



TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

on the Branford Green

May you find Christ, Community and Compassion within these historic walls.

On the Occasion of Trinity Church's Annual Meeting

By The Rev. Sharon Gracen

Jan. 26, 2014

*The LORD is my light and my salvation;
whom then shall I fear? *
the LORD is the strength of my life;
of whom then shall I be afraid?*

*One thing have I asked of the LORD;
one thing I seek; *
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days
of my life;*

That's why we come to church - to seek a greater knowledge of God, to search for answers and to understand purpose. As spiritual beings having a human experience, we know that there is something more to our existence waiting to be revealed. So we seek a spiritual home that gives us food for our journey, companionship in our search and direction. This Annual Meeting is a good time to ask, how are we, as Trinity Church, responding to the spiritual needs and hunger of those who are already here and those who are seeking.

*To behold the fair beauty of the LORD *
and to seek him in his temple.*

Visually, Trinity is a beautiful place. There is a sense of calm and peace in this sacred space. Its proportions are pleasing, not too big, not too small. Just right. There is still room for people to find a place and many have this year. As lovely as the architecture is, it is the people who love to share it that encourages people to stay. The addition of the Hanna memorial window has not only enhanced the experience of finding God in beauty. It is a gift to ourselves, and a lovely outreach beyond our doors. If you haven't seen the window lit at night and how it looks like a jewel in a perfect setting, plan to drive by sometime. While the building is not the church, we are, it is important to us and to our community and so our stewardship of this place is a responsibility. We do that with a combination of our own elbow grease and the expertise of local plumbers, electricians, sound technicians, and others. We have honored the legacy of this

1100 Main Street, Branford, CT 06405

www.trinitybranford.org

203-488-2681

e-mail rector47@trinitybranford.org



TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

on the Branford Green

May you find Christ, Community and Compassion within these historic walls.

building well. There is much to be done and we have tried to anticipate and be prepared for the work and its cost. But all in all, this gem on the Green is doing OK.

*For in the day of trouble he shall keep me safe
in his shelter; *
he shall hide me in the secrecy of his dwelling
and set me high upon a rock.*

*Even now he lifts up my head *
above my enemies round about me.*

How many of us come here on Sunday, worn out by our work in the world or dispirited by what we see around us? This place offers familiarity, welcome and comfort. The names on our prayer list are a litany of hope. We give our broken places up to the prayers of our friends here and derive a sense of shelter from the storm of isolation. Our care for each other is one way that we take part in God's mission - to paraphrase our Bishop. God is working in the world to heal division and isolation, to bring us into unity in Christ. God is working to heal despair, to overcome injustice and inequality. We are instruments of that work. Here at Trinity we work on a true sense of being here for each other, not merely for our own sense of comfort and security. It is the work before us. It requires us to give of ourselves.

*Therefore I will offer in his dwelling an oblation
with sounds of great gladness; *
I will sing and make music to the LORD.*

Music is a vehicle at Trinity for joy and moments of transcendence. Not only has Ron Baldwin taken the choir to new heights, we have begun to offer sounds of gladness with the greater community. The music we offer, is not merely the sound of instruments, it is the joy with which we come together and live this mission. There is joy in all of our worship and in how we offer hospitality. This is most apparent when people come here for funerals. They are powerful statements of who we are. One thing that is still a work in progress here, is fuller participation, which holds back the greatest expression of gladness. Hymns are for all of us, not only those with good singing voices. The choir is not here to entertain, but to lead. So I implore you, do not hold yourself apart from the music here. At the very least, have a hymnal open and read the poetry even if you do not sing it. Energetically, it makes a big difference. I implore you to evaluate how you participate in all the ways we make a joyful noise - whether it is on the green for the Trinity Fair, our fellowship and education opportunities, and most importantly, our Holy

1100 Main Street, Branford, CT 06405

www.trinitybranford.org

203-488-2681

e-mail rector47@trinitybranford.org



TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

on the Branford Green

May you find Christ, Community and Compassion within these historic walls.

Week worship. Coming together is the only way to overcome the individualism and isolation that besets world. Making a joyful noise together is the church's countercultural mission.

*You speak in my heart and say, "Seek my face." **
Your face, LORD, will I seek.

You have been my helper;
*cast me not away; **
do not forsake me, O God of my salvation.

Nowhere is our participation in God's mission more visible than in our Outreach ministry. People who are hungry, who struggle to pay the rent, who dwell in historic injustice or the poorest nation on earth are those in need of salvation - which is the restoration of God's vision. When someone lives in poverty for long enough, it feels like being cast away. Cast away from hope, held back from a share of God's blessing. God answers pleas for help through us and others who do the work of compassion and justice. We are the witnesses, the ones who see the faces lined with fatigue and a loss of hope. There are now people in far flung places who know us and trust us to keep them from slipping out of sight. Jesus said "Follow me." We follow him on the path that leads to a world redeemed from apathy and cruelty. Even a cursory glance at the world reveals the enormous amount still to be done but every year we pledge to do more. The budget includes a small increase in the Outreach line item. As always, when we have more, we do more.

One of the pearls of this past year is the way we respond when we make up our minds to do something. 1700 cans of food to lay out a labyrinth was an ambitious goal but you did it in the best way possible, with everyone doing a bit. It was a terrific thing and even the silence as people walked the circular path was a joyful noise.

"Follow me." Yes, let's follow him further along the way and as we do, we will find blessings that we did not anticipate, in the companions who join in the pilgrimage, in the stories that we hear and share, in the shining moments of love as we give away what we have. It's all God's anyway, our time, our talents and our treasure, so let us spend it extravagantly in service with joy.

1100 Main Street, Branford, CT 06405

www.trinitybranford.org

203-488-2681

e-mail rector47@trinitybranford.org