

# Trinity Times

*"Growing in Christ, Sharing in Love"*

A publication of Trinity United Church

A union congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the United Church of Christ  
118 King George Road • Warren, NJ 07059 • Phone (732) 469-5044

[www.trinityunitedchurch.org](http://www.trinityunitedchurch.org)

Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, Pastor

Cyndy Reames, Editor

Volume 11 Issue 11

December 2008

## From the Pastoral Assistant's Pen –

*By Joy Klingeman*

Christmas season is often a season of anticipation. We anticipate spending time with loved ones. We anticipate some time off from work. We anticipate traveling and shopping. As most of you know, I am anticipating some other things this Christmas season. I am getting married December 13. So I am anticipating a honeymoon, and decorating a new apartment, and blending Christmas traditions with my new spouse. As I anticipate this wedding, I have been thinking about how the Bible compares our final union with Christ, at the end of all things, to a wedding.

Christian theology has this idea of the "already and the not yet." In other words, we *already* have a relationship with Christ. Christ is *already* at work in our lives, bringing light out of darkness, bringing freedom from all that binds us, bringing community from loneliness. And yet, something in us still longs for something more. We long for our bodies to be freed from pain, once and for all. We long for security and lasting love. We long to be at home with God, to know God by sight. And yet we do *not yet* have these things.

When I think about my fiancé, sometimes I get that feeling of longing. I *already* have a relationship with him. He *already* brings me a sense of love and security and home. And yet, I do *not yet* have a home with him. Our wedding will symbolize this final union.

Our wedding with Christ, our final wedding, will be the climax of all of our longings and anticipations. And from that day forward, we will be with Christ, forever. It is a union, the ultimate union that will last for eternity.

With anticipation and hope,

*Joy*



## Season of Advent ~ Christmas ~ Epiphany Watching for the Light

### Sunday Nov. 30

10:30 am – "Just Look at Me!"

Joy Klingeman, preaching

Trinity Times and Advent 2008 Devotionals available

### Sunday Dec. 7

10:30 am – "Let Peace Come Down"

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching  
Service of Communion

### Saturday Dec. 13

4 pm – Caroling, Decorating, and Soup

### Sunday Dec. 14

10:30 am – "Our Souls by Turns Must Sing"

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching  
Music: The Madrigals sing during worship  
Mini-concert following worship

7 pm – Taize Worship Service

### Sunday Dec. 21

10:30 am – "A Promise of Birth, Birthing a Promise"

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching  
Music: The TUC Tone Chime Choir  
Readers' Theater

### Wednesday Dec. 24 Christmas Eve

5:30 pm – Candlelight Worship and Communion Service

"When Wonder Falls Silent"

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching  
Music: Tim Walton

### Sunday Dec. 28

10:30 am – "Simeon says, 'Rejoice!' Simeon says –"

Thom Rhodes, preaching

### Sunday Jan. 4

10:30 am – "Gold, Circumstance, and Mud"

The Rev. Bob Beringer, preaching  
Service of Communion  
After worship: Epiphany Potluck Luncheon  
Following luncheon: "Un"-trimming the Church

## Notes from the Covenant Board

*Phil Krieter, Clerk of Session, Pro tem*

*The following are highlights from the November 18, 2008 stated meeting of the Covenant Board. The next stated meeting will be December 16, 2008.*

- A motion was passed to approve with regret the request of Gary Pratt for a sabbatical until the end of his term (Jan. 2009).
- A motion was passed to approve the selling of the TUC stock fund within 10 days.
- A motion was made and passed to approve the nomination of Cyndy Reames as elder commissioner to the Nov. 25 Presbytery meeting.
- A motion was made and approved with regret to transfer the membership of Karen Van Manen to Binkley Memorial Baptist Church in Chapel Hill, NC.
- A motion was made and approved that the special Christmas Offering (taken Dec. 21 and Dec. 24, 2008) be divided between the UCC and PC/USA missions designated for microbanks.
- Reports were received from Christian Ed, Member Care, Personnel, Worship, Stewardship, Mission, Mission & Vision sub-group, and the ONA Committee.
- A motion was made and passed to accept the report from treasurer, Carol Krueger.
- A first reading of the 2009 Budget was done and a preliminary Stewardship report given.

*The following are highlights from a special November 23, 2008 meeting of the Covenant Board.*

- A motion was made and passed to elect Peg Mara as new TUC treasurer and Carol Krueger as assistant treasurer for one year terms starting January 31, 2009.
- A motion was made and passed to elect Cyndy Reames as the final member of the nominating committee (joining Phil Krieter, Lorraine Kimsey, and Harry Morgan).

### MEMBERS OF THE 2008 COVENANT BOARD

Larry Armstrong	('11)	908-647-1797
Kit Bebbington	('10)	732-356-3730
Yvette Halpin	('11)	732-469-7858
Kay Hurd	('10)	732-560-9209
Phil Krieter	('10)	908-707-4031
Lynn Merrill	('09)	908-256-1346
Gary Pratt	('09)	ON SABBATICAL
Cyndy Reames	('09)	732-271-1885
Robert Willitts	('11)	732-564-1508

('xx) indicates year current term of office expires

### Portrait of Pastoral Ministry – November 2008

- Met with the Stewardship Committee (11/2) and with the Worship Planning Team (11/9)
- Planned and led worship (11/2, 11/9, 11/16)
- Celebrated *Home* Communion (11/4)
- Participated in the 3<sup>rd</sup> ONA Conversation held at TUC (11/8)

- Attended the Worship and Theology Team meeting in Roselle (11/13)
- Moderated CB meetings (11/18, 11/23)
- Held supervisory meetings with pastoral assistants, Joy Klingeman and Jared Stephens (11/2, 11/14, 11/16, 11/23)
- Attended Presbytery Meeting in Rahway with elder commission, Cyndy Reames (11/25)
- Made pastoral calls and hospital visits
- Joined Karen Kaslusky and Kay Hurd in planning the November adult education series, "Depression: Out of the Shadows"
- Worked on Advent/Christmas/Epiphany adult education brochure
- Planned Advent/Christmas/Epiphany worship

### Financial Report:

*Ralph Pratt, Financial Secretary; Carol Krueger, Treasurer*

Since we are "going to print" a week early, the financial information for November 2008 was not complete. Please check the January 2009 issue of Trinity Times for the November and December 2008 totals, as well as the quarterly income and expense reports.



### Make Room for New Blessings:

#### Preliminary Stewardship Data

As of November 26, 2008, **32 pledging units** have been received for a **total of \$100,403**. Of those 32 pledging units, **4 are new pledges**, **17 pledges increased** from last year, **9 remained the same**, and **2 pledges decreased**.

The bottom line from the first draft of the 2009 TUC operating budget is \$140,035.75. This does not include TUC Mission giving, which is based on a percentage of the total amount of pledges received.

Thanks to the members of the 2008 Stewardship Team: Peg Mara, Lynn Merrill, Harry Morgan, Joyce Pratt, Thom Rhodes, Jared Stephens, and Pastor Elsie. Thanks also to those who wrote letters (Jared Clark Stephens and Cyndy Reames), those who gave Moments for Stewardship (Harry Morgan, Kristi Flint, Brian Mastrolia, and Tom Teel), and to Ralph Pratt for calculating the pledges.

And, thank you all for your generous response to God's new and abundant blessings!

### Admin. Team Highlights – November 2008

*Robert Willitts, Chair*



The new front steps are in! The work went very well and as soon as the concrete has completely hardened, railings will be installed on both sides. Thanks to all who have waited so patiently, contributed so generously, and worked so diligently to make this happen.

## A Christian Education Minute

Kit Bebbington and Lynn Merrill, Elders  
Pastor Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, Coordinator: Adult Education

### Adult Christian Education:

**Sunday Morning Adult Education Class** is held in the church sanctuary from **9:30 am until 10:15 am**.

During **Advent** join us for our series, led by Thom and Elsie Rhodes, **Watching for the Light:**

- ...In Hope (November 30)
- ...In Peace (December 7)
- ...In Joy (December 14)
- ...In Love (December 21)

### Children's Christian Education:

The teachers for the 2008-2009 **Godly Play** program are Lorraine Kimsey, Lynn Merrill, Kathy Pantalone, Mildred Waale, and Kit Bebbington. Student helpers this year are Scott Pantalone, Glen Pantalone, Mark Pantalone, and A.K. Waale; their role is to assist in greeting the children, age 2 – first grade, when they arrive each week. Classes begin at **9:30 am**. The Godly Play classroom is located behind the nursery downstairs.

- Dec. 7** *Mary and Joseph Show the Way*  
Kit, Teacher; Mildred and Glen, Greeters
- Dec. 14** *The Magi Show the Way*  
Lorraine, Teacher; Kathy and Mark, Greeters
- Dec. 21** *Meeting the Christ Child*  
Kathy, Teacher; Lorraine and AK, Greeters
- Dec. 28** *Meeting the Christ Child*  
Kathy, Teacher; Lorraine and AK, Greeters



### **New Child Care Providers at TUC**

Two women have been hired as job-sharing partners to “run” the nursery and offer child care to our youngest TUCers.

*Miss Christina* is the mother of two, Jimmy and Johnny, and lives with her family in Stirling. She attends St. Vincent's Church when not working at TUC.

*Miss Antonina* has one son, Philip. She and her family live in Green Brook and attend St. Mary's Church, where she also teaches CCD, when not at TUC.

Volunteers are still needed each Sunday in the nursery during the **10:30 worship service**. This is especially important as new born Aaron joins Evan, Luke, Conner, and Samuel in the nursery. A sign-up sheet is in the PNC notebook or for more information, contact volunteer coordinator, Cyndy, at 732-271-1885.

### **Hospitality One-on-One ~**

Our Pastoral Assistants, Joy Klingeman and Jared Stephens, are both on “vacation” until January 2009. When they return, there will be opportunities for you to take them out to “lunch” after worship, which is part of the official compensation package we are to provide. Two sign-up sheets for providing lunch – one



for Joy and one for Jared – are in the PNC notebook in the sanctuary. Both of these enthusiastic young people will have lots to share when they return since Joy will be getting married during the break and Jared will be traveling in Europe over his hiatus. So, even if you've already met them, sign-up again – you won't regret it!



### **“Come let us worship together”**

*Sue Coslick and Cyndy Reames, Co-Chairs*

### *Numbers that Matter: Worship Attendance*

November 2	38 Adults	3 Children/Youth
November 9	44 Adults	6 Children/Youth
November 16	44 Adults	5 Children/Youth
November 23	42 Adults	5 Children/Youth

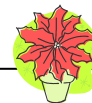
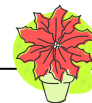
COMMUNION was served to 41 people on November 2 and home communion was served to 5 people on November 4.

### *Calling all flowers...*



The sign-up sheet to **provide** flowers is in the PCN notebook. Choose a week that fits your schedule. Make certain to have your bouquet on the table no later than 15 minutes prior to service (10:15 am September – June). Please remember to bring your flowers in a vase and then to take your vase and flowers home after worship. Thank you.

Planning to use Poinsettias to decorate this holiday season? If so, consider “loaning” one or two to TUC on Sundays, December 14 and 21 and on Christmas Eve. Contact Cyndy Reames if you will be able to contribute.



### **Save the Date...**

Join us on **Sunday, January 11, 2009** for a reception celebrating the wedding of Pastoral Assistant Joy Klingeman and Samuel Arroyo Troncoso. The couple will be married on December 13 at a small intimate ceremony in the Princeton Seminary chapel.





Watching for the Light ~  
Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2008

Into our darkness, Lord, send light,  
And show the world your way;  
Remove the shadows from our sight;  
Make clear the path, we pray.  
Transform our wand'ring ways to right,  
And night to brightest day!

*Michael Morgan*

Advent is the season of anticipation, the season of waiting, the season of *Watching for the Light*. This year, during the lighting of the Advent candles each Sunday, we will use liturgy based on the poem by Michael Morgan, *Darkness into Light*. The poem has also been used throughout the 2008 Advent Devotional Booklet, available at the church on **Sunday, Nov. 30**. The booklets provide a guide through the season, with scripture, song excerpts, and quotes of the season.

Many activities have been scheduled, offering opportunities for fun, socializing, learning, and slowing down...

- **Sundays**

**9:30 am** Sunday school for all ages focus on the season (see page 3)

**10:30 am** Worship blending word and music of the season (see front page)

- **Saturday, December 13**

**4 pm** Gather in the sanctuary as we decorate the church while singing favorite carols of the season under the expert eye of Piper Miley. Then stay for a supper of soup and bread.

- **Sunday, December 14**

**10:30 am** The Madrigals of Franklin High School will again be joining us during worship, bringing their unique sound and style, reminiscent of an old English Christmas. Immediately following the service, this talented group of students will continue sharing their gift in a mini-concert.

**7:00 pm** Pastoral Assistant Jared Stephens will lead a Taize worship service, with music provided by Iain Flint (son of Kristi). (see this page for more details)

- **Sunday, December 21**

**10:30 am** The TUC Tone Chime Choir will make their debut as part of the worship service, bringing the sound of the season into our midst in a unique and delightful way. A Readers' Theater will bring the scriptures of the season dramatically to life.

- **Wednesday, December 24, Christmas Eve**

**5:30 pm** Before all the family gatherings and opening of presents, join us for a time of worship, including a service of communion and a traditional candlelight singing of Silent Night. Tim Walton, director of the Franklin High School Gospel Choir, will share his gift of music as part of the service.

- **Sunday, January 4, 2009**

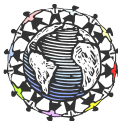
Following worship (with Parish Associate, the Rev. Bob Beringer, preaching) celebrate with us at an Epiphany Potluck Luncheon. A sign-up sheet will be in the PCN notebook beginning Dec. 14. Then stay around after and help "un"-trim the church.

**Taize comes to Trinity**

A Taizé worship service includes candlelight, prayers, readings, silence, and soft music with repetitive words, often accompanied by keyboard, flute, violin, or other instruments. The service is very meditative and offers a wonderful opportunity to be silent and commune with God.



Join Pastoral Assistant Jared Stephens and a circle of planners on **Sunday, December 14 at 7 pm**, as they facilitate a Taize-style worship service at TUC.



**OUTWARD BOUND ~ MISSION at TUC**

*Kay Hurd, Mission Chairperson*

The mission team met on Nov 12, 2008 at TUC. We discussed upcoming mission projects and dispersing of mission designated funds. We received \$50.00 in disaster relief funds which we will divide and give to the PC/USA and UCC disaster relief funds.

Our annual Christmas offering, collected on Dec. 21 and Dec. 24, will be divided between the two denominations.

**Ongoing Mission Opportunities:**

Each Christmas season the Mission Team provides opportunities to give to those who have less than we have, to share our gifts. This year, we will collect *new* gifts for adults and children for the **Elizabethport Center**. The center takes our gifts and makes them available for a small price to those in Elizabeth so that they can give and receive presents on Christmas. Elizabethport was started by our Presbytery as a small mission project and now represents a major social institution in Elizabeth.

We will also be collecting *new toys* for the **Somerset County Jail Chaplaincy**. The chaplains at the jail make these toys available to prisoners to give to their children. Toys/gifts for babies and teenagers are especially needed.

TUC's outreach to the world will once again, be monetary gifts for **Heifer International**. We will have gift cards from Heifer for you to give to your recipients. Giving the gift cards, indicating that you have "given a sheep" (or some other animal), offers an opportunity to talk about how Heifer will give the actual sheep to a family who will then raise it for wool to sell and meat to eat. Then,

when they have baby sheep they must pass on the gift to another family in the village, keeping the cycle going.

The bins for the gifts to **Elizabethport Center** and the **Somerset County Jail Chaplaincy** are in the sanctuary. Checks to **Heifer** should be earmarked "Heifer." **All Gifts will be delivered in the first week of December. Heifer gifts will be collected through the end of December.**

### Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity

*Submitted by Phil Krieter*



Over the last few years, TUC has participated in helping build houses in several New Jersey communities with both contributions and labor. Since 1994, RVHFH has built 27 homes in 10 towns in Somerset and Hunterdon Counties. Over 100 persons now have a place they call home that they helped build. In that time, there have been no foreclosures.

In the past, most of the cost of a house has been the acquisition of the land; the house itself costs approximately \$100,000 in materials. The need for affordable housing in New Jersey, though, has taken on more importance due to the Council on Affordable Housing (COAH). Now, towns are donating land or selling it for very low prices to Habitat to help meet their obligations for affordable housing. This has opened up more opportunities. Four houses are now going up in Franklin Township with another one being built next year. Nine houses will be going up as a group over the next two years at Dutch Lane in Bridgewater. These will be designed around a cul-de-sac. Another 8 houses will be started in Kingwood (Hunterdon County) in 2010 and 2011.

A meeting of RVHFH at Somerville Reformed Church in November detailed how churches can be part of the housing solution. Those who have participated on a Saturday (and banged their thumbs with a hammer) know that our labor is useful. Your help can be used in other times and ways:

- Individuals can work on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Calling ahead is requested, but you can just show up. (Youth volunteers 16-17 years old need adult supervision).
- Volunteers are needed for the Church Relations Committee to decide on the strategy and focus of the RVHFH church relations program.
- Persons are needed to update congregational information, call congregations to verify contact information, update church e-mail lists, attend events to represent RVHFH (i.e. Mission fairs, alternative giving fairs), speak at church events and meetings, or produce brochures and flyers with graphics.
- Donate your old car that has been giving you so much trouble and isn't worth fixing up to pass inspection.

If you are interested, please contact Phil Krieter (908) 707-4031 or by email at [pakrieter@verizon.net](mailto:pakrieter@verizon.net) or contact Pam Ely, the director or RVHFH, at [director@rvhabit.org](mailto:director@rvhabit.org).

### FOOD BANK NEWS



This Advent / Christmas season, consider buying two of some, if not all, of your favorite holiday foods and contribute one to the Food Bank Network of Somerset County during the next **Hunger Offering on Sunday, December 21, 2007**. Or, bring your contributions of cash or food-stuffs to the church anytime during the month. The basket is always kept in the narthex (the little entry way off the sanctuary). Staples such as stews, soups, tuna, pastas and sauces, rice, cereal, vegetables and fruit, peanut butter, canned meat, and powdered milk fill the bags of those on low incomes. "Treats" such as canned yams, boxes of stuffing, canned hams, cranberries, gravy mixes, cookies, or cake mixes will help make someone else's holiday "merry."

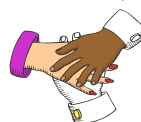


Continued thanks go to Ernie Cottrill and Joanna Marston for delivering our food donations to the Food Bank distribution center and to Paul Krueger, for the volunteering he does each week at the center.



### Interfaith Hospitality Network

*Tom Hanc, Coordinator*



For several years, Trinity United Church has been supporting the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) in partnership with the Pluckemin Presbyterian Church. IHN provides temporary food, shelter, and other support to homeless families in participating churches on a rotating basis. Our next opportunity to help out with this ministry will be **Thursday, December 18, 2008**. The following are the volunteer opportunities available:

- a) Dinner preparation and delivery to Pluckemin church by 5 pm
- b) 5 pm - 7 pm: serve dinner, socialize with guests, begin cleanup
- c) 7 pm - 9 pm: socialize with guests, finish cleanup
- d) 9 pm - 7 am: sleepover at Pluckemin, watch over guests

A signup sheet will be placed in the PCN notebook on Sunday, Nov. 30. Contact coordinator Tom Hanc at 908-626-9843 or at [tghanc@yahoo.com](mailto:tghanc@yahoo.com) for more information on how you can participate.

### TUC Website - Under Construction



The new "construction crew" – Shari Altena, Robbyn Prange and Thom Rhodes – have begun work on the TUC website. Check out all the changes they have made at [www.trinityunitedchurch.org](http://www.trinityunitedchurch.org).

## Giving Gardeners' Project

Submitted by Ellen Waldstein

On November 12, Peg, Elsie, Nancy, Ellen and Ari turned over the horse manure and covered the entire TUC plot with newspapers and dirt. This was done in hopes of killing the sprouted hay and other weeds that were (note the past tense!) planning on thwarting our Spring planting come 2009! We are excited about our new, improved and more accessible plot that Ernie (Cottrill) tilled and fertilized for us. We have big plans plus enthusiasm for our planned "plots within the plot" so we can grow a variety of vegetables: ensuring a harvest of some success each year and crop rotation for years to come. Ernie assures us this will be the TUC plot, so we will enrich the soil, rotate the vegetables, and nurture ourselves and others in the bargain! Contact Peg at (908) 647-6304 or Ellen at (908) 647-7266 if you'd like to share in one of our work sessions! We always have fun not to mention snacks after!

## OPEN AND AFFIRMING (ONA) – THE CONVERSATION CONTINUES

After three conversations, the ONA Committee – Heather Harris-Galgoci, Yvette Halpin, and Nancy Parkinson – are asking for your help in determining what comes next. Do you have more questions that need to be answered? Are there other aspects of this issue you want explored? Let the committee know how you want to proceed. A suggestion box has been provided in the sanctuary for your comments or you can send an email to one of the members (addresses available in the church directory).

\*ONA is "shorthand" for Open and Affirming, the designation for congregations in the United Church of Christ which make public statements of welcome into their full life and ministry to persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

## PEOPLE CARE NETWORK (PCN)

The PCN Notebook has become an invaluable tool for keeping track of the many things happening at TUC – and the many ways we can participate. Check out the notebook (kept on the sanctuary piano) to sign-up for:

- Volunteering for child-care in the nursery on Sundays
- Volunteering for Custodial Duties at TUC
- Providing the Sunday flowers
- Providing Hospitality on Sunday mornings

### Opportunity for Hospitality



Volunteers are needed to provide refreshments after worship on Sundays.

Sign-up in the PNC notebook or contact [thesecretary@trinityunitedchurch.org](mailto:thesecretary@trinityunitedchurch.org). If you don't want to volunteer alone, please consider asking someone to share it with you. If you've never volunteered before and aren't sure what you need to do, I can give you the details. Thank you in advance!

Heather, Coordinator, Sunday Morning Hospitality  
Please respond to: [hharrisgalgoci@kpmg.com](mailto:hharrisgalgoci@kpmg.com)

## Volunteer Custodians Needed

Our resident TUC Custodian Angel (aka Lynn Merrill) is on "leave" through **January 2009**, following surgery. Volunteers are needed to help cover this vital, but relatively, unnoticed, task. The job is two-fold:

- Saturday - cleaning and setting up worship (vacuuming, emptying trash, arranging the chairs in the congregation and choir loft areas)
- Sunday (after hospitality) – cleaning and setting up for the week (vacuuming, emptying trash and taking bags outside, arranging chairs in circle, rearranging choir loft area)

A sign-up sheet is in the front of the PCN notebook. As of the printing of this issue of Trinity Times, the Saturday slots have been filled, but the Sunday slots are open on December 7, 21, 28, and January 4. Be sure to choose the date or dates that work best for your schedule before they are all gone!

## TUC Soup Contest

The winner of the 2008 TUC Soup Contest was Judy Coslick with her Cream of Celery Soup. Getting through all 14 soups to be able to make an "informed" decision was hard! The variety of choices included navy bean soup, 16-bean soup, chili, Italian vegetable, chicken noodle, cream of broccoli, to name just a few.

Thank you, Nancy Irwin, Peg Mara, and Lynn Merrill, for coordinating this fun opportunity for sharing yet another talent of so many TUC members and friends. And thanks to all the soup makers and tasters for making this event such a success year after year!

## FUND-RAISING UPDATE

Fund-Raising Committee: Ellen Kanarek, Joyce Pratt, Gary Pratt, Peg Mara, Yvette Halpin



By the time you read this Newsletter there will be only a few days left in the **GREEN Christmas Online Auction**.

Here are some statistics on the auction as of this writing (halfway through):

- Raised more than \$3000
- 358 items in the catalog
- 10 items bought outright with "Buy Now" feature
- 158 items have been bid on
- Most popular category is Gift Certificates: 31 items, 29 have received bids, \$701 raised; more than half were purchased through the scrip program and subsequently donated to the auction
- 50 bidders, 27 from out of state

When bidding ends on December 7, many of these figures will have more than doubled!

Thanks to all who have contributed so generously to the auction catalog, to those who have donated cash to help defray the costs of the auction (Ultrapar, Inc, Ralph and Norma Pratt, the TUC Giving Gardeners, and others), to those who have placed a bid, and to those who have passed the word to their family and friends.

If you haven't yet participated in this spectacular fund-

raising effort but would like to do so, you can:

- Donate an item (especially a gift card, a food item, or something related to the “green” theme)
- Donate cash
- Bid on something – even if you don’t win the item yourself, you will have raised more money for TUC!
- Get the word out: hand out an auction business card wherever you go; use the “Refer a Friend” button on the auction website; or email the auction link to everyone you know.: [www.tuc.cmarket.com](http://www.tuc.cmarket.com).

### TUC NOW PARTICIPATES IN THE GREAT LAKES SCRIP PROGRAM

When you and friends purchase scrip through TUC, you’re purchasing negotiable gift certificates that are used just like cash. The scrip is issued by the national and local retailers where you and your friends already shop. These merchants want to support non-profit organizations, and in return ask us to support them by shopping with scrip at their stores. You can use scrip to purchase everyday expenses like food, clothing, and other essentials, and with every purchase, you earn revenue for TUC.

So far we have placed over **\$8000** worth of orders through the TUC scrip program, raising almost **\$400** for the church. This is the best time of year to place an order: many of the participating merchants increase their donation percentages during the holiday season, and you could easily complete your entire Christmas list with gift cards!

Because of the holiday rush, please place your orders with Ellen K or Peg by **December 15** in order to guarantee holiday delivery. In general, orders placed by noon on a Monday will be delivered to you the following Sunday. Please include your check with your order (payable to TUC, with “scrip” in the memo field). Thanks for your support!

### What’s happening in and around TUC

#### A CapPALS



This fun loving singing group is taking a break; there will be no rehearsals in December. For more information or if you have an opportunity for this group to perform, contact Harry Morgan at 732-469-5994.

#### Laugh Out Loud



For information on the next 8-week session scheduled to begin in February 2009, contact certified Laughter Instructor, Yvette, at 732-469-7858.

#### Project Healthy Bones



This active, joyful, exercise and fitness group meets **each Monday at 9:30 am and Wednesday at 10 am**. For more information on how you can become involved contact the leader for the group, Carole Juth, at (732) 469-5666.

#### Yoga: Stretching Into New Territory

The gentle exercise known as Yoga is at TUC. Certified Yoga Instructor, Yvette Halpin leads sessions on **Tuesday mornings at 9:30 am and Tuesday evenings at 7:30 pm**. For more information and/or to register, contact Yvette at 732-469-7858.

#### The Trinity Stitchers



Every 3rd Saturday of the month, TUC is transformed into an old-fashioned sewing circle as this group of knitters, crocheters, and needle pushers of all kinds gather to “ply” their crafts and visit. Whether you are an “old” hand or want to learn, come join the group. The group will **not** meet in **December**; they have been invited by the Bound Brook and Skillman groups to a December Knitting Workshop put on by the founders of the Prayer Shawl Ministry. For more information contact coordinator, Carol Krueger at 908-647-5870 or at [cakowls@eclipse.net](mailto:cakowls@eclipse.net).

#### The TUC Mini Art Gallery

Space has been designated in the TUC sanctuary for displaying the work of community artists. Throughout the month of **December 2008**, the works of **Rosalie Stern** will be on view. Rosalie is a unique digital artist, creating her works via the computer.



Donations received from any sales will be used for TUC restoration projects. If you would like to become a TUC *Artist of the Month*, sign up in the PCN notebook or contact coordinator, Kit Bebbington at 732-356-3730. Kit is delighted that there are artists scheduled through August 2009!

#### Scleroderma Support Group

*Submitted by Ellen Waldstein*

Scleroderma is a rare, chronic autoimmune disease that afflicts an estimated 300,000 Americans. This support group is for those whose lives have been touched by the disease in one way or another. They meet on the **first Wednesday** of each month, downstairs at TUC.

On **Wednesday, Dec. 3 at 7 pm** the Scleroderma Support Group will be hosting a guest speaker from Actelion Pharmaceutical Company. Our guest will be speaking about pulmonary hypertension, a serious complication of scleroderma and potentially life threatening consequence. People without scleroderma can also have pulmonary hypertension so this program (snacks provided) may be of interest to others diagnosed with this. Call Ellen Waldstein 908-647-7266 for further information.

## Nurse's Prescription

By Kay Hurd R.N., Parish Nurse



Greetings in the name of the Great Physician! We've been discussing depression in Adult Education. This is the time of year when depression can rise to the surface. We may not have the picture holidays on greeting cards -- most of us don't. The holidays bring up past hurts, losses, grief. For many of us this may be a transient depression, but for some it's truly clinical depression and the risk of suicide is real. Clinical depression is a physical biochemical problem in the brain. The incidence of suicide rises during the holidays. How can we cope? First, recognize that the sadness you feel is real. It is a huge loss of energy. You may experience feelings of sadness, and an inability to be engaged in life around you even though you may function well outwardly. Those who are depressed may have physical symptoms: headaches, stomach upsets, joint and random pain throughout your body. As the TV commercial states, depression is painful -- psychologically and physically -- for the individual and for family and friends. If these feelings last more than two weeks **seek help** and **if you have thoughts of suicide get help immediately!** You may go to the emergency room of any hospital and tell them that you are depressed and have thoughts of suicide. They will refer you to the county mental health people on site. Go to your physician. You can call the county mental health agency -- in Somerset County it is Richard Hall Community Mental Health Center at 908-725-2800 or Family and Community Services in Bound Brook at 732- 356-1082. Get in touch with me, Kay Hurd 732-560-9209 or Rev. Elsie at 908-304-3605.

Many of us experience transient or chronic depression because of situations in our lives. We know that medication and talk therapy do help, but here I would like to talk about preventative medicine for depression. We all have an energy field around us because of the chemical electrical reactions that take place at the cell level in our bodies. That's why we back up when someone enters our space. We also have internal energy, our spirits. We are body, mind and spirit. When we get the external and internal energies flowing we function at a higher level in all systems. Eastern medicine has been using energy healing (not curing) for a long time and Western medicine is just catching up. Research is being done to measure it. It's being researched at the medical and nursing schools at John Hopkins, Columbia Presbyterian, Duke and Stanford among others. And it's being used by practitioners of Healing Touch, Therapeutic Touch, Tai Chi, Qigong Chi and Reiki.

We have also been practicing healing energy in the church for thousands of years. It's called prayer, inward journey, soul work etc. Lectio Divina, Taize prayers, repetitive prayers using rosary beads, Gregorian chants -- all are repetitive sounds to help focus and connect us with God. This isn't study, listening to professors and it isn't even reading our Bible, although this mental work can lead to the soul journeys. I know a man who

studied and read almost every book in the universe, but when faced with a crisis, lost his faith. I truly believe it was because his faith was in his *head* not his *heart*. Being still and listening to the still voice of God that will connect you to God's peace and joy is another way of preventing depression. It doesn't mean that your external world won't come apart at the seams, but it does provide the internal peace needed to know that God is walking right beside you all of the way. It eases the pain of change, loss, chronic illness and grief. This is the way that the church can be of assistance. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

For many the Happy Holidays "ain't" happy; they are painful and sad. The clinically depressed cannot "pull themselves up by the bootstraps." Clinical depression is a physical biochemical problem within the brain. Treatment consists of a good relationship between the patient and the therapist for talk therapy, and medication. Prevention of the situational depression is connecting your soul with God. Depression is not the end, but often the beginning of the road back to wholeness.



## News of the Wider Church



### THE PRESBYTERY OF ELIZABETH

At the November 25, 2008 meeting of the Elizabeth Presbytery, a first reading of the 2009 budget was done. Included in the "reading" was the following: We are a community of churches which is experiencing, enjoying, and sharing the love of Christ. We are:

- 51 congregations (50 churches and 1 fellowship)
- 4 counties in the middle of New Jersey
- 14,296 members
- 121 ministers

We had/have:

- 2008 operating expense budget of \$531,371
- Staff size of 6 including 2 part-timers and 1 volunteer

The Presbytery Council is comprised of five "units," each acting on behalf of the whole in its own area of responsibility:

- Vision Ministries
  - Where are we going?
- Congregation and Mission Ministries
  - Who is the community?
- Vocation Ministries
  - Who is on the journey?
- Transformation Ministries
  - How are we getting there?
- Stewardship Ministries
  - What are the resources?

The Presbytery of Elizabeth exists to serve and enhance the mission of its congregations.

*So we, who are many, are on body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another.*

(Romans 12:5)

**What does Eco-Justice mean?  
How can you help?**

Resources from the Eco-Justice office of the National Council of Churches USA are available in hard copy and online at [www.nccecojustice.org](http://www.nccecojustice.org).

**Suggestions on conserving and preserving water from the *Presbyterians for Restoring Creation*:**

At Religious Institutions

- Install faucet flow restrictors
- Reduce water heater temperature
- Install water efficient equipment
- Practice green landscaping

Additional information at

<http://www.epa.gov/watersense>

At Home

- Stop leaks and inspect water irrigation systems
- Install insulation blanket on older water heaters
- Install water efficient appliances and fixtures
- Plant more native plants

Additional information at [www.greenfaith.org](http://www.greenfaith.org) or at

<http://www.h2ouse.org>

Overcome the bottled water habit. Did you know...?

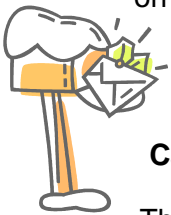
- Nine out of ten plastic water bottles end up as garbage or litter
- Plastic water bottles clog landfills and litter the landscape
- Toxins in the plastic can leach into groundwater

Additional information at

<http://www.prcweb.org> (resources, bottle water)

**Great Christmas Idea!!!**

When doing your Christmas cards this year, take one card and send it to an American Soldier, either on active duty or recovering in hospital, care of the following address:



**Holiday Mail For Heroes  
PO Box 5456  
Capitol Heights, MD 20791-5456**

The cards must be sent and received by  
**December 10.**

If we pass this on and everyone sends one card, think of how many cards these wonderful special people who have sacrificed so much would get.

*Submitted by Kit Bebbington*

*More from Joy Klingeman...*

With my wedding coming up, I have been thinking about the ultimate wedding feast with Christ. This poem I wrote came out of that reflection, and uses images from Revelation 19.

**The Feast**

It is over! It is finally over!  
Come, come to the wedding feast.

Look to your left at that prostitute, Time,  
smoking in the remains of her lovers,  
Anxiety and Death.

It is over! It is finally over!  
Come to the banquet, come to eat.

No longer will you be chaste,  
Held in, frozen, grieving over the  
Tinges of desire for things  
You thought you'd never taste.

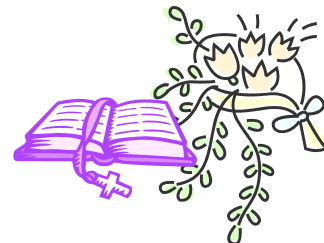
It is over! The waiting is over!  
So come to the wedding, come to the feast.

Do you hear that sound like thunder?  
That is our deep cello, bass voices,  
In symphonic celebration of the groom.  
Listen to heaven's Beethoven as you lie  
for that long massage you always craved.

It is over! Every tension is over!  
So come let me show you true celebration.

Let your skin delight in this fine bright linen,  
and bury your face in this collection of day lilies,  
orchids, wild roses. Now walk with me.  
No, no do not take your seat. You are not a guest.  
My daughter, today, you are the bride.

It is over. It is finally over.  
So let me wipe away those tears.



## Sunday Sermon Notes

Christian Education for all ages begins at 9:30 am

Worship begins at 10:30 am

Pastor Elsie Armstrong Rhodes can be reached at the church at 732-469-5044, on her cell at 908-304-3605, or via email at [thereverend@trinityunitedchurch.org](mailto:thereverend@trinityunitedchurch.org)

### December 7: "Let Peace Come Down"

Scripture: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; Isaiah 40:1-11; Mark 1:1-8

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching

*Second Sunday of Advent*

Celebration of Communion

### December 14: "Our Souls by Turns Must Sing"

Scripture: Psalm 126; Isaiah 61:1-4; Luke 1:47-55

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching

*Third Sunday of Advent*

Special music by The Madrigals of Franklin High School

### December 21: "A Promise of Birth, Birthing a Promise"

Scripture: Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26; Luke 1:26-38

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching

*Fourth Sunday of Advent*

Readers' Theater; Hunger Offering

### December 28: "Simeon says, 'Rejoice!' Simeon says --"

Scripture: Psalm 148; Luke 2:22-40

Thom Rhodes, preaching



### December 24: "When Wonder Falls Silent"

Scripture: Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Luke 2:1-14; John 1:1-14

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching

*Christmas Eve Candlelight Service*

Celebration of Communion ~ Special Music by Tim Walton

### Trinity United Church

118 King George Road

Warren, NJ 07059

*"Growing in Christ, Sharing in Love"*

December 2008



