



TRINITY TOPICS

The Newsletter of Trinity Episcopal Church

POTTSVILLE, PENNSYLVANIA

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November/December 2024

Musing from the priest's computer.....November -December 2024

John 3:9: Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?"

Luke 1:34: Mary said to the angel, "How can this be...?"

There is a spiritual practice called "Lectio Divina", which is typically done in 4 steps:
Lectio, Meditatio, Oratio, Contemplatio.

LECTIO: One selects a passage of Scripture and reads it, usually slowly out loud, and repeats it by reading it slowly again once or twice.

MEDITATIO: Next, consider a word or phrase in the passage that stands out to you.

ORATIO: Pray, focusing on the words that stood out to you asking God for guidance in meaning or action.

CONTEMPLATIO: Finally sit in the quiet of the moment, considering the majesty of God and the peace of God's presence.

Lectio Divina can be a worthwhile practice as we move from Ordinary Time-- the weeks after Pentecost--and into the Advent and Christmas seasons. It can be done alone, or as a group, or even as a family practice.

The words above from the Gospels of St John and St. Luke have always stuck with me. Typical words I think because we hear them or say them frequently, often under joyful and hocking emotional circumstances. Consider a visit from a long-lost relative or receiving a threatening medical diagnosis. Our minds resort to that "How can this be" almost instantaneously! But our humanity and our connection to the Supreme God the Creator can provide grounding readily. In addition, the gathering of the great cloud of witnesses—our family, our friends, and our fellow churchgoers—can offer affirmation and peace and enable us to share our joys and sorrows.

We will rush into seasons of Thanksgiving and Advent as the weather chills and as daylight fades faster than ever day to day. These later sunrises and longer nights present an opportunity to pray the Lectio Divina as a new or reconstituted prayer practice.

Right before Christmas, at the Winter Solstice, more minutes of daylight arrive! Hope and light renew us. These seasons also present us with the opportunity to invite others to pray with us, and to come to worship with us too. Remember, the Episcopal Church is still the best-kept secret in Christianity.....so let's NOT keep it a secret!

Rest in the Love of Christ, and keep each other in your prayers!

In brotherly love,

Fr. Kurt

Trinity Church's Mission Statement

"Living, loving, sharing in the name of Jesus Christ"

Vision Statement

"Honoring the past as we build a strong foundation for the future, while sharing our Christian faith through service to the community."



Advent Project For Nursing Homes

At each entrance, there is a box waiting for your generous gifts of travel-size items or small sizes (7 or 8 oz.) for nursing home residents who have very little disposable income. This was a huge success last Christmas and all churches are now involved so the blessing of giving should be tenfold. Here are examples of items needed:

Toothpaste and toothbrushes

Shampoos and conditioners

Body lotions, hand lotions

Travel tissues

Nail files

Disposable razors

Mouthwash, breath mints

Combs

Hand wipes, bathroom wipes

Hand sanitizer

Lip balm

Deodorant

The deadline for filling the boxes is December 10 and the items will be delivered in Christmas bags to those most in need. Christ's Love with a Christmas bow!

Christmas Flower Memorials

In this edition of the TOPICS, you will find the form for Christmas flowers in memory of loved ones or thanksgiving for blessings. The deadline is Sunday, December 8. Please be precise as to names and intentions since Kristy is new to our parish and will not know what specific requests were made in 2023.



Thank you for your attention to this.



Coffee Hour

Coffee Hour is held on the second Sunday of each month. We invite a family or individual to sign up to bring a treat to share for fellowship after the service. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the hallway behind the altar.

Altar Guild

Volunteers are needed for the Altar Guild. As with the Counters, we have very few volunteers. Setting up for a Eucharistic service is easy to learn and only takes about 15-20 minutes of setup at the end of each week. On Sundays after the service, guild members clean up and put the consecrated elements in the tabernacle when necessary. If you are interested, please see Karen Portland or Cora Gamelin-Osenbach.



Trinity's 200th Anniversary

In 2027 we will be celebrating our parish's 200th anniversary! It seems like a long way off, but it will be here sooner than we think. A committee needs to be formed to discuss possible events for this momentous celebration. A liaison with the Historical Society should be part of this. If you are interested in serving on a committee or have any ideas for events, please speak to any member of the Vestry to begin this process. Many thanks!



Clothesline-of-Love

Clothesline-of-Love season is fast approaching. Items requested are socks, gloves, hats, scarves, all sized from kids to adults and one-gallon clear plastic freezer bags. Items can be dropped off at the church during office hours. Any additional questions, please contact Paul Barnwell at 570-617-7286.



Soup Sale

Calling all good cooks, we will be holding a soup sale in the church lounge on Sunday Nov. 3 following service. This is a perfect time of year when we are looking for warm and delicious soups, stews and chili to enjoy for lunch and supper. Start looking up your favorite recipes so we have another great selection to sell. The prices for the soup will be \$10.00 quart and \$5.00 pint. Containers will be available in the church lounge on the piano.



Holiday Treat Exchange

On Sunday, December 8, we will have the Annual Treat Exchange. You are invited to join in the fun. Bring a tray of your favorite cookies or some other holiday treats (like spiced nuts or candy) to display in the lounge. After the service, everyone gets a bag to select their favorite treats to take home. No cakes or pies please which are difficult to bag.

If you are not able to bake or create something, please join us for fellowship and sharing goodies to go. There will be plenty for all.

Gas Boiler Update

Miller Mechanical Enterprises of Schuylkill Haven was tasked to demolish and remove the old gas burner and install a new Burnham gas boiler. A new cement pad was installed by Robert Burns Masonry. The newly installed boiler is complete and has passed all Pennsylvania inspections. It is now ready for the heating season.



The cost of the new gas boiler is over \$85,000. Any donations toward this new heating system will be appreciated. Please include your name and envelope number, and "gas boiler" on the envelope and place your donation in the offering plate or send it to the church.



Phone and Email Update

As time goes by, we sometimes forget to update our addresses, phone numbers and email information at the office. If this is the case for you, please contact Kristy Sarge at the office 570-622-8720 or email your updated info to episcopalch200@gmail.com.

Prayer List

We are in the process of renewing our prayer list. If you would like someone included in that list, please call the office at 570-622-8720 and let Kristy know.





Calling All Decorators

On Sunday, December 22, volunteers are needed after the service to help decorate the church for the Christmas Eve service. Help will be needed to place poinsettias, the crèche, hang sconces and wreaths, fluff bows and change altar hangings, etc. after the 9 am service. Many hands make light work. Thank you to anyone who may be able to help.

Vestry Members Needed

As we begin to think ahead to our holiday celebrations and the end of the year, we must also think about the Annual Meeting on January 26, 2025, and the need for new Vestry members. Vacant spots need to be filled for 3-year terms. The Vestry meets on the fourth Sunday of each month to discuss pertinent issues in the church and make decisions that impact the parish. This is another ministry for people to consider with time and talent. Please contact any Vestry member for more information and with any questions you may have. "Here am I, Lord..."



Committee Reports and Vestry Bios

All committee reports and biographies for those standing for Vestry must be in the office no later than Wednesday, January 8, 2024, so the Annual meeting report can be prepared for the meeting on Sunday, January 26. If you need a form, please call or email Kristy. 570-622-8720 or episcopalch200@gmail.com

Counters Needed

We need counters for Sunday mornings after the service. We still have only 4 counters and when several are away, the counting and subsequent deposit are delayed. Another opportunity for ministry which only takes a couple of hours per month when there are more volunteers. Please speak to any member of the Vestry if you feel called for this ministry. Thank you.



Christmas Flowers

Donations for Christmas Flowers may be made by completing this form and returning it with your contribution by Sunday, December 8, 2024



Flower donations received after Dec. 8 will go into the general flower fund.

Given by: _____

In memory of: _____

In Thanksgiving for: _____

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY



THE MUSIC CORNER

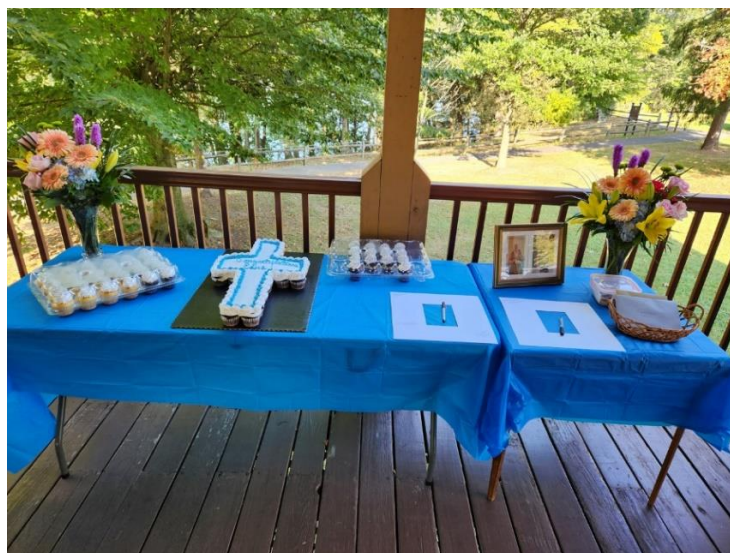
by Cora A. Gamelin-Osenbach

Mark your calendars!! On Sunday, December 15 at 2 pm, organist F. Allen Artz, III will present a Christmas organ concert featuring a carol sing to benefit our church. What a blessing! Allen is a great friend of Trinity and these fund-raising concerts have been so successful in the past. All the proceeds from this concert will go to the upkeep of Trinity. There will be a suggested donation of \$10.00.

What a wonderful offering for the season. If needed, a weather date for December 22 is scheduled.

Edna Rauco's Retirement Party

Edna Rauco, our Church Administrator for the past 46 years, retired from her position at the end of August. A picnic for the Episcopal Church of Schuylkill County was held on Sunday, September 15, at 10 am at the Sweet Arrow Lake large pavilion in Pine Grove for Holy Eucharist and then a picnic/reception followed the service for Edna's retirement.





Trinity Episcopal Church

Centre Street at Howard Avenue
Pottsville, PA

presents

F. Allen Artz, III

organist
in concert on

Sunday, December 15, 2024

2:00 PM

+++

Hark, the Glad Sound!

Carols for Organ and for Audience Singing

+++

\$10.00 suggested donation**

***ALL proceeds from this Concert/Carol-Sing
will benefit the
Trinity Episcopal Church*

November

2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
ADVENT PROJECT UNDERWAY BOXES AT EACH ENTRANCE					1 6pm Necrology Service Chapel of Resurrection at Charles Baber Cemetery	2
5 Clocks back one hour  9 am Service Stewardship Sunday <i>Bring cards to be blessed</i>	4	5	6 12pm Healing Service	7	8	9
10 9 am Service Veterans Sunday Coffee hour following	11	12	15 12pm Healing Service	14	15	16
17 9 am Service	18	19	20 12pm Healing Service	21	22	25
24 9 am Service 10:30 Vesty Meeting	25	26	27 NO Healing Service	28 Office Closed 	29	30

December

2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9 am Service Advent I	2	3	4 12pm Healing Service	5	6	7
8 9 am Service Advent II <i>Christmas Flower Deadline</i>	9	10 Advent Project Deadline	11 12pm Healing Service	12	13	14
15 9 am Service Advent III <i>2pm Chrstmas Organ Concert & Carol sing F. Allen Artz, III TEC fundraiser</i>	16	17	18 12pm Healing Service	19 11 am MPTF Christmas Party @ Holy Apostles <i>Eucharist followed by lunch & games</i>	20	21
22 9 am Service Advent IV <i>10:30 Vestry Meeting</i>	23	24 6pm Christmas Eve Festal Eucharist & Procession to Creche	25 <i>9am Eucharist- St. Luke's Chapel</i>  Office Closed	26	27	28
29 9 am Service Christmas I	30	31	<i>January 1</i> Office Closed 			



Prayer Helps Even for a Cemetery

Everyday life is filled with stress and turmoil and with many unknown problems popping up all day long. Sometimes the problems are small and manageable and other times they are horrendous and earth-shaking events. Small tribulations, while inconvenient like a flat tire, or an appliance that isn't working, or being late for work, an appointment, or school are normal and our body and mind adjust to the situation even when it can be costly like needing a new set of tires or a new refrigerator. However, other times, especially if it is with us or our family's health or our finances, can be overwhelming; and the mind and body just can't process it all. It is at this time that many of us turn to God and prayer. We pray fervently. We ask our friends and church to pray for us or our family until the situation or problem is resolved. We, of course, say prayers of gratitude or perhaps ask for continuing strength and endurance to stay the course if it is a long, lingering situation. Whether the problem is long-term or short-term, we must remember to refresh our body and mind and to give ourselves a relaxing moment away from the problem. And of course, there is no better place, other than in church, to refresh, unwind, and refocus than being in nature with God. Walking in nature on the cemetery property settles the overwhelmed mind because the multitude of cheerful trees are vying for our attention to distract us from our problems and soothe and relax us.

The month of November is emotional. It is a warm, delightful and entertaining month while its fallen leaves and bare trees are the forebearers of uncertainty and fear of how cold, icy and formidable the upcoming winter months will be. The cemetery Board can well appreciate the description of November. The cemetery is a property of immense beauty with its many trees, its wide variety of memorial markers, the gothic chapel, Egyptian revival gateway entrance, its Scatter Garden, meditation area, and its pond with its vegetation attracting so many butterflies and birds. The cemetery's 2024 year has turned out to be horrible and costly. To date, we have had over \$21,000 in tree damage and clean-up. About one-third was covered by insurance. Insurance does not cover the tree debris clean-up, only damage to broken or knocked-over memorial markers. The vandalism in February to markers and the granite chapel bench created more problems including a need to install costly security cameras. But the big overwhelming stress factor is that the cemetery is down to its last \$100,000 in its investment account. This will cover the cemetery for perhaps one more year, and then unless we have outside help and monetary support, the cemetery will have to close its gates.

The Board's prayers have been long and fervent for financial aid to provide a promising future for the cemetery. (We have even thrown in some prayers of winning the lottery.) And while we tend to become negative and depressed over our financial situation, walking among these spectacular trees dressed in their finest fall foliage is like a promise from God that he will always be there for us. Our many ugly problems and uncertain future still hold God's promise of many beautiful, soothing and joyful things to come.

God always provides even for the cemetery. Two very generous and unexpected monetary contributions from one plot owner and a contribution from a second plot owner have allowed the cemetery to purchase and install cameras for the chapel and the equipment storage barn and to install a closing gate at the 16th Street entrance. Also, contributions from three plot owners and several Board members have allowed us to cover the majority of the tree damage expenses. We have created a GoFundMe.Com -Charles Baber Cemetery account for future tree removal, although contributions are slow in coming. But all in all, God has taken care of the cemetery and his marvelous works of nature this year. We indeed have much to be thankful for. Best wishes for a fruitful and bountiful Thanksgiving holiday, and don't forget to visit the cemetery with the trees providing their last fine vestiges of Fall.



Charles Baber Preservation Trust

A Christmas Tree Tradition

by: C. Field -December 2024

Whoever thought of bringing a tree indoors, decorating it and making it a Christmas tradition? The foundation of this question is based not on the tree itself, but on greenery of any kind, preferably evergreens because of their scent. The greenery usage became a traditional item that was tied to the winter solstice of the shortest day and the longest night of the year which is December 20th- 21st. Its celebration originated with the Egyptians and Romans who worshiped sun gods. The ancient people believed that their sun gods became weak and sick during these short days and long nights. The thought process was that the greenery through plants, palms, papyrus reeds, and evergreen boughs would please the gods and “cheer them up” so to speak which in turn would strengthen them. The greenery also symbolizes life over death. Feasts formed around this time period and extended beyond the sun gods to the gods of agriculture because once the days lengthened and the gods got stronger, the farms and orchards would become green and fruitful.

Germany is credited with starting the Christmas tree tradition by bringing the green boughs or an evergreen tree indoors and decorating it with fruits and nuts. If trees were scarce, pyramids of wood were decorated with evergreens and candles. Martin Luther, the 16th-century Protestant reformer, first added lighted candles to a tree. He was awed by the stars twinkling amidst the evergreens. To recapture this scene, he erected a tree in his main room and wired its branches with lighted candles. As early as 1747, the Moravian Germans in Pennsylvania had a community tree in the form of a wooden pyramid decorated with candles. Of course, the Early Puritans forbid and punished this “pagan mockery.” Eventually with more German American immigrants arriving, by the 1890s, Christmas tree popularity grew. The trees were decorated with apples, nuts, and marzipan cookies with strings of brightly dyed popcorn interlaced with berries and nuts. Electricity brought about Christmas lights, and ornaments arriving from Germany replaced the fruits and berries.

Visiting the Baber Cemetery at this time of year gives a person the full appreciation of how beautiful the evergreen trees are in their natural world complete with twinkling stars at night. Given a light dusting of snow, cones, and berries, they too are ready for Christmas. Some evergreens like the eastern red cedar along the 16th Street south fence and McBarron Alley develop blue berries over the winter months. Other evergreens like the many arborvitae develop tiny cones that split open to form a star shape with a bluish center. The wide Norway spruce are fully laden with many 6” long cones with tight scales. Their outward sweeping branches hold long strands of needles that look like draped tinsel. Our eastern white pine that stands like a tall rigid line of guards along the southern perimeter and the dirt path going down the hill from the chapel has long needle clusters and many 5-1\2” long cones with wide-open scales. (The eastern white pines are still on our safety watch list, particularly during the winter months, because their age, brittleness, and heavy branches and boughs can easily break.) A unique evergreen classified apart from the true conifers which have seeds in their cones, is the yew trees and shrubs at the cemetery. They do not have cones. Their seeds form inside red berries. One other conifer that is quite nice but goes unnoticed is our bald cypress. They like wetlands, so they are best suited for placement around the pond. At ages 5 and 6, they are still young babies. Their leaves are soft and flat and turn reddish brown in the fall. They too when they get older will have cones. Our tall cryptomeria with their pompom-shaped needle clusters have turned chocolate brown for the winter months. Also interestingly, the Japanese Larch which is the only evergreen to drop its long strands of needles during the winter, maintains many, many tiny cones that line its branches making it look like a branch with goose pimples. If you need some quiet time during the busy Christmas season, take a half hour or so and come and visit the cemetery to see how nature decorates her Christmas trees. Best wishes for a merry and blessed Christmas to everyone!

News from Marion Price Trust Fund

Medicare open enrollment has begun! Enrollment to update and make changes to your 2025 Medicare plan is open until December 7, 2024. Changes are coming to Medicare in 2025, so it is a good time to review your coverage to be sure you have the coverage you need at the best cost. One of the big changes starting in 2025 will be a yearly \$2,000 out-of-pocket cap for Medicare-covered prescriptions.

The PA MEDI program was created by the PA Department of Aging to help seniors understand Medicare and other health insurance benefits. Schuylkill County Office of Senior Services helps fund the PA MEDI program here in Schuylkill County. PA MEDI staff and volunteers operate locally through the office of Diakon Community Service, located at 2020 W. Norwegian Street in Pottsville. Dana Oravitz is the coordinator and she or volunteers can answer questions and provide information concerning Open Enrollment. I heard Dana speak at a recent meeting and she recommended that seniors take advantage of the PA Medi program, especially this year, because of the changes in Medicare benefits. PA MEDI counselors are trained to offer unbiased Medicare education to help seniors make the most informed choices about their options. Counselors do not sell Medicare products; they just give you the best options based on each individual's needs and medications. If you are interested in an appointment I have listed the available locations. Open enrollment sessions are held at the following locations between 9 AM and 3 PM:

- ***October 19 or 21, November 11 or 18, December 7th** at the Diakon Office, 2020 W. Norwegian St Pottsville
- ***October 26** at Tremont Senior Center, 139 Clay Street in Tremont
- ***October 28** at the Mahanoy City Senior Center, 138 W. Centre Street in Mahanoy City
- ***October 29** at the Schuylkill Haven Senior Center, 340 Haven Street in Schuylkill Haven
- ***October 30** at Calvary Chapel Church, 1010 W. Maple Street in Valley View
- ***October 31** at Bethany E.C. Church, 13th and Market Streets in Ashland
- ***November 4** at Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church Greenwood & Mauch Chunk Streets in Tamaqua
- ***November 13** at Faith Church, Route 61 South in Orwigsburg

SENIORS MAY REGISTER FOR AN APPOINTMENT or receive more information by calling Diakon's PA MEDI program at (570) 624-3019. **PLEASE CALL EARLY** to ensure getting an appointment. Last year over 900 seniors were served by the program.

SAVE THE DATE!!

Please help me spread the word that the annual Marion Price Trust Fund Christmas luncheon will be held on December 19, 2024, at Holy Apostles Church in St Clair. The Eucharist will begin at 11 AM followed by a luncheon, games, and social time. This year we will be playing the "GIVE AND TAKE GAME" which I understand is a lot of fun and similar to a white elephant game. Please contact me or Bonnie Baker for details on participating in this game. More information will follow closer to the date, but feel free to contact me in the office with any questions on this or if I may assist you in any way. I will do my best to find an answer, provide information, or help obtain needed services. I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a healthy and Happy New Year!

Trinity Episcopal Church

200 South Second Street

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Phone: 570.622.8720

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Return Service Requested

Deadline

For

January/February "Topics"

Monday, December 16, 2024



November Birthdays

1 – Madison Scott
5 – William Bowler
7 – Brad Ross
9 – Quinn Evans
10 – Joseph Siminitus, Nolan Weiner
13 – Edward Hosler
14 – Cole Demcher
15 – Booker Hostetter
17 – Charles Guensch
18 – Norman Kauffman, Andrea Allar
22 – Janet Grabowski
25 – Lorie Kauffman
27 – Nancy Depsky, Lance Reedy
30 – Jonathan Barreiro

December Birthdays

3 – Ryan Wehr
6 – George Stone IV
9 – Carol Stone Field
10 – Olivia Kauffman
14 – Kristy Sarge
18 – Gretchen Frederick
22 – Seraphina Brennan
23 – Carol A. Seitzinger
28 – Eric Stone, Ashley Hopkins, Dallas Petrosky
29 – Lauren Polcrack