2007). Religious ignorance became "a sign of genuine piety."

Checking one's intellect at the church door became apparent in four long-term shifts within the churches: from learning to feeling, from doctrine to storytelling, from the Bible to Jesus, and from theology to morality.

Prior to the shift from learning to feeling, Prothero writes, Puritan clergy held the head and the heart in a creative tension, criticizing both rationalists and enthusiasts. Then came those who "made a virtue of their ignorance ... scorned the learned clergy of Harvard and Yale and romanticized graduates of the school of hard knocks." Millions of Americans sought "not to know Jesus but to feel him."

A shift from doctrine to storytelling became apparent when "dry, dull, dead and dogmatic" sermons gave way to those that entertained. The narrative sermon filled the churches. "Religion prospered while theology slowly went bankrupt," said historian Henry Steele Commager.

There was also a shift from the Bible to Jesus. Rather than struggle with geology, evolution and biblical scholarship, many religionists pledged their allegiance to Jesus-onlyism.

Finally, the shift from theology to morality. "Americans of all stripes became moralists," Prothero writes, "with an ethic that combined Christianity, republicanism and capitalism." Some moved toward the social gospel; others focused on individual behavior. They reduced theology, ultimately religion, to morality. What would Jesus do?

During my occasional short course on theology, I stress that we're all theologians, whether academically trained as such or not, because we all have a take on the content of faith, however simplistic our take may be. One of my lighter-moment handouts is a pledge I suggest my students sign: I think (about God); therefore, I am (a theologian). Never will I begin a sentence with "I'm no theologian, but ..."

Prothero cites President Eisenhower's "piety on the Potomac" during a 1952 meeting with a Soviet official: "Our form of government has no sense unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith, and I don't care what it is." Will Herberg called this strange brew of devotion to religion and indifference to content "faith in faith."

A world-class theologian has written about religion as the capacity of the human consciousness to apprehend ultimate meaning and ultimate value symbolically. Theology, in contrast, he said, questions this apprehension. It is to religion as economics is to business and biology to health.

Theology is our attempt to understand, by analogy, the faith we profess. It is continuing inquiry, faith seeking understanding, not faith seeking a warm fuzzy.

I think Prothero is most helpful when detailing the shift from learning to feeling. Crucial for a fruitful understanding of current conversations and debates often characterized as religious, however, is his recognition of how religion has been reduced to morality.

One need not be religious to be an effective advocate of one side or another of questions such as war, divorce, sexuality, abortion, gun control, the environment, integrity in government and personal relationships. To characterize these as the turf of the true believer may be a telltale sign of religious illiteracy.

Canon Bill Lewellis has been communication missionary for the Diocese of Bethlehem, the Episcopal Church in 14 counties of northeastern Pennsylvania, since 1986, and canon theologian in the diocese since 1998.



# Trinity Episcopal Church - May 2007

Easter - Pentecost

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Trinity Prayer Cycle</b> 5/6 Patrick, Barbara, Mike, Shelley & Jason Barry 5/13 Sean, Donna, Daniel & Savannah Barry 5/20 Don and Beverly Barton, Barbara Bean 5/27 Jan and Janice Beck		<b>1 St. Philip and St. James</b>  <i>Mary Patterson</i>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>  <i>Patrick Kelley</i>	<b>5</b> 10-2 Regional Evangelism Workshop, Towanda
<b>6 Easter 5</b> 9:00 Holy Eucharist 10:00 Coffee Hour 5:00 Choral Evensong, St. Stephen's, Wilkes-Barre <i>Kim Murray, Noah Gurney</i>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>  <i>Cindy Spezialetti</i>	<b>9 ECW Annual Meeting, Kirby House</b>  <i>T.J. Smith Hazel &amp; Ron Hunt</i>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>  <i>Kathy &amp; Kevin Ayres Savannah and Chandler Paul</i>	<b>12</b>  <i>Barry Goldsmith</i>
<b>13 Easter 6 - Rogation (Mother's Day)</b> 9:00 Holy Eucharist 10:00 Coffee Hour  <i>Colleen Barton</i>	<b>14</b>  <i>Cora Orshal</i>	<b>15 Clergy Day</b>	<b>16</b> 6:30 - 8 Biblical Storytellers, St. Peter's, Tunkhannock	<b>17 Ascension Day</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>  <i>Caleb Hunsinger Sharon Cole Phil Kelley Amanda Forbes</i>
<b>20 Easter 7</b>  9:00 Holy Eucharist 10:00 Coffee Hour  <b>----Vestry Meets----</b>	<b>21</b>  <i>Jeff Davenport</i>	<b>22</b>  <i>Patricia Gurney Martin</i>	<b>23</b>  <i>Virginia Ford</i>	<b>24</b>  <i>David J. Bivins</i>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>  <i>Alyssa Catlin</i>
<b>27 Day of Pentecost</b>  9:00 Holy Eucharist 10:00 Coffee Hour	<b>28 Memorial Day</b>	<b>29 Clergy Bible Study</b>  <i>Virginia Caum-Lake</i>	<b>30</b>	<b>31 The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary</b>	<b>Cub Scouts Garage Sale Saturday, June 2 303 McDuffee St.</b>	

*Anglicans Around the World* 5/6 The Diocese of North Kerala (South India); 5/13 Province V, The Episcopal Church; 5/20 The Worldwide Anglican Communion 5/27 The Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, Anglican Church of Canada

*Diocesan Prayer Cycle* 5/6 St. Barnabas, Kutztown, the Rev. John Brndjar, priest-in-charge; 5/13 St. Stephen's Pro-Cathedral, Wilkes-Barre, The Rev. Daniel Gunn, rector, the Rev. David Sullivan, associate, the Rev. Vincent Liddle, associate; 5/20 Trinity&St. Philips, Lansford, The Rev. Robert Wellner, Stella Pispeky, Treasurer; 5/27 St. Alban's, Sinking Spring The Rev. Karl Kern, rector, the Rev. Diane Zanetti, assistant, the Rev. Charles Beem, associate

*Kajo Keji*, 5/6 The Congregation at Koiba; 5/13 The Congregation at Pomojo; 5/20 The Congregation at Sarajale; 5/27 The Congregation at Sodogo.  
*The Diocese of Swaziland* Bishop Meshack Mabuza and the Diocesan AIDS Ministry.



***"If we live  
in the Spirit,  
let us also walk  
in the Spirit."***

***Galatians 5:25***

*Hart ©*

RIP, Johnny Hart, 2/18/31 - 4/7/07

**Celebrate the Day of Pentecost, May 27  
Wear Red!**

**Vestry meets May 20th**

**Don't forget to sign up to host a coffee hour!**

**Trinity Times** is online at our web site in pdf format at [www.trinityathens.org/Archives.htm](http://www.trinityathens.org/Archives.htm). The earliest publication is 11/03.

## **Cub Scouts Garage Sale is June 2nd**

Come one, come all! Either donate or shop or both. While you're doing your annual spring cleaning, set aside the knickknacks that you really don't want anymore, the gifts you never use, and the other things cluttering up your house. All donations are welcome, except clothing.

Remember one man's cast off is another's treasure (just take a look at ebay to see the truth in that).

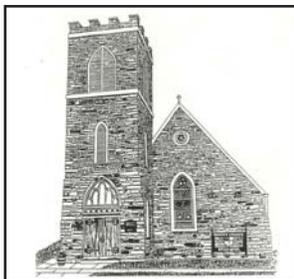
Your donations and/or purchases will fund our cub scout troops activities. You can drop off your donations at the Parish Hall after mid May.

## **Rector's Discretionary Fund**

On the first Sunday of the month any offering that is not designated as a pledge goes into the RDF. Over the past year funds have helped a prisoner, a battered woman, a patient with no place to go and others. Historically, it's purchased acolyte robes, housed the homeless, paid camping fees for young people, bought gas for the stranded. In other words, it is for those who are marginalized, exactly the people that Jesus spent his time with.

*...as you did to the least of these, so you did unto me*

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**May at Trinity**