December 2014—January 2015

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"It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope."

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger

Inside this issue:

Worship Ministry and Pastoral Care Ministry	3
Advent Into Epiphany	4
Parish Life Ministry	5
Outreach Ministry	6
Spiritual Education Ministry	7
Stewardship & Leader- ship	8

Finance Ministry

8

When Christmas Is Not So Joyous

Advent is the time of waiting for the coming of the Messiah that is celebrated at Christmas; thus it is known as the season of anticipation and hope. The light of the candle reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world, dispelling the darkness. The primary color of advent is blue, which means hope and waiting, and aligns with the seasonal meaning of Advent.

For some people, the Advent/Christmas season can be painful. It may be the first holiday without a loved one who has recently died. It may be a time that, for many reasons, has always been difficult. The constant refrain of the media, in shopping malls and churches, about the happiness of the season, about getting together with family and friends, reminds many people of what they have lost or never had. The grief surrounding death, the anguish of broken relationships, the insecurity of unemploy-



ment, the weariness of ill health, the pain of isolation, all these can make us feel very alone in the midst of the celebrating and spending. We need the space and time to acknowledge our sadness and concern; we need to know that we are not alone. We need encouragement to live the days ahead of us. We need the true gift of Christmas - hope.

For these reasons, Trinity will offer a special

(Continued on page 2)

Hospitality and Compassion Meet Practicality



Trinity's Closet has a long history of helping local residents in need by providing household cleaning prod-

ucts, personal hygiene items, and gently used clothing and linens. This fall, we greeted more than 125 guests – our largest turnout.

And with each event, we are learning how we can best provide a welcoming experience. Our guests arrive early, so now we have hot coffee and a breakfast treat while they wait for the doors to open. We en-



courage them to relax in a pew and enjoy the beauty of our church. We give out 'chips' that can be exchanged upon exit for items that are limited. No more carrying that pillow around

(Continued on page 2)

When Christmas Is Not So Joyous

Submission deadline for the following *Messenger* is the 15th of the current month. Please e-mail to communication@trinitybranford.org. Photographs are welcome. It is respectfully requested that material not be formatted (no bolds, underlines, bullets, truncated lines, unusual spacing, etc.), since graphic design software doesn't know what to do with it!)

Articles and event notices will be reviewed by an editor. Editorial rights are reserved for clarity, and to fit space constraints.

Messenger Contributors

Features

Rev. Sharon, Ann Freeman

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A color issue is on trinitybranford.org/news

Trinity Leadership

Senior Warden:

Mark McElrath

Junior Warden:

Rodney Hayes

Parish Clerk:

Ellen Shirev

Treasurer:

Michael Freeman

Assistant Treasurer:

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Vestry

Maryann Allen, Andy Campbell, Judie Cavanaugh, Dru Dodd, Terry Kron, Mary MacDonald, Ed Monico, Kathy Sanchez, John Seibyl

Staff

Parish Administrator:

Jane Dougherty

Sexton:

Nancy Williams

ED CS

"Longest Night: A Blue Christmas" service on Monday, December 22, at 7:00 PM. God's presence is for those who mourn, and for those who struggle. God's Word comes to shine light into our

darkness.

(Continued from page 1)

The short service will be followed by a brief time for light refreshments and fellowship.

Our appreciation goes to Marlisa Mills, Director of Bereavement Services, Ct. Hospice, and newcomer to Trinity, for sharing her expertise with the Worship Ministry in programming this special service.

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(Continued from page 1)

Hospitality, Compassion, continued

while trying to select a sweater, a blanket, or a bottle of laundry soap.

This October, we tried two new features, both very big hits. Jen Zehler filled bright blue re-usable scrub buckets with eco-friendly, low-cost cleaning solutions (baking soda and vinegar) and tucked in a laminated instruction card. People appreciated not only the items, but also this idea that they can put to use all year. We will expand this for the spring Closet, with help from the Scouts.



We also partnered with the Sin Sisters Band. As part of their Halloween bash at the Owenego, the Band asked party goers to donate a coat for the Closet. Between the Band's efforts and those of Trinity's parishioners, over 100 people found coats to help keep them warm this winter. We overheard one smiling woman exclaim as

Continued on page 6

Advent To Epiphany

The Church Year begins with the Season of Advent on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, November 30. Special services include:

December 7 and 14, Pageant Rehearsals

Costumes and part assignments happen on Sundays, **December 7** and **14, 11:30** AM. Parents and children please come to the undercroft. Rev. Sharon's inner costumer itch drew her to a sale table of material that she, Dru Dodd, and Freda



Wood are turning into as many cool costumes as they can.

December 20, The Christmas Pageant



At **5:00** PM, Trinity's smallest angels will enchant us all. Please bring a side dish or dessert of your choice, to share. Ham and drinks provided. The children are so deserving of your support

and time. Please come.

December 22, Longest Night: A Blue Christmas

This is a time to name our loneliness, loss, rejections, and doubts, so that we may heal, and receive the true gift of Christmas—hope. Please extend invitations to all in the community who wish to come.

December 24, Family Service, 5:00 PM

At **5:00** PM, a special service designed with excited children in mind will set the right tone for Christmas. Music, a reading from *The Velveteen Rabbit*—the telling of Jesus' birth—and the holy meal at the Lord's Table, all make for a very Holy Night.

Concert and Eucharist, 10:30 PM

For many years there has been a tradition at Trinity for the choir to present a short program of Christmas music at 10:30 PM on Christmas Eve. It is a choral music prelude to the festival Eucharist at 11:00 PM. This year the concert

will consist of the following works:

Hodie Christus natus est - Plainsong Psallite - Michael Praetorius Gesu Bambino - Pietro Yon Carol of the Bells - Mykola Leontovich



Were You There on That Christmas Night? - Natalie Sleeth

On This Day Earth Shall Ring - arranged by John Rutter

The festive Eucharist at 11:00 will include the congregational singing of many traditional carols. The choir will sing "When God's Time Had Ripened" by Alfred Fedak, and "In the Bleak Mid-Winter", by Harold Darke.

Special Fellowship Events:

Baking Cookies and Wrapping With Love, Saturday, December 6th,

Saturday, December 6th 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Gather together in Trinity's kitchen for a baking and wrapping morning for our homebound parishioners. Bring your favorite recipe and all the



ingredients for 4 dozen cookies or 4 small loaves of sweet breads. We will bake our goodies, and exchange with our friends. Leave two dozen cookies or 2 loaves of bread for our pastoral care visitors to deliver to our homebound parishioners, and take 2 dozen or 2 loaves home. If you have other commitments, but want to bake, come at 12 noon on Saturday to exchange, or leave your goodies in the Church office on Friday, December 5th, by 1:00 PM. Not a baker but enjoy the fellowship? Come for the aroma therapy in the kitchen, and help wrap! Contact person is Martha Monico.

December 7, First Sunday Breakfast, 9:00 AM



Chef Peter Hayes is going all out with a Christmas morning casserole with sweet roasted red peppers, green bell peppers, eggs, onions, sausage and cheese, baked on sliced brioche bread. For a special treat—hot cocoa with a Cinnamon stick, and maybe a

special surprise. Come find out! \$3.50 per adult, \$2 per child, \$10.00 maximum per family. *Please* sign up in the foyer, call the office, or email **firstsundaybreakfast@trinitybranford.org.**

(Continued on page 5)

Worship Ministry



Sandy Baldwin Chair

November 30, Advent Begins

The silent procession to the slow steady

beat of chimes sets the stage for Advent worship.

The parts of the service that we always sing—known as the "service music"—change. Instead of the celebratory *Gloria*, the choir will alternate two different settings of the *Kyrie*, both rich with harmony and mystery. The *Sanctus (Holy, holy, holy)* will change to the familiar setting by Franz Schubert.



The Fraction Anthem at the

Breaking of the Bread will also be different, but follow the same pattern, with parts for you to sing. The tune for our Lord's Prayer will be a traditional plainsong chant. But the true star of Advent worship is the hymnody. Advent hymns are the most beautiful, haunting, and evocative of the whole year.

Altar Poinsettias



Everyone who donated lilies at Easter (and submitted a list of memorials), will receive a letter with instructions on how to continue their memorial(s) for Christmas. Simply return the letter to Trinity Church, along with your donation for the

poinsettias. Donors who specified different names for Easter and Christmas will receive a letter listing the Christmas names.

For parishioners who have not had plant memorials before, there will be forms at the back of the church, and on the table in the Parish Hall lobby. Please note the submission deadline is no later than **Wednesday**, **December 17**, **2014**.

If you have any questions about the poinsettia memorials, or weekly altar flower memorials, please contact Ruth Knowlton at altarflowers@trinitybranford.org, or call her at home. She is in the directory.

8003

Pastoral Care Ministry



Cathy Seibyl Chair

Pastoral Care Ministry Will Be Busy During Advent

Pastoral care team members representing Lay Eucharistic Visitors (LEVs), the meal ministry, and the prayer group, met to discuss how to meet Trinity's pastoral needs as we enter the seasons of Advent and Christmas. Among the identified needs—1) parishioners who are homebound; 2) a dozen or so parishioners who receive ongoing pastoral support (cards, visits, meals, flowers, phone calls, emails); 3) ten young adults away at college; and 4) parishioners who have lost loved ones this past year, who are in various stages of bereavement, and still others who struggle with chronic stress and hardship.



Lt to rt back: Martha Monico, Rev. Sharon, Dru Dodd, Nancy Williams, Janet Daley, Ann Freeman, Peter Otis, Annie Gustely; front row-Rodney Hayes, Donna Robinson, Ann Collier, Cathy Seibyl, Bert Rowe, Marlisa Mills. Complete list of ministry members in the membership directory/groups.

Our ambitious plan says that we recognize God's love made manifest in each and every person, by caring for one another during this season of waiting and anticipation. There will be home deliveries of homemade cookies and breads; mailings of homemade Trinity Christmas cards (photos taken by Peter Otis); and small care packages for our college students. Some homebound parishioners will receive the gift of the Godly Play story, *The Mystery of Christmas*, and hear the beautiful tenor voice of parishioner Ed Hull. For others for whom Christmas is yet to be joyful, Sharon and the Worship Ministry have programmed the special worship service, Longest Night: A Blue Christmas, on Monday, December 22, at 7:00 PM.

If you feel at all called to help in this ministry, please contact me at pastoralcare@trinitybranford.org.

Parish Life Ministry



Peter Hayes Chair

Trinity Transitions

We're happy for Ellen Shirey and her husband William Whobrey, who are moving to California by the end of the year. Happy, because they will back with family, and William has a new teaching position at Stanford University. Ellen,



who is currently our Parish Clerk, has served Trinity in many ministries over the years, and we are grateful for her gentle presence. We wish the Whobrey family much happiness. So long!

Trinity Book Group, December 2, 7:00 PM

On The Wings of Chance, by Peter Schuller. This second book in the trilogy involves the adventures of Charlie Howell, a professor of neuroscience and philosophy. In Mauritius, he discovers a new world of experiences and perspectives, which significantly alter his own outlook on life.



Trinity Grounds Crew — our coffee hour hostesses with personality plus! Smiles from left to right: Claudia Campbell, Lexi Brown, Olivia Campbell, Christina and Rachel Pepe. Thank you for a job well done!

Saturday, December 13, 4:00-6:00 PM

Holly Party at the Rectory

Rev. Sharon and Peter invite you to join them in this (now) traditional December fellowship. Between 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM, enjoy an outrageous array of homemade cookies and a glass of mulled wine.

And please, take home some holly!



January 1, New Years Day Open House

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Date: January 1, 2015

Time: 1:00 PM — 4:00 PM

Place: Gena and Jim Eggert's

51 Hilltop Drive, Branford



RSVP strictlysocial@trinitybranford.org

or phone (see directory)

Please bring a snack to share.

Twelfth Night Celebration Save the date! January 10, 2015, 5:30 PM



Twelfth Night will be an elegant affair. Following appetizers in the Guild room, the menu calls for potato leek soup with chive butter, a simple green salad with a balsamic vinaigrette, and maybe

a sherbet palate cleanser. The main course will be half of an oven-roasted Cornish hen with a peach glaze/sauce, rice pilaf and Harvard carrots. Decadent desserts will be the order of the day!

Outreach Ministry



Joe Brummer Chair

Trinity's Thanksgiving Gift To Our Neighbors

Trinity Church did it again! 267 total. 104 from St. Theresa's and 153 from Trinity, and 104 supplements. Plus, Rotary Club is donating \$1,000 to the dining room! The Branford Food Pantry is fully stocked for this holiday thanks to you!

Trinity's Giving Tree

The stars on our Giving Tree tradition will buy Christmas gifts for five struggling Branford families. The tree will be up in early December in the Parish Hall. Please help yourself to a paper star. **Wrapped gifts** must be brought to Trinity no later than **December 15** to be sure to make Santa's sleigh. Thank you!



Hospitality, Compassion Meet Practicality By Kathy Sanchez, Coordinator Continued from page 2

she tried on a down coat, "It fits and I can't believe I don't have to pay anything for it". Special thanks to Matt and

Kristina Stafford and Janet Hager who braved the late, rainy night and scary ghosts to pick the coats up at the Owenego party.

It truly takes a village. This could not have happened without the dedicated Scouts who carried all the items up from the undercroft on Thursday night (in *photo*), the many hard-working Trinity volunteers who organized



everything on Friday, and the crew that assisted our guests on Saturday.

Of special note: it was great to see so many new faces among the volunteers. Thank you ALL! And thank you, thank you, for all the donations. We'll do it again in the spring – even bigger and better!

To Serve Is A Privilege By Bobbe Otis, Coordinator



Columbus House is a homeless shelter in New Haven, providing food, shelter, and other services to men and women 18 and older. It has developed a wide base of volunteer support, and that is how Trinity Church became involved. As a matter of fact, Trinity Church was one of the first charitable organizations to step up, and we have provided meals continuously

at Columbus House the longest!

On the first Monday of each month, a crew of five chops veggies, heats stew, butters bread, and dishes up dessert. We serve cafeteria-

style to the dinner guests. All this happens in just 2 hours from 4:00 PM -6:00 PM. The crew has lots of fun; and the experience of putting a plate of delicious hot food into a hungry person's hands is a privilege. Diners express sincere thanks with kind comments and give a huge round of applause to our crew after dinner. One cannot help but reflect on how lucky most of us are, and how easy it is to take the blessing of food and shelter for granted.



We are planning now for 2015, and need Trinity members to join the crew or play a support role. Options include: sponsor a portion of the meal—\$10 per month will help buy salad ingredients, brownie mix, or ice cream. Or, add **Dinty Moore** Beef Stew to your grocer-



ies, and leave in the baskets at the back of the church. Or, we need bakers to bake brownies for dessert and bring to church on the Sunday before we serve. If you can commit to three months baking at a stretch, that would be perfect.

Spiritual Education Ministry

There's a sign up sheet on the bulletin board. Questions? Email **columbushouse@trinitybranford.org** or call. I am in the directory. Thank you!

Learn more about Columbus House at columbushouse.org.

Service With A Smile

The Branford Community Dining Room crew continues this quiet and steadfast kitchen ministry, cooking and serving breakfast several Saturday mornings a year for the clients. Team leader for information is Maureen Shea, **diningroom@trinity-branford.org.** Thank you, all!



Left to right: John & Audrey Hanniford, Maureen Shea and Maryann Allen (front), Ted Paluha and Peter Hayes

Email from Susan Kelly, Crow Reservation, after receipt of Outreach funds:

"We are very happy we are getting 2,000 lbs. of potatoes, more apples, all for 300, plus lots of bread, and we ordered more regular stuff. Thanks you guys; it is going to be a great holiday season."





Martha Monico Chair

Adult Forums Sunday, January 11, 2015, 9:00 AM

Interventional Radiology---"Surgery without a knife"

A new specialty---40 years in the making—more information at www.sirweb.org Robert I. White, Jr., MD, retired 2012 Professor Emeritus and Senior Research Scientist, founder and former director Yale Vascular Malformation Center. Bob will speak about the benefits of a wide variety of minimal approaches to surgical procedures for both women and men.

High School Youth: Confirm Not Conform (CnC)

Trinity's CnC joint program with Zion Episcopal Church and the Rev. Lucy LaRocca, meets twice per month with high school youth to explore their beliefs and decide if confirmation is something they wish to pursue. In October, four youth, along with Jen Zehler and Rev. Sharon, went to Bridgeport for The Big Day of Serving: helping those in need and cleaning up parks for 6 hours. They had a blast!



Left to rightt: Matilda, Jen Zehler, Jordy, Gabe, and Lauren

As part of this program, we pair each youth with an adult member of the congregation, so that a non-related adult can be a mentor, sharing their own struggles and questions about God. They walk a faith journey together for a few months. They are:

Stewardship Ministry



Steve Carlson Chair

Many thanks for all the pledges we have received as of today! For those members who have yet to send in their 2015 pledges, please do so as soon as possible, and in any case before December 15th.

In addition, for those who made pledges for 2014 and have not yet fulfilled them, **January 17**, **2015**, is the last day to make a cash gift for 2014. Statements will be mailed by the end of January.

Merry Christmas to all! And thank you for all you do for Trinity.

8003

Leadership

Vestry Nominations

The Nominating Committee for Vestry 2015 has been formed, and is currently seeking the names of individuals interested in becoming either an Officer---Sr. Warden, Jr. Warden, Treasurer, Parish Clerk---or a Vestry member, or Diocesan Convention & Deanery Representative. Those who are nominated will be presented and voted on at our next Parish's Annual Meeting, in January 2015. Rodney Hayes leads this committee.

Vestry

The basic responsibilities of the Vestry are to help define and articulate the mission of the congregation; to support the church's mission by word and deed, to focus on strategic issues and new initiatives, uphold a fiduciary responsibility for the parish, and to select the rector when needed.

Elected Terms

Officers are elected for one-year terms. Vestry members are elected for three-year terms. Each year, three of the nine vestry positions change. Vestry meets once a month on the third Tuesday, except July. Meetings generally last for two hours.

Requirements

- Complete Safe Church training (provided)
- ~ Officers must clear a background check (confidentially handled by the Rector).

Finance Ministry



Bill Baskin Chair

Stock Gifts to Trinity

Many of you generously donate stock to Trinity as part of your annual pledge. When you make your request for stock to be transferred to Trinity, it takes weeks for the funds to actually reach us; and we cannot credit your giving statement until the funds have actually been received. So please make your donation in plenty of time for the funds to reach us before year's end. Any funds received after we close the Trinity books for the year (which is shortly after mid-January), will be applied to next year's pledge. Thank you!

NEWS ON THE USE OF TRINITY'S ENDOWMENTBy Peter Schuller

In June of 2013, Finance Ministry Chair Bill Baskin appointed a "Super Committee" to take a comprehensive look at Trinity's Endowment Funds and how they were being used. Members of that Super Committee decided to focus their efforts on the Funds that were endowed to provide financial as-



sistance to Trinity parishioners and residents of Branford, which constitute the major portion of Trinity's total endowment. (The remainder is primarily devoted to physical plant maintenance and repair.)

The Super Committee divided itself into two working committees, one to review the legal, moral, and ethical implications of the lan-

guage used in each of the bequests that gave rise to the Funds in question (Chaired by myself), and the second to review and establish policies for investment of principal and spending of "income" from those Funds (Chaired by John Macdonald, right). Over the course of the next 12



months, those two committees met, formulated positions and recommendations, sought approval of the same from the Finance Ministry, and finally proposed those recommendations on to the Trinity Vestry. Details of those recommendations are available in a report submitted into the minutes of the October Vestry meeting (2014), the highlights of which are outlined below:

It was recommended that certain underutilized Endowed Funds be aggregated and more proactively tapped for

Finance Ministry continued

"investment" in church and Branford community projects and programs that would benefit the people named in the bequests that created those Funds.

It was also recommended that certain Endowed Funds be managed in a way that would encourage more people in the church or the Branford community to avail themselves of appropriate financial assistance from those Funds.

It was recommended that the Vestry adopt a "Tobin Spending Rule" to guide future Vestries (and appointed Trustees) in allocating how much should be spent down cumulatively from the Endowed Funds in any given year. (See report October Vestry Minutes for explanation of this "Rule".)

It was recommended that the Vestry generally adopt a 60% equity/40% fixed income asset allocation for the entire Endowment and that such investment parameters be reviewed annually.

The Vestry accepted all these recommendations and asked Finance Ministry Chair Bill Baskin to recommend a slate of "Trustees" to be appointed to implement the recommended policies and execute them in the management of specifically identified endowed Funds going forward.

These documents may be found as a link in the current Trinity in Touch, and on the parishioner website, see Minutes and More.

8003

Spiritual Education Ministry continued

Mentor	Youth
Ron Baldwin	Gabe Simerson
Joe Brummer	Sophia Campbell
Cathy Carlson	Lauren Elmasry
Judie Cavanaugh	Machaela Price
Holly Kennedy	Sarah Marsland
Lisa Davis-Rucinski	Madeline Rowe
Mitch Rucinski	Andy Campbell, Jr.
Peter Schuller	Matilda Kreider



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Trinity Episcopal Church 1109 Main Street Branford, CT 06405

The Rev. Sharon Gracen, Rector Ronald Baldwin, Music Director

Parish Office 203-488-2681

trinitychurch@trinitybranford.org

www.trinitybranford.org

Worship at Trinity

Sunday

8:00 AM Holy Eucharist Rite II 9:45 AM Sunday School and Nursery Care

10:00 AM Holy Eucharist Rite II With music and choir

> Televised on Channel 18 And AT&T Channel 99 7:00 PM Sundays

Trinity Church "Messenger" (USPC 611040) published by Trinity
Episcopal Church, 1109 Main Street, Branford, CT 06405.
Second Class Postage Paid at Branford CT.
Send address changes to above address.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

December 2014 ~ Special Dates ~ January 2015

- 1 Columbus House, 4:00 PM
- 2 Trinity Book Group 7:00 PM
- 6 Baking Cookies, 10:00 AM
- 7 First Sunday Breakfast, 9 AM Pageant Rehearsal, 11:30 AM
- 13 CnC: Bowling & Holly Party, 2:00-5:00 PM
- 14 Holly Party at the Rectory, 4:00-6:00 PM
- 14 Adult Forum, 9:00 AM
 Pageant Rehearsal 11:30 AM
 Outreach meeting, 11:30 AM
- Pledge cards to be returned Giving Tree Gifts Due Back
- 16 Vestry Meeting, 7 PM
- 17 Altar Poinsettia checks/Memorial lists due
- 20 Pageant and Potluck Supper 5:00 PM
- 22 Longest Night: A Blue Christmas Service, 7:00 PM
- 24 Family Service 5:00 PM Christmas Concert 10:30 PM Festival Eucharist, 11:00 PM
- 25 Eucharist 10:00 AM

- 1 Strictly Social Open House 1:00 -4:00 PM
- 4 First Sunday Breakfast, 9:00 AM
- 5 Columbus House, 4:00 PM
- 6 Trinity Book Group, 7:00 PM
- 10 Twelfth Night Dinner, 6:00 PM
- 11 Adult forum, 9:00 AM Dr. Bob White Outreach Meeting, 11:30 AM CnC, Trinity, 4:30 PM
- 19 Office Closed / Martin Luther King Day
- 20 Vestry Meeting
- 25 CNC, Zion, 4:30 PM

25 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

There will be **one 9:00 AM service** on this last Sunday in January, immediately followed by the Parish Annual Meeting. *Everyone is invited to stay and participate*. Hear about the state-of-the-parish; say 'thank you' to departing Vestry members and Officers; exercise your vote and elect your new Vestry members; hear about Outreach, ask questions; let your voice be heard!

30 & 31 CnC, New York City overnight trip

Every day calendar, trinitybranford.org/news