

Trinity Times

A newsletter for the members and friends of Trinity Episcopal Church

Trinity Episcopal Church
The Episcopal Church in Athens since 1842
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The Rev. Benjamin Lee Lentz, Long - Term Supply Priest

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Late Pentecost - Advent - November, 2020

Rumination: November

"Pilgrims, Puritans, & Giving Thanks"

The Rev. Benjamin Lee Lentz

Excepting the stubborn few, the leaves have fallen from the trees. The frost is on the pumpkins. We've changed all of the clocks in the house (well, one or two timers hidden away have probably been overlooked). Halloween stuff has been put away for next year and the Christmas stuff is "waiting in the wings".

November must be here!

Soon refrigerators throughout the country will be decorated with colorful handprint-turkeys. Black hats with buckles will begin to appear throughout elementary schools in preparation for the obligatory reenactments of the first Thanksgiving feast. Handprint-turkeys, hats with buckles, and dramatic productions are all cute – and equally make-believe.

You see, many people confuse our idealized religious heritage with the real thing. Many people confuse the Separatists or Pilgrims (Plymouth Colony, 1620) and the Puritan Non-Conformists (Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1629). They both sought release from the sovereignty of the Church of England but had little tolerance for dissenters within their own group as well as for other Christian disciplines. Although both had a similar agenda – to form a purely Christian society in a land distant from the king and his church – neither group gave the other much respect.

Although these immigrants, fighting for a foothold in the Americas might have had reason to give thanks, if simply for their survival, it doesn't seem much for which we need to be thankful. The religious persecution and bickering had simply moved from Europe to the new world.

Despite the fact that the icons of religious freedom sought mostly their own particular freedom, the seed

of religious pluralism was planted on this continent. That seed has grown in ways they would never have imagined and that is something for which we should be truly thankful.

We can also celebrate and give thanks for the wisdom of the founding fathers (Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, John Adams, Hamilton and Madison) of the new nation to maintain a distance between the power of those governing and those entrusted with the spiritual welfare of the people. The strategists of the new nation, setting aside the theocracies and pseudo-theocracies of Europe, gave us religious freedom. Because of their insight churches, synagogues and mosques stand side by side throughout our land, each free to worship as they deem fit.

I recently remembered a meeting at the Church of the Redeemer many years ago, two Muslim guests, from Pakistan and Egypt, paid the United States a great compliment. They told us that they greatly admire the religious freedom we enjoy. It was a humbling moment.

How often I take that freedom for granted. How often I am apathetic toward the religious pluralism of this great nation. I've since realized that their tribute also challenged me.

Their comment challenges me to move beyond simply tolerating other faiths. It challenges me to learn more about the other religions that are a part of this great nation. It challenges me to defend as fervently their right to worship as I defend my own. It challenges me to afford them the same respect I expect for my faith.

This Thanksgiving let's be sure to give thanks for the right things. Let us give thanks for the blessings we are afforded in this country. Let us give thanks for the religious freedom we have. Let us give thanks for the challenges and opportunities a religiously pluralistic society grants us.

Diocesan Convention Report

Laura Cama, Delegate



The 2020 Diocesan Convention was conducted on Zoom. No doubt the preparation stage was grueling, but the convention went smoothly. Bishop Kevin spoke first. He gave us a recap of the intensive planning process that has taken place over the past two years. The diocesan budget had been kept at a minimalist level to provide a financial cushion and allow future projects.

The bishop and envisioning team made it a priority to support vibrant and stable congregations. There will be a new staff position, a member of the clergy whose job is to support parish life. This will involve traveling and individual work with parishes. Ministerial grants and assessment relief will be available to struggling parishes.

Bishop Kevin has been particularly active in advocacy for the vulnerable and has formed a new racial justice task force. He is involved with a group led by Dean Kelly Brown Douglas of EDS, whose racial justice work has been particularly influential. He also introduced us to the new Latinx ministry. We later approved a resolution establishing the project. It is primarily active in the Scranton area where the Spanish-speaking population has increased in the past decade.

The budget passed without discussion. Diocesan income has actually increased somewhat even though the number of parishes not paying assessment increased, because most parishes have increased their budgets.

We saw a video about the trip made in February by Bishop Kevin and Charles Barebo for the New Hope project. They visited the refugee camps in Uganda where most of the people of Kajo Keji had taken refuge. Many of the people were still there. Three young women who had graduated from the New Hope sponsored high school spoke about their current lives and plans. All were in marginal employment situations, hoping to continue with professional education when possible, and grateful for the education they received. Bishop Kevin and Charles then checked the condition of the buildings in Kajo Keji. These are standing but will need extensive repair.

An Appeal from the Senior Warden

First of all, my sincere thanks to those of you who have come out and joined in worship services since they resumed following the Covid-19 suspension. We like to think that we are a close-knit, caring and cohesive community. Unfortunately, in this time of continued social distancing, mask wearing, and general isolation, it is sometimes difficult. Some of us long for a return to coffee hour and the social interaction that goes with it. All of us, I am sure, long for the return to the normal Eucharist. But, as we see the increase in local infections, not to mention national and world-wide cases, it is likely that the present restrictions will be required for a significant length of time.

Please consider this a plea for more of us to become more involved. Opportunities abound. Speaking for Barbara, Marn and myself, we would love to have a couple more individuals in the rotation as Worship Leader. Perhaps if you are unable to see yourself in that role, you could volunteer to read the Old Testament lesson. Barbara sets up the altar for the service every week. Clean-up after the service is handled by Barbara, Marn and myself. Martha Pierce handles recording and depositing funds every week. When we resume normal services it would be nice to have a regular acolyte again which we have not had since the passing of our long-term adult acolyte in 2017. Marie Bubniak has handled our outreach efforts for a number of years, but finds herself unable to do so at the present time. Nate Schwartzberg handles all kinds of repairs and maintenance.







Normally we attempt to entice your increased participation as part of a "time and talents" request in the annual Stewardship Letter. I felt this year we should get a head start. Looking ahead to our Annual Meeting in January, it appears likely that we will have to forgo the potluck brunch and social part of the event, probably handling the meeting as efficiently as possible immediately following services unless there is a significant improvement in the Covid-19 situation between now and then. Vestry elections are part of the Annual Meeting. Presently the Vestry consists of five persons whose names appear on the back of the bulletin each week. More would be better. Five is the minimum and the restrictions placed on who can serve for how long make it difficult for us to come up with five willing

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Trinity Episcopal Church - November 2020

Last Pentecost

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
<i>Trinity Cycle of Prayer</i> 11/1 Kelly Murray, McKenzie Elliott. 11/8 Peg Murray, Ray Parker. 11/15 James, Mary and Andy Patterson. 11/22 Mary Beth, Lyude and Savannah Paul. 11/29 Doug, Rosemary and Sarah Plank.		<i>Diocese of Bethlehem:</i> 11/1 Good Shepherd, Scranton, Lifelong Christian Formation. 11/8 St. Luke's, Scranton, The Rev. Rebecca Barnes. Diocesan ECW. 11/15 St. Alban's, Sinking Spring, The Rev. Dennis Reid, Rector. 11/22 Christ Church, Stroudsburg, The Rev. Douglas Moyer. Standing Committee. 11/29 St. Stephen's Pro-Cathedral, The Rev. Timothy Alleman; Holy Cross, Wilkes-Barre.			<i>Kajo Keji:</i> 11/1 St. Matthew Gaderu Parish. 11/8 St. John Mondri Parish. 11/15 Jondale Parish; St. Peter Keriwa Parish. 11/22 St. Matthew Lori Parish; Romogi-Richard Earl High School. 11/29 St. Mark Rodo Parish.		Fall Back! Daylight Savings Time Ends 
1 All Saints Day 10:00 Holy Eucharist II Spiritual Communion and Renewal of Baptismal Vows 	2 AA 8:00 pm	3 Election Day <i>Heather Martin Lake</i>	4 AA Intergroup 5 pm AA 7:30 pm	5 AA 5:30 pm AA 8:00 pm	6	7	
8 Pentecost 23 P-27 10:00 Holy Eucharist II Spiritual Communion <i>Blake Draper Everett Forbes</i>	9 AA 8:00 pm <i>Matthew Hollywood</i>	10 <i>Jim & Mary Patterson</i>	11 AA 7:30 pm	12 AA 5:30 pm AA 8:00 pm	13	14	
15 Pentecost 24 P-28 10:00 Holy Eucharist II Spiritual Communion National Donor Sabbath --Vestry Meets--	16 AA 8:00 pm	17 <i>Kent Stanley</i>	18 AA 7:30 pm	19 AA 5:30 pm AA 8:00 pm <i>Joe Barber</i>	20	21	
22 Last Pentecost <i>Feast of Christ the King</i>  Christ the King 10:00 Holy Eucharist II Spiritual Communion	23 AA 8:00 pm	24	25 AA 7:30 pm	26 Thanksgiving Day AA 5:30 pm AA 8:00 pm 	27 <i>Elizabeth Maneval</i>	28 <i>Alex Mentzel</i>	
29 Advent I 10:00 Holy Eucharist II Spiritual Communion Lectionary Year B begins 	30 Saint Andrew The Apostle AA 8:00 pm	<i>Anglicans Around the World:</i> 11/1 The Church of the Province of West Africa, Archbishop Jonathan Bau-Bau Bonaparte Hart. 11/8 The Church of the Province of the West Indies, Bishop Howard Gregory. 11/15 The Church of Ceylon, Bishops Khiloraj Ranjit Canagasabey and Keerthisiri Fernando. 11/22 The Church of Bermuda, Bishop Nicholas Dill. 11/29 The Lusitanian Church, Bishop Jorge Pina Cabral.		Fill the Carol Reed Memorial Mitten Tree! 11/29 through December 20. 	December 13 is Stewardship Sunday. December's Newsletter will include a pledge card. You can mail it or place in the offering plate on that day.		

November at Trinity

Sundays at 10 a.m. - Holy Eucharist II and Sermon with Spiritual Communion

Daylight Savings Time Ends at 2 a.m. November 1 - Fall Back.



Sunday, November 1 - All Saints Day - Renewal of Baptismal Vows

**Tuesday, November 3 - Election Day
VOTE**

Sunday, November 15 - Vestry meets

Sunday, November 22 - The Last Sunday of Pentecost - Christ the King



Sunday, November 29 - The First Sunday of Advent [Lectionary Year B begins]



From the Senior Warden - Cont'd from page 2

members who meet the requirements. Vestry normally meets after services on the third Sunday of the month, usually for about an hour. Please consider whether you would be willing to become a member.

There are many other ways to become more involved. Please contact me (or Barbara) if you are willing to serve in any capacity.

Thanks,
Dan Gerhart



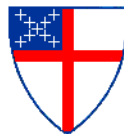
The Carol Reed Memorial

Mitten Tree will go up for the season of Advent on 11/29. We'll decorate it with hats, gloves, mittens, scarves and socks. All items are donated to local schools. Carol began this tradition in 2007 and each year the tree has gotten fuller and fuller. After she died in 2014, we renamed the tree for her; it reminds us of her caring heart

and endless capacity for giving—not to mention her quirky sense of humor —she would always find the most outrageous hat for the topper.

Christmas Outreach Ideas - In the past we have put together items for a meal as well as presents for a local family in need. We have also donated our entire Outreach budget to Kajo Keji, our sister diocese, for scholarships for girls, schools and supplies. As you read in Laura Cama's report on Convention, the need is even greater this year for our brothers and sisters in refugee camps.

Do you have other ideas for Christmas Outreach? This is going to be a rough year for everyone. Please let us know your ideas. Call or write the church office, or speak to a vestry member. Thank you.



**The Episcopal Church
Welcomes You**

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Last Pentecost - Advent

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To seek and serve Christ in all people