



Lifeline

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The Church of the Holy Trinity

An Episcopal Church

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A Message from Our Rector, *Fr. Kevin M. Cross*

Joy

On Gaudete Sunday, Deacon Lisa delivered a sermon on joy that struck a chord with many of you. I decided that this would be a great message to include in our first Lifeline of 2022. Lisa has shortened her message to fit but has not lost any of the core message of God's dream of joy for the world. Let these words inspire you to actions of spreading God's joy to the world around you.

"Here is joy, unspeakable joy, joy which the world cannot see or touch, nor the powers of darkness come near to interrupt, and this joy is full of glory." These are the words of Quaker Isaac Pennington.

These words seemed a perfect way to introduce the topic of joy. Whatever else is going on, it is important to remember to be joyful. The readings for Joy Sunday are certainly joy-filled. "Sing aloud, shout. Rejoice and exult with all your heart," says Zephaniah. From Isaiah: "Surely it is God who saves me, I will trust in him and not be afraid." And Paul tells the Philippians: "Rejoice, again I say rejoice! The Lord is near, do not worry about anything." These are words of pure joy.

But we know that life is not always easy and happy. John the Baptist brings us back to this reality when he yells at the crowd: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Those very harsh words remind us that people do not always get along, and there is much strife in the world. If someone yelled that at me, I think I would either tune out and walk away, or become defensive, and confrontational. But the joy in the gospel is realized in what comes next, and what comes after that. The crowd didn't turn away or start a fight, rather they asked, along with the tax collectors and soldiers: "What then should we do?" Whether the people truly wanted to see God's salvation, or just wanted to avoid the wrath doesn't really matter. God can use it all. However, whatever we present to him, he can use to deepen our relationship. We can't ever be away from God. But we can forget how to open our eyes to see that we are in God's loving presence always. And when our eyes are closed that way, it is hard to be in joy.

John then answers the crowd with things that are very doable. Give someone who doesn't have one your extra coat. Do your job well and with integrity. Don't take advantage of your position. So simple, but that is where the joy is - seeing a job well done, helping your neighbor - that is where the joy is because that is where we see God. John is telling us one way to live into God's will. Pennington is noted to have written about the incredible joy that comes from turning your will over to God. That's it. That is the secret to joy.

So, putting it all together, open your eyes, turn your will over to God, shout and rejoice - and there you have joy. Easy right? Sometimes, yes. When things are going well, it is usually easy to be joyful.

But what happens when you are going through a really rough patch? The cancer diagnosis, financial woes, then never-ending work stress. Can you remember to be joyful then, or even remember what joy feels like? A definition of joy by theologian Henri Nouwen may help. First, he describes something a little different - happiness - as depending on external conditions.

Make no mistake, it is not happiness we are speaking about. Now there is nothing wrong with happiness, but it is dependent on things out there, which will come and go. And we have no control over those things. But joy, Nouwen said, is "the experience of knowing that you are unconditionally loved and that nothing - sickness, failure, emotional distress, oppression, war, or even death - can take that love away." Thus, joy can be present even in the midst of sadness or disease or stress. It is not sac-religious or insensitive to be joyful even with all the chaos of our current reality. No, it is not sac-religious, it is imperative. There is always some sort of distress and oppression going on somewhere. And it may call us to action. But through it all, no matter the outcome, we are unconditionally loved.

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CHEERS and APPRECIATION

- Tremendous appreciation to the **Altar Guild, Flower Guild, Ushers, Greeters, Set Up Crew, Sunday School, Choir & Musicians, and everyone else** who made our Christmas Services a time of joy and beauty. God came through with some nice weather considering the time of year. The Sunday School adaption of the pageant was marvelous. It even brought a couple of grandma's to tears. The music by Cora and John was lovely with the attendees whole heartedly singing the carols. Our roadies did a marvelous job setting up and taking down the equipment. The Altar Guild set a lovely altar and managed the transition so that we are all set for the 7 pm broadcast. The music at the 7 pm service by Cora, Denise Nathansen and Melissa Wise was heavenly. The ushers and greeters created a welcoming community environment. An attendee at the 3 pm service remarked on how his heavy heart was uplifted by the warm, joyful greeting he received.
- Thank you to the **Delmarva Trio and to Cora, Martha Britt, Linda Sattler, and Maris Wicker** for the inspiring Advent music program.
- Thank you to our Sunday School and Youth for their inspiring Christmas Pageant: **William Schmidt, Joshua Schmidt, Pepper Rohman, Josphe & Justin Callahan, Poppy Kellogg, Will Straub, and Jack O'Mara**. Thank also to our Sunday School teachers **Barbara Cross, Kathy Becker, and Pucky Lippincott**
- Heartfelt warmth and thanks to **Garden and Garnish and Doc's Sunset Grill** for keeping us warm with the loan of their tent heaters!
- Thank you to **our Vestry, mission teams, spiritual growth leaders, Sunday School and youth leadership, parish administrator, Connie Greenhawk, Deacon Lisa Webb, and music director, Cora Bruner** for your dedicated service. It takes a village!
- Congratulations to our newly confirmed **Colin Lang, Grace, Grant & Kelsey Meyerle, and Josh & Will Schmidt**. We take delight that your faith journey led to this blessed event and are extremely proud of you.
- Thank you to our copy provider, **ABS Business Systems**, for their very generous donation of 100 macaroni and cheese meals for our local food bank.

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I believe it is one of our most important tasks as Christians, as people of God, to own that, to let it penetrate the depth of our being. It is just another way of expressing that we have turned our will over to God. And when that is our truth, we can't help but be a calming and loving presence to everyone we meet. To be in joy and invite others in as well. That is when the kingdom of heaven really bursts forth. It is also important to follow the exhortations of John and share our extra coat with someone in need. But we won't always have an extra coat, or even one for ourselves. We are, however, always loved unconditionally, and can always be joyful, and can share that love and that joy with others.

A few verses beyond the lectionary reading, Paul talks about this with the Philippians. He wrote: *'I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.'*

With practice, we too can be content, in joy, in all situations. It is God who gives us this strength. And it is not only for our benefit; this truly helps heal the world. We simply turn our will over to God, and know we are loved no matter what.

Amen - Dr. Deacon Lisa Webb

Continued from previous column

- Thank you to **all who donated warm clothing for the Tornado Relief Program**. I heard that people from Holy Trinity were seen dropping off donations all day long to this program. You are a good people!
- Thank you to parish administrator **Connie Greenhawk** for her patience with me and her dedication to making sure all loose ends are tied together. You are a saint.
- It has been a wild ride this year. However, we can all take pride in that the bumps along the way were navigated well. I give thanks for each of you. Your contributions and good cheer made it a delightful trip. **You all** have been a blessing to me and the whole HT family. Thank you. I look forward to another great year ahead.

Blessings. Fr. Kevin

Wednesday Lunch Bunch Ministry – Volunteers Needed

The Wednesday Lunch Bunch is a long-standing ministry of Holy Trinity. The ministry strives to provide meals to the home bound in the communities of Oxford and Trappe. Many of our recipients are individuals whose names have come to us through Social Services, but we also have our own list of people with health issues, recent surgeries, and those who just need a friendly visit. While the pandemic has challenged this ministry in many ways, we are currently delivering meals on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. Our dedicated Soup Meister group, headed up by effervescent chef Larry Paz, prepare a delicious soup, sandwiches, fruit and a treat for each meal. Our team of Lunch Bunch Messengers deliver 30 + meals/week with a smile on Wednesday mornings. On special occasions the Oxford Garden Club and our Sunday School send along flowers and cards. It is a ministry of joy and love.



We are seeking additional volunteers to join this jolly crew. Currently we are in need of messengers to assist with delivering the meals on Wednesday mornings. We

hope you will consider offering a bit of your time to this important ministry. Please call the office to sign up. 410-226-5134. You will not regret doing so!

Additionally, we would like to expand our ministry to include the first and third Wednesdays as well. If you are interested in joining a team to take on one or both days, we would welcome you with great thankfulness.

For another way to support this ministry, please see the Just Once Per Year article on this same page.



Just Once Per Year Program to Resume

The Just Once Per Year program (JOPY) was rolling along really well when Covid hit and the Lunch Bunch program had to stop making and delivering food to those in need in our community. Since JOPY's inception, we church members covered every week for two years, by committing to provide either the funding or the actual groceries needed for the weekly lunch. Lunch Bunch has partially resumed, now providing lunches on the second and the fourth Wednesday of each month. Each lunch consists of soup, a sandwich, a piece of fruit and a dessert item. There is a need to resume JOPY to financially cover the cost for groceries. Would you recommit to the program by sending in a check that will cover the cost of one lunch per year? The average cost for the weekly lunch is \$100.00, feeding approximately 30 people. If yes, please be sure to write "JOPY / Lunch Bunch" in the memo area of your check so that it is properly allocated. Thank you for supporting the Lunch Bunch members who, on behalf of the congregation of The Church of the Holy Trinity, provide nourishment and much joy to our community.

Sharon Paz

Holy Trinity Milestone

Passed on:

Anne Frezi Legare December 20, 2021

Confirmations on December 5, 2021

Colin Lang

Grace Meyerle

Joshua Schmidt

Grant Meyerle

William Schmidt

Kelsey Meyerle

Bishop San's Visit

On Sunday, December 5th, Bishop San attended his annual visitation with the Church of the Holy Trinity in Oxford where he confirmed six young people and celebrated the dedication of the new Claire Chapel.



In keeping with covid protocol, the service was held under a heated tent. The Bishop also spent some casual time chatting with the new Confirmands (pictured above, right). This amazing group of students are an indicator of the healthy life of the parish and the future viability and sustainability of the diocese.

At the conclusion of the service, the Rector, Reverend Kevin Cross and Deacon, Reverend Dr. Lisa Webb along with the bishop and congregation, headed over to dedicate and consecrate the new Claire Chapel which is located on the church campus.

Claire Chapel was donated by our brother Al Smith, a long-time faithful member of the parish and the Diocese of Easton in honor of his late spouse Claire. The doors of the building were purchased and shipped from England as part of a redundant chapel. This goodwill gesture, of giving new life, is reminiscent of a *Parousia project* or *Second Chance* initiative. A beautiful representation of what God can do for a diocese living in Parousia.

The parish feels that this spiritual center, which is open to the public, will allow people to come for private meditation, reflection, and bible study. The bishop sees this as a very holy event; an inspiration to everyone gathered to witness the church connecting to the people of the community in such a spiritually tangible way.

The Bishop commends the leadership of the Rector, Reverend Kevin Cross and Deacon, Reverend Dr. Lisa Webb, along with that of the vestry and lay leadership of the congregation - for their vision to ensure a place of private devotion that is open for the entire community.



Music

Cora and The Delmarva Trio Inspired Our Advent Service



Keyboard – Have a keyboard to donate?

Our music program is seeking an 88 key-weighted-digital-action-piano. Cora would like to be able to offer more multi-hand piano music at future services and programs. If you have a keyboard you are no longer using, please talk to Cora. We would love to hear more of this amazing and unique music.

ECW Christmas Bazaar

Dear Friends,

What an amazing Christmas Bazaar! It truly was “re-imagined” this year. The tent added something new and different with its European market flavor.



After a difficult period dealing with Covid and being socially isolated for over a year and a half, it was great to celebrate the Christmas season sharing the Christmas spirit with our Church community, our town of Oxford, and others that are new to our village. Our ECW successfully raised approximately \$14,500 – all to be given to various local charitable organizations.

A huge thank you to all who worked, planned, and helped during the event. Together we did an outstanding job. Also, thank you to all that attended the bazaar and purchased our beautiful wreaths, delicious baked good, frozen foods, and many other Christmas items.

Finally, thanks to all the men who did the difficult heavy work needed hauling everything out and then returning everything to the Parish Hall – your hospitality table was hugely successful!



We all look forward to again working together on next year’s Christmas Bazaar. We wish you all a joyous Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Sara and Sally (Co-chairs)



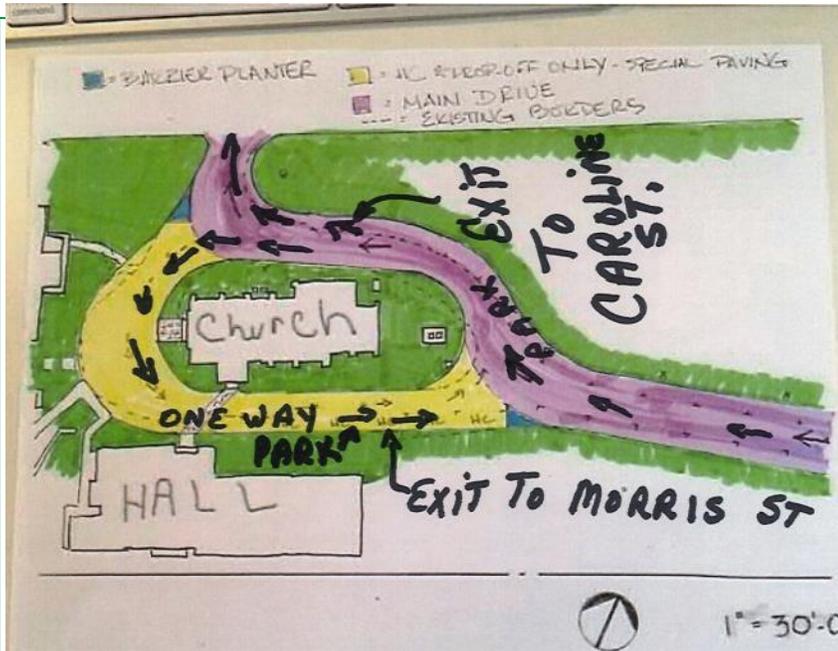
Absolute Business Solutions

One of our business partners surprised with a donation of 100 boxes of macaroni and cheese. These will be used for those in need such as Neighborhood Center and Care Paks. Thank you to Dan Rinaldi and his team.



A Safety Moment

Traffic Flow



ing. Parking between the church and parish hall may be accessed by circling around the church so that when parked, autos face and will exit via Morris St. All other cars will exit via Caroline St. Following this traffic pattern will eliminate cars arriving from the Morris St entrance from driving between the church and parish hall. A one-way sign and arrow direct the flow. It is our hope that bringing traffic to a stop in this high-risk area will enhance the safety for all members of the parish, but especially the safety of our Sunday school children and parishioners with mobility difficulties.

Sunday School

Many thanks to the Sunday School children and their parents for providing such a meaningful service on Christmas Eve. Although we only had a few times to practice, the children did a wonderful job showing the true meaning of Christmas. We are pleased to welcome Gene and Ellis Williams to our Sunday School family. Also participating were Justin and Joseph Callahan, Poppy Kellogg, and Pepper Rohman. Will Straub was a great shepherd during practice but unfortunately was unable to join us for the service.

It was wonderful to have former Sunday School students, and now confirmed members of our community, Will and Josh Schmidt, who volunteered to be the narrators. These past

two years with Covid we have had to adapt our pageant and this meant no lines for anyone to learn. Will reminded the Sunday School students, "You got off easy. In MY day, we had to memorize our lines."

We also thank God for a beautiful day for the pageant and most importantly, for his son Jesus. That's what Christmas is all about - celebrating the birth of Jesus who came to show us that Love is the Way.

Barbara Cross



Connie's Corner



“Keep your face always toward the sunshine, and shadows will fall behind you.” — **Walt Whitman**

“Spread love everywhere you go.” — **Mother Teresa**

“Just don't give up trying to do what you really want to do. Where there is love and inspiration, I don't think you can go wrong.” — **Ella Fitzgerald**

“In a gentle way, you can shake the world.” — **Mahatma Gandhi**

Written by Connie Greenhawk

The snow drifted down from the sky above
 As if the angels sent us a feather of love
 Snow makes the world shiny and bright
 Glistening medallions all through through the night
 Can you hear the angels as they sing
 Words of God they willingly bring
 So look skyward and welcome the snow
 Let it warm your heart and let your soul glow.

If you would like to submit a favorite saying or thought, email to Connie at office@holyltrinityoxfordmd.org

CELEBRATE OXFORD 2021

Since we could not hold our annual Celebrate Oxford Thank You Party this year, we decided to do something different to thank all of the volunteers and town workers who help make Oxford a “little piece of heaven.” Certificates for a treat at the Oxford Social Club/Highland Creamery and this letter were distributed during the week of December 19th.

Greetings:

For the many years, we at the Church of the Holy Trinity have enjoyed hosting an event for all of you who make this community such a pleasant place to live. We have celebrated with a southern barbeque, a trip to Italy, and transformed the church grounds into Oxford-ritaville While the arrival of Covid caused us to change our plans last year we had hoped to resume our celebrations and to something equally fun this year. Alas, Covid has continued and once again we were not able to offer you a night of food and fun this past year.

While we cannot celebrate in the style we are used to, we still want you to know that you are appreciated and loved. Without your presence in this community, Oxford would not be the “little piece of heaven” that it has become.

So, this year we thought what says “celebrate” better than ice cream? As a token of our ongoing appreciation for you we would like to treat you to some delicious, world famous Highland Creamery Ice Cream, a beverage and/or pastry. Through the generosity of the Church of the Holy Trinity and the Oxford Social Club/Highland Creamery, we present you with this gift certificate.

Enjoy ice cream, sundaes, milk shakes, malts and slushes (don't forget the frostie paws for your fur babies)- whatever floats your boat! And remember as you enjoy this summer treat that we are grateful to you for all that you do.

Blessings,

Fr. Kevin, on behalf of the Church of the Holy Trinity community



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The Church of the Holy Trinity



Lifeline



MISSION

The Church of The Holy Trinity, an Episcopal Parish in Oxford, Maryland: a caring Christian community dedicated to growing in God's love through worship, study, service and fellowship.

Who We Are

We are a small parish with a big heart comprised of committed people willingly sharing their talents to help those in need.

We are all seekers on a spiritual journey; encouraging of others also on the journey, and non-judgmental of where one might be on that journey.

Service Schedule is as follows:

**Morning Prayer Tuesday 8:30 am
via Zoom**

**Holy Eucharist Services are held
8:00 am and 10:00 am with the
first Sunday of every month a
combined service at 9:30 am in
person and Broadcast**