



Messenger

Published by Trinity Episcopal Church

January 2011

From the Rector

There was a delightful old movie from 1945 called *Christmas in Connecticut*. I remember seeing it at some point in my growing up years and while the plot had escaped me, the idea of an idyllic, snowy Connecticut Christmas with a great cast of characters and tradition and joy has always remained an ideal. Since then I've had Christmas in many places, several in Paris, six in California and they all pale in comparison with 2010. Christ's birth was celebrated with simple elegance, the warmth of the community and the joy of sharing in the preparation was a lovely experience. Peter and I thank you.

And now on to a new year with all of its possibilities. There is much for us to do and plenty of opportunities for serendipity – God coming to us in unexpected ways. I look forward to learning new things with you and sharing in the work that God has for us to do. Here's to a blessed 2011.

Peace,

Sharon +

About Epiphany

January 6th is the Feast of the Epiphany. The word comes from the Greek *epiphaneia* which means appearance or manifestation. It is the twelfth day after Christmas and the traditional arrival of the visitors from the east – the Magi. They brought him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to this Son of David. They represent the gentile world for whom Christ is also born.

The feast is characterized by light – the light of a star observed by the astronomer Magi which they followed to Israel so that they might see and worship the child who must indeed be important to warrant such a celestial sign.

Twelfth Night is the night to create a bonfire out of the Christmas trees and follow it with a feast. In Tudor England, the Twelfth Night marked

the end of a winter festival that started on All Hallows Eve--which we now celebrate as Halloween. On this day the King and all those who were high would become the peasants and vice versa. At the beginning of the Twelfth Night festival, a cake that contained a bean was eaten. The person who found the bean would rule the feast. Midnight signaled the end of his rule and the world would return to normal. King cakes are popular today in France and also in New Orleans although the bean or *fève* has been replaced by a small ceramic figurine.

At Trinity this year, we will celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany on Sunday, Jan. 2 and then on the 6th, you are all encouraged to light a candle, enjoy a piece of cake and be King or Queen for the day!

Trinity Church Annual Parish Meeting

There will be one 9:00am service on the last Sunday in January, immediately followed by the parish annual meeting. *Everyone is invited to stay and participate.* (Sharon was heard muttering something. Might have sounded like 'locking the door...'?).

Hear about 'the state of the parish'; say 'thank you' to departing Vestry members and Wardens; exercise your vote and elect your new Vestry members; meet your new Wardens; hear about the operating budget now structured to support the new Council of Ministries; meet the new ministry chairs on the Council of Ministries; let your voice be heard!

Mark your calendar—January 30th, 2011.

A Trinity Christmas Pageant Party

The Christmas Pageant centered around Trinity's children and youth, was presented as theater-in-the-round, in the Parish Hall. What a delight! If you had seen the dress rehearsal you would have had your doubts. But -- as always in showbiz -- it went perfectly on the night.

Parents and grandparents, uncles and aunts, newcomers and friends of parishioners warmed up the evening singing Christmas carols accompanied and led by our own Ron Baldwin.



Then, the excellent narrators told the story, the superb actors acted and the audience enthusiastically participated singing hymns and carols woven into the story. Everybody was on cue!



Huge thanks go to the organizers and costumers — **Linda Torrey, Debbie Kelly & Liz Melvin**—and Rev. Sharon gets an Oscar for best director!

Energy was high for the potluck supper which was festive and delicious. **Phoebe and Richard Burbine**, did an amazing job preparing a feast of lasagnas, and thanks to all the participants for the potluck contributions. As always, when nobody knows what food is coming, somehow a wonderful meal unfolds. It was truly a fun event.

An extra thank you to the Christmas elves who setup and cleaned up -- much appreciated, thank you!



Rehearsal. Organizers are working hard while waiting actors teach Max how to run thru the tunnel of legs!!

Worship Ministry

After all of our *extraordinary time* – Advent, Christmas, Epiphany and The Baptism of our Lord, we will return to *ordinary time* – on January 16th. The color will be green once again and will remain so for eight weeks until Ash Wednesday on March 9th. During this time we will return to singing the Lord's Prayer at the 10:00 service and other familiar settings of the service music.

At a special worship service on December 8th, members of the Worship Ministry experienced a different kind of Prayers of the People – a meditation set to music. Many of those present expressed their interest in more of this very peaceful, centering kind of prayer.

"I found myself deep in prayer. It was very moving. It is also a wonderful way to include some music in the 8:00 service." – Blake Lehr

"The Prayer Meditation was moving and beautiful. It gave me the opportunity to speak with my Dad (who passed away 7 years ago) and pray for friends and family members in a quiet and reflective (undisturbed) setting. I let the music wash over and around me in a flowing manner and with a calming influence... as did Sharon's prayers. That evening I had the best night's sleep that I have had in weeks!" - Cheryl Hyder

It is our plan to use this prayer meditation for the eight week green season between Epiphany and Ash Wednesday. Then during Lent, we will return to one of the familiar forms for the Prayers of the People in the Book of Common Prayer.

Spiritual Disciplines or Practices: seeking a deeper knowledge of God

During this season of Advent, Sharon helped us to look at a series of disciplines as tools for our spiritual growth and freedom. Their purpose is the replacement of old destructive habits with new life-giving ones. Quoting Richard Foster, author of *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spirit-*

tual Growth, Foster says, "...they are God's way of getting us into the ground (like seeds); they put us where (God) can work with us and transform us. By themselves the Spiritual Disciplines can do nothing; they can only get us to the place where something can be done. They are God's means of grace."

The discipline of Prayer. This is the primary means by which we open ourselves to God. Foster says that prayer "ushers us into perpetual communion with God." The more we commit ourselves to this communion, the more we experience God's power in our lives to heal and transform and guide us to new discoveries. With practice, we get better at it.

The discipline of Study. We are transformed through the renewal of the mind. We can study scripture, nature, people and we can study ourselves all in our quest to know God better. It is important for us to be informed about our faith and to ask the big questions:

Who is God? Who are we? What do we do now?

The discipline of Simplicity. This discipline helps us live in integrity with others and the planet. We were reminded of the familiar Appalachian melody *'Tis a gift to be simple; 'tis a gift to be free...*, that teaches us to appreciate the "little things" and be true to one another. The questions we can ask ourselves are:

Do I need it? Can I live without it? Why do I want it?

The discipline of Submission. This is really the crux of Christianity. Submission requires a change of focus from self orientation to one of mutual subordination, a spirit of consideration and deference. Submission and the freedom that it brings has the power to change the world and make us truly ready for Christ to be born in us. The questions we can ask ourselves are:

Worship Ministry

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Do I need to win here? Can I put what I want aside and let go of it? Can I be a servant leader and find satisfaction or even joy that someone else's needs are met?

The discipline of Celebration. This is the expression of joy about being alive and knowing that we are a cherished part of God's wondrous creation. It is also a way to acknowledge the freedom that we seek in the practice of our other disciplines. It is the joyous culmination of all of the other work. Because celebration is all about joy, it can manifest in many wonderful ways.

It might be helpful to try this spiritual discipline thing backwards, start with celebration.

Let your prayer be a celebration of relationships, with God, with those for whom you pray, and with the whole world.

Let your study be joyous curiosity, galloping toward new ideas and fresh insight on traditions.

Let the discipline of submission be a means of celebrating other's joy and triumphs.

And then when you celebrate, don't hold back, let your joy be infectious, share it with others.

Sharon's complete sermons and Rector's Reading Recommendations may be found at www.trinitybranford.org/rector.html. Or, go to www.trinitybranford.org, click on About Us, select Rector from the dropdown list, and you're there.)

"We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give."

Sir Winston Churchill



Education Ministry

An Introduction to the Bible –

From Genesis to Revelation in 8 weeks!

Rev. Sharon is offering an introductory Bible Study course on Saturday mornings at 9:00 beginning on January 15th. The course will provide:

- an understanding of the many different voices and types of literature within;
- the history and context of the people of Israel and their story;
- The Torah, Psalms and the Prophetic books;
- the Hebrew scriptures as the context for the New Testament;
- the portrait of Jesus from the different Gospels;
- the history of the early church through the letters;
- a history of how the Bible came to be what it is today.

Please register for this course by calling the Trinity office – 203-488-2681. There is a \$5 charge for the cost of materials.

Editors' Note:

Submission deadline for the following months *Messenger* is the 15th of the current month. Please submit any hard copy to the office or e-mail to ajfreeman@comcast.net. Photographs are welcome. It is respectfully requested 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 for clarity by an editor. Editorial rights are reserved.

Outreach Ministry

Save February 5th for fun and entertainment !!

The Trinity Outreach Ministry is again sponsoring an International Dinner on Saturday, February 5th. The evening will start at 6:00pm with a concert by the "The Power of Praise and Worship Band". The musical core of the band will be inviting our own **Cheryl Hyder** and **Bill Bray** to perform the majority of the vocals during the evening.

Dinner will follow in the Parish Hall and all proceeds will benefit the Branford Fuel Assistance program. Entrees from around the world will be provided by committee members and friends, and we'll be asking for dessert donations from attendees.

Dinner With Friends

Meals are more fun when they are shared. Beginning January 14th, Trinity will host **Dinner with Friends** on the second Friday of the month. Enjoy a satisfying dinner that you don't have to cook, and fellowship at the table, perfect for those who live alone or a chance to spend time with old friends or make new friends. January's menu is a tasty pork loin, all for just \$8.00. Dinner is served at 6:00 pm, first come, first served!

How can you help? We need a team of volunteers to help with baking cookies and cakes for dessert, and also to help setup, serve and cleanup. This is a great ministry opportunity for those who enjoy to serve and meet others. If you are interested in helping, please contact the office.

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You

A Trinity thank you in behalf of everyone who attended First Sunday Breakfast in December, goes to the anonymous benefactors who funded the breakfast for everyone. Very nice!

A very special thank you to our retiring wardens after many years of service. There will be a special coffee hour after both services on January 23. Make a note!

And another happy note—thank you to **Peter Schuller** for the extra pair of hands to help serve a large crowd. Peter enjoyed himself so much we can now welcome him as a new member of the First Sunday Breakfast team!

Trinity has a special thank you for our children and youth who raised approximately \$50 for UNICEF through donations collected on Halloween. Thinking of others and making an effort to give to neighbors who are in need, wherever they may be, is thoughtful and kind and very much appreciated. Trinity will receive certificates from UNICEF, which will be posted on the corkboards near the children's Worship Centers.

Altar guild leaders **Nancy Collins & Betsey Bray**, thank Crystal Cleaners for their generosity. Crystal Cleaners does not charge Trinity for cleaning altar hangings and vestments. To add your personal appreciation, take your next cleaning to Crystal Cleaners at 78 North Main Street, Branford.

Dear Trinity Family,

I wanted to thank everyone who helped make Angel Tree Prison Ministry such a success this year. We helped 75 children in 25 families know their incarcerated parent remembers and loves them. We purchased 118 gifts that were delivered to homes in Branford and local towns.

A special thanks to Ann Collier, Nancy Gillette, Lisa Rucinski, Steve Sharma, Pat Kelly-White, Kim Humphrey, Dru Dodd, Adam Humphrey, Mary Hyder, Mary McCarthy, Gayle Calabrese, Janet Daley, Loretta Merlone, Kathy Sanchez, Paul Humphrey, Dave and Lisa Howell, Mike and Pat Freeman, and Matt Radulski.

Sincerely,

Alyson Humphrey

Parish Life Ministry

The building of community is a crucial part of the mission of the church and one of the things that helps to do that is a good coffee hour. Trinity has had a small but dedicated group of volunteers who have made coffee and provided hospitality after the 10:00 service for a long time. We are grateful for their ministry and are now inviting others to share it. In the new year, the Parish Life Ministry will be inviting various groups to host expanded coffee hours. Not only will this provide tasty fellowship but it will serve as a showcase for the various groups and ministries at Trinity.

On January 9, Peter Hayes, the Chair of Parish Life, will lead the way with tasty offerings and fellowship Trinity style.

On Exhibit in January

Local photographer, The Rev. Bill Keane, Senior Pastor at the Baptist Church on the green, has provided many exquisite views of Trinity over the years. In December he continued his love affair with the beauty of our church and produced three new beautiful images. They will be on display during the Coffee Hour in January. Come and enjoy them.

First Sunday Breakfast

January 2, 2011, 9:00 AM

A traditional Trinity favorite is back! Egg McTrinity is a fried egg, cheese and Canadian bacon on a hard roll. Coffee, tea, and juice will be served. Each table will also have a bowl of clementines.

It's \$3.50 per adult, \$2 per child, \$10 family maximum.

Please RSVP to the office or use the signup sheets in the Narthex (back of the church) and Parish Hall.

A special invitation goes out to our newcomers. This is a great way to meet other parishioners from both services, and lets us get to know you a little bit. Breakfast is in the undercroft, through the doors to the Parish Hall, down the stairs.

In Memoriam

*Robert Cromer
and
Shirlee Molaskey*

May their souls and those of all the departed rest in peace.

Louise Gilpatrick Cookbooks

Louise was a long time Trinity parishioner, wife of Bill Gilpatrick who continues to attend at 8:00. Louise was a fabulous cook and baker and many of her best recipes can be found in the *Louise Gilpatrick Cookbook* which she produced as a fundraising tool to help Trinity. Some copies are available to the first lucky buyers, at \$10 each. They would make nice gifts. Please contact Winnifred Judge at 203-488-8755.

PAW PRINTS by Max



So, I thought that life in California was great but I now have a much higher standard. First of all, I share my office with Jane who is a goddess. We keep pretty busy and then we go for a walk in the woods – nothing like that in Southern California. Out there, we had these little lizards which were fun to chase, but nothing compared to the squirrels on the green! They are cheeky little critters and gave me a good run for my money at first. But I don't see so many of them now; apparently I scared them away. What? What's hibernation? Oh well, eternal vigilance, that's my job here.

Time, Talent & Treasure

Council of Ministries Progress

The **Table of Chairs** is formed by the leaders in each ministry group . The TOC is almost filled and will be announced at the annual meeting.

Looking at the rest of the COM, where do you feel called to participate? Everyone has the most basic gift, it's simply a caring heart. Some ministries take very little time and occur infrequently, others take more time ; some are on a set schedule, others are at your convenience.

Whether a newcomer or old-timer, Episcopalian or not, young or old, if you worship at Trinity, this includes YOU!

Everyone is encouraged to participate in ministry. Find information at www.trinitybranford.org/ministries or you can contact Sharon for guidance.

Giving Envelope packets were mailed via bulk mail before Christmas. If you have not received your packet please contact the office.

Note to Newcomers: in order to receive a statement that reflects your household giving, we must assign an envelope number. Donations to church may be included in your charitable giving calculations on your annual income tax. To request an envelope number please contact the office.

Our "countesses" (the ladies who count and record donations) usually notice new givers who contribute by check. Once they see repeat giving three times, they assume you are getting to know Trinity, will assign an envelope number and send you a giving packet.

Finance Ministry

Finance
Investments
Memorials and Gifts
Restoration
Stop & Shop

Buildings and Grounds Ministry

Landscaping
Exterior
Interior
Rectory

Parish Life Ministry

Hospitality
 Coffee Hour
 First Sunday Breakfasts
Fellowship
 Family Events
 Christmas Pageant &
 Festival of Desserts
Membership
 Newcomers
 Connection &
 Recognition
Quilters
Trinity Fair
Branford Festival
Book Club

Spirituality Ministry

Prayer & Meditation
Lay Eucharistic Visitors
Flower Delivery
Stephen Ministry
Hospice Outreach

Outreach Ministry

Planning & Strategy
Columbus House
Community Dining Room
Guatemala
Tagless Tag Sale
Scouts
AA, NA
Dinner With Friends

Stewardship Ministry

Year Round Education
Annual Pledge Campaign
Planned Giving
Health
Environment
Financial Counseling

Education Ministry

Nursery
Godly Play
Youth
Adult Forums

Worship Ministry

Liturgy
Choir
Altar Guild
Lectors
Chalice Bearers
Intercessors
Acolytes
Ushers and Greeters
Video Taping

Communications Ministry

Messenger newsletter
Editors and writers
Website
Social Networking
Bulletin Boards
Directory
Photography

Administration

Rector
Wardens
Treasurer
Office Manager
Volunteers
Archives

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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.

The Rev. Sharon Gracen, Rector

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Website
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
7:00 PM Sundays

Wednesday
12:10 PM Eucharist & Healing
Service, Parish House

January 2011, Special Dates

Sunday January 2nd	Celebrating the Feast of Epiphany ; 9:00 First Sunday Breakfast
Thursday, January 6 th	Feast of Epiphany
Sunday January 9 th	Baptisms; Parish Life Coffee Hour; Outreach Ministry Social @ Rectory
Friday January 14 th	6:00 Dinner with Friends, Parish Hall
Saturday January 15 th	9:00 Introduction to the Bible, 1 of 8
Sunday January 16 th	Prayer Meditation begins in Worship; 1:00 Soup for All @ Congregational Church, RSVP 203-488-7201
Monday January 17 th	8:30, St Therese's Church, Martin Luther King breakfast. RSVP 203-488-4163
Saturday January 22	9:00 Introduction to the Bible, 2 of 8
Sunday January 23	Reception for retiring Wardens after the 8:00 and 10:00; Newcomer Social @ the Rectory
Saturday January 29	9:00 Introduction to the Bible 3 of 8

Sunday January 30th, 9:00 One service followed by Annual Meeting