

# TRINITY NEWS

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December 2018

Trinity Reformed Church  
North Plainfield, N.J. 07063

Rev. Scott R. Harris, Pastor  
Ginger Smellie, Editor

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Members & Friends,

As I write this, I am both very tired, and very joyful! We have just held a workshop here, designed and presented by the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center called "Healthy Congregations". This workshop was built on the work of Dr. Peter L. Steinke author of the book by the same name; Healthy Congregations.

As a student of Dr. Edwin H. Friedman, who was himself a student of Dr. Murray Bowen the father of Family Systems Theory; Steinke came to understand congregations to be, as families are, systems. Traditionally we think of relationships in terms of a linear pattern. In a working relationship, let's say, the boss "A" does something to or asks something of "B" who has an effect on "C" who then effects person "D" way down the line. If, within that relationship something goes wrong, the blame is directed at the position at the beginning or top; person "A". We might visualize such a linear pattern as:

A → B → C → D

Conflict in such a pattern results in anxiety and the blame for that anxiety is assigned to a particular position. Let's say something went wrong and we are fans of Harry S. Truman's famous saying that, "The buck stops here." In that case, it (the conflict and resulting anxiety) is all the fault of "A"! So to relieve the tension and anxiety "A" is punished or replaced. It's about cause and effect with each part of the pattern effecting only one other part in isolation. The afterschool kids play board games on Wednesdays and one they have is a classic; "Mousetrap"! In this game the players build a "Rube Goldberg" mousetrap and if they are the one that sets it off and causes it to trap their game piece, or "mouse", they lose because their action caused another action which caused the ball to drop which caused the swimmer to dive into the barrel which caused the net to fall and trap their "mouse"! It's all very neat and tidy!

Families (and churches are families) aren't so neat and tidy. They are systems where every person's actions effect multiple other members of the system in a multiple of ways, causing those persons to react, and those reactions then effect everybody else in multiple ways and they react and their reactions affect others and so. This is more like a pinball table with bumpers and flippers bouncing balls all over into each other than it is like a game of "Mousetrap"! In a systems approach to congregational leadership we acknowledge that the church, like a body is susceptible to disease, and that disease isn't "conflict", the disease is "anxiety". Anxiety is like an infectious disease; once it starts it spreads! In a healthy congregation the leaders, both clergy and laity, deal with conflict head-on and work to mitigate the effects of anxiety!

Congregations as systems and their leaders fall somewhere on a spectrum between fully self-differentiated and fully fused. The more fused a system is the harder it is for people to think and act independently and the more reactive the system is to anxiety and the more likely decisions are made based on how to make relationships more "comfortable". Such a congregation is unhealthy. The more differentiated a system is the more open it is for people to have different thoughts and opinions and decisions that are made are grounded in clear beliefs and goals and the less reactive the system is to anxiety. And that's a healthy congregation!  
Thanks to everyone who helped make this event a success!  
Grace & Peace,  
Pastor Scott

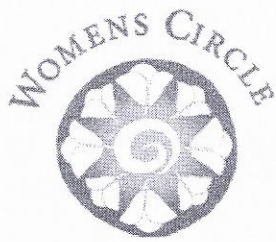
In the month of October Pastor Scott gave the following sermons:

On October 7<sup>th</sup> was our annual "World Communion Sunday" communion service held jointly with our daughter church; Agape House. Pastor Ursula preached this year and our sermon was "Therefore, ...." based on scriptures from Genesis 2:18-24 and Mark 10:2-16.

On October 14<sup>th</sup> our sermon was "Of Camels' Eyes and Needles" and our scripture lessons came from Amos 5:6-7, 10-15 and Mark 10:17-31. From these scriptures it was shown that although salvation is free, discipleship is costly. In response to this it is hoped that we will be aware of and accept the high cost of discipleship.

On October 21<sup>st</sup> our sermon was "ONLY When Called By God". Our scripture lessons for this sermon were Hebrews 5:1-10 and Mark 10:35-45. In this sermon we learned that leadership in the church is not a position of power to be campaigned for, but a call to servanthood from God to be fulfilled. In response we were encouraged understand serving on consistory as a calling from God and a service to God through service to others.

On October 28<sup>th</sup> our scripture lessons came from Job 42:1-6, 10-17 and Hebrews 7:23-28 and our sermon was "What Job Learned". We discussed the fact that in the end of the story of Job, he didn't worship God in order to receive a reward, but in trusting, obeying and serving God in spite of calamity and suffering, Job learned that God is faithful. In response we are asked to trust that God is faithful, even during our tough times.



BROEK CIRCLE – will meet on Tuesday, December 11th at 11:00 p.m. At the home of Joanne Nuber for their annual Christmas lunch.

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Broek Circle will once again collect “Used” Christmas cards (front only). A basket will be in the Narthex starting January 1<sup>st</sup>.

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Members of Broek and Jacoba went to Port Newark in October and packed 362 packages for the Christmas at Sea program!

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JACOBA CIRCLE – Christmas meeting Monday, December 10th at 7:00pm in the Library Lounge. Linda Raysick, hostess.

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December, 2018

- 4. Leslie Zarnowski
- 9. Jennifer Kenderdine

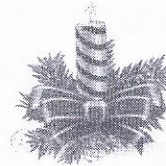


### FESTIVAL OF CAROLS

Sunday, December 9th  
At 2:00 p.m. Bring your friends!

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Monday, December 24<sup>th</sup> – 8:00 p.m.



Carols, Candlelight, Cookies and Fellowship

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From Pat Ledger:

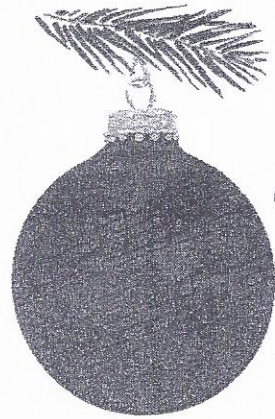
Many thanks for your cards, get well wishes, and altar flowers I received following my recent surgery.

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January Newsletter DEADLINE -

Friday, December 14<sup>th</sup>





*Sounds  
of the  
Season*






NAME THAT TUNE

1. Colorless Yuletide
2. Castaneous-Colored Seed vesicated in a conflagration
3. Singular yearning for the twin anterior incisors
4. Righteous Darkness
5. Arrival time: 2400 hours Weather: Cloudless
6. Loyal Followers Advance
7. Far Off in a Feeder
8. Array the Corridors
9. Bantam Male Percussionist
10. Monarchial Triad
11. Nocturnal Noiselessness
12. Jehovah Deactivate blithe Chevaliers
13. Red Man en route to the Borough
14. Frozen Precipitation Commence
15. Proceed and Enlighten on the Pinnacle
16. The Quadruped with the Vermilion Proboscis
17. Query regarding Identity of Descendant
18. Delight for this planet
19. Give attention to the Melodious Celestial Beings
20. The Dozen Festive 24 hour interval



# DECEMBER

Sun                      Mon                      Tue                      Wed                      Thu                      Fri                      Sat

Every Sunday 10:00 a.m. Worship in Sanctuary						1.
2. Communion First Sunday in Advent 	3.  Consistory 7:30pm	4.	5.  Bible Study 7:30pm	6.  Choir Rehearsal 7:30 pm	7.	8.
9. *Festival of Carols 2pm  *Second Sunday in ADVENT 	10.  Jacoba Circle 7:00	11.  Broek Circle 11:00pm	12.  Bible Study 7:30pm	13.  Choir Rehearsal 7:30 pm	14.  Newsletter	15.
16. *Third Sunday in ADVENT 	17.	18.	19.  Bible Study 7:30pm	20.  Choir Rehearsal 7:30 pm	21.	22.
23. *Fourth Sunday in ADVENT  30.	24. * Candle Light Service 8pm  New Year's Eve! 31.	25. 	26.	27.	28.	29.