

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

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, Pastor

Thom Rhodes and Cyndy Reames, co- Editors

Volume 12 Issue 3

December 2009



From the Pastor's Pen –

By The Reverend Elsie Armstrong Rhodes

Advent -Christmas 2009 “For Those Who Wait”

Every stage of our life involves some form of waiting. When our children are tiny, we wait years for a good night's sleep. When they're teenagers, we wait what seems like years, for them to return safely home after a night out.

We wait for the right job (or any job), for the right relationship, for the right leader, for the right time ...

We wait for children, grandchildren, for surgery, for retirement ... and we wait for the results of medical tests.

Waiting can present an enormous challenge. We tend to be impatient, I-can-fix-it kinds of people ...

but not all situations can be fixed. We assume that everything in life can be made better by taking action, but sometimes it just isn't so.

The season of advent, more than any other time of the church year, invites us to embrace the spiritual discipline of waiting. For this season will not be rushed. The advent carols must be sung. The Advent candles must be lighted week by week. Christmas will finally come when all the expectant scriptures have been read and when the baby has finally been born.*

We may deplore the passivity of waiting. Yet waiting is an enormous opportunity if we

regard it as a wise teacher. Waiting offers us spiritual gifts: the gift of patience; the gift of letting go; the gift of living in the present; the gift of trust in God; and the gift of gratitude, among many gifts.

And so this Advent-Christmas season, let us welcome *waiting* as a spiritual discipline, and join the poets in praying,

God, be with us in our waiting ...

God's abundant grace and peace be with you,

Pastor Elsie



**Resource: Holly Whitcomb, Seven Spiritual Gifts of Waiting (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2005)*

The Covenant Board of Trinity United Church

has called a

Special Congregational Meeting For Sunday, Dec. 6, 2009 at Noon

For the purpose of discerning a faithful stewardship of our resources that reflects our priorities as a congregation, and our mission and vision as a church.



Season of Advent ~ Christmas ~ Epiphany
For Those Who Wait
Spiritual Gifts of Waiting

Sunday Nov. 29

10:30 am – “Trusting the Slow Unfolding”

The Gift of Patience

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching
Advent 2009 Devotionals available

Sunday Dec. 6

10:30 am – “Watching for the Dawn”

The Gift of Letting Go

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching
Service of Communion

Saturday Dec. 12

10 am – 12pm – Decorating, Caroling, and Soup

Sunday Dec. 13

10:30 am – “Joy in the Present”

The Gift of Living in the Present

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching
Music by The Madrigal Singers during worship
Mini-concert following the benediction

Sunday Dec. 20

10:30 am – “Even As We Hope”

The Gift of Trust in God

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching

4:00 pm – Christmas caroling to the homebound ending
with a pot-luck party at Cyndy Reames’

Thursday Dec. 24 Christmas Eve

5:30 pm – Candlelight Worship and Communion Service

“Let Evening Come”

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

Sunday Dec. 27

10:30 am – Scripture & Other Readings, Carols

Bring Christmas Creches, Carols and Cookies to share

Sunday Jan. 3

10:30 am – “An Epiphany Biblical Feast”

The Rev. Lise Worthington, preaching
Service of Communion; Distribution of Stars

After worship: A Biblical Feast based on the morning worship
Following luncheon: “Un”-trimming the Church



Planning to use Poinsettias to decorate
this holiday season? If so, consider
“loaning” one or two to TUC any
Sunday, December 6 through Christmas
Eve. Contact Cyndy Reames if you will
be able to contribute.



For Those Who Wait :

Five Spiritual Gifts of Waiting

Advent/Christmas/Epiphany 2009

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, come forth from deep
within me with Christmas’ luminous beauty.

Edward M. Hays

Advent is the season of anticipation, the season of
waiting, Have you ever considered the spiritual gifts that
we can claim from waiting? During this Advent season,
we explore five distinct spiritual gifts of waiting. The
2009 Advent Devotional Booklet, which will be available
at the church on **Sunday, Nov. 29**, provides a guide
through the season, with scripture, song excerpts, and
quotes of the season, as well as reflections from
various contributors.

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

• **Saturday, December 12**

10 am – 12 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
potluck lunch of soup and breads. A sign-up sheet is in
the PCN notebook on the sanctuary piano.

• **Sunday, December 13**

10:30 am The Madrigal Singers 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 benediction, this
talented group of students will continue sharing their gift
in a mini-concert. Then stay and enjoy holiday goodies
as you meet these amazing young people and their
families.

• **Sunday, December 20**

4:00 pm Meet at the church, then join the fun as we
take the Christmas season in music to those who are
homebound. We will end up at Cyndy Reames’ home,
69 Lackawanna Blvd in Gillette, for a potluck party,
more music, laughter, and fun. A sign-up sheet is in the
PCN notebook on the sanctuary piano.

- **Thursday, 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, December 27**
10:30 am Creches, Carols, and Cookies is the “theme” for worship on this first Sunday after Christmas. Everyone is invited to bring a crèche (nativity scene) to be displayed on specially prepared tables in the choir loft. Worship will be a blend of scripture and other readings and favorite Christmas Carols. Our hospitality time will be a chance to share favorite (or extra!) holiday cookies and candies.

- **Sunday, January 3, 2010**
10:30 am The Rev. Lisa Worthington will be preparing another Biblical Feast focusing on Epiphany to share with all of us following morning worship, during which she will preach. Worship will include a Celebration of Communion and the Distribution of Stars for 2010. Then stay around after the feast and help “un”-trim the church.

Notes from the Covenant Board

Submitted by Phil Krieter, Clerk of Session

The following are highlights from the October 20, 2009 stated meeting of the Covenant Board.

- A motion was passed to approve that TUC become a member of “More Light Presbyterians” adopting the following statement: “Following the risen Christ, and seeking to make the Church a true community of hospitality, the mission of More Light Presbyterians is to work for the full participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people of faith in the life, ministry and witness of the Presbyterian Church (USA).”
- A motion was passed to approve that 3% of the monies allotted in the 2009 budget for the PCUSA and the UCC Benevolence funds be paid now; the other 3% to be paid at the end of the calendar year.
- A motion was passed to hold a special congregational meeting at noon on December 6 to discuss the future of TUC and the possibility of getting a building loan to improve and expand our present facility.
- A motion was made and passed to accept the report from Treasurer, Peg Mara.
- A motion was made and passed to hold the next stated meeting of the Covenant Board on Thursday, Nov. 19 at 7 pm.
- A motion was made and passed to elect Lynn Merrill as elder representative to the Nov. 17 meeting of the Elizabeth Presbytery.
- Discussion of the 2009 Stewardship Campaign: *Building a Vision; Leaving a Legacy.*

MEMBERS OF THE 2009 COVENANT BOARD

Larry Armstrong	('11)	XXX-XXX-XXXX
Kit Bebbington	('10)	XXX-XXX-XXXX
Yvette Halpin	('11)	XXX-XXX-XXXX
Kay Hurd	('10)	XXX-XXX-XXXX
Phil Krieter	('10)	XXX-XXX-XXXX
Lynn Merrill	('12)	XXX-XXX-XXXX
Nancy Parkinson	('12)	XXX-XXX-XXXX
Robert Willitts	('11)	XXX-XXX-XXXX
Shari Altena	('12)	<i>resigned</i>

(*xx) indicates year current term of office expires

TUC Financial report

	<u>MTD</u>	<u>YTD</u>
	10/31/09	10/31/09
Income:		
General/Other	\$ 17,531	\$ 118,696
Designated	290	5,115
Total Income	17,821	123,811
Disbursements		
General/Other	13,006	114,781
Designated	751	3,300
Total Disbursement	13,757	118,081
NET	\$ 4,064	\$ 5,730

Shared Hospitality Sundays

Heather Galgoci, Hospitality Coordinator

As Hospitality Coordinator for TUC, I'd like to begin a new tradition for our Hospitality time after worship on a monthly basis. **The last Sunday of each month, beginning on November 29th**, will be Shared Hospitality Sunday. Each month there will be a theme/idea, and we ask that anyone who wishes bring in 1 item to share relating to the theme. This way, **the last Sunday of every month**, no individual person needs to sign up for Hospitality, and I, in turn, will provide the beverages for the Shared Hospitality Sundays. These are the planned themes for the next 3 months:

November 29th – Harvest: please bring in a favorite fruit or vegetable to share

December 27th – Holiday: please bring in some of your Christmas cookies or baked goods to share

January 31st – New Year: please bring in a new food, something that you've never tried before, to sample for yourself & to share with others. I welcome any feedback on this idea, and if you have any suggestions for future Hospitality Sundays, I would love to hear from you!

Thank you SO much!

--Heather

Adult Christian Education:

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

Nov. 29-Dec. 20: "Advent Through the Eyes of Those Who Waited"

With information provided by The Thoughtful Christian, TUC will embark on a thoughtful three-week series on the prophets from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament:

November 29 - "Isaiah – Prepare Ye" (Led by Thom Rhodes)

December 6 - "John the Baptist – The Voice Cries Out From The Wilderness" (Led by Thom Rhodes)

December 20 - "Mary and Elizabeth: Sisters in Waiting" (Led by Cyndy Reames)

Special Adult Ed. Opportunity You Won't Want to Miss!

December 13 – Sticks and Bones A very unique opportunity to watch and discuss this powerful award-winning documentary short - led by the filmmaker Rehema Imani Trimiew.



Children's Christian Education:

The teachers for the 2009-2010 **Children's Education** 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 classroom is located behind the nursery downstairs.

Child Care Volunteers Needed



Volunteers are needed each Sunday in the nursery during the **10:30 worship service**. Christina Clark says that it is especially important to have a second adult in the nursery to hold and play with young Aaron, while she or Miss Antonina supervises

the play of the other children including Evan, Luke, Aaron, Conner, and Samuel. A sign-up sheet is in the PNC notebook or for more information, contact volunteer coordinator, Lorraine Kimsey. If just eight people sign up on a regular basis, they would only miss worship once every two months.

Numbers that Matter: Worship Attendance

October 25	30 Adults	2 Children/Youth
November 1	41 Adults	3 Children/Youth
November 8	35 Adults	6 Children/Youth
November 15	34 Adults	2 Children/Youth

Ongoing TUC Website Updates-

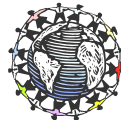


The "construction crew" – Robbyn Prange and Thom Rhodes – continue to make changes to the TUC website. Take a look at www.trinityunitedchurch.org.

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
- Providing the Sunday flowers
- Providing Hospitality on Sunday mornings



OUTWARD BOUND ~ MISSION at TUC

Our annual Christmas offering, collected on Dec. 20 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.**

FOOD BANK NEWS



The next **Hunger Offering** will be collected on **Sunday, December 20, 2009**. Bring your donations of food-stuffs such as stews, soups, tuna, pastas and sauces, rice, cereal, vegetables and fruit, peanut butter, canned meat, and powdered milk, to bring forward during the worship service. Or, drop off your contributions of cash or food to the church anytime during the month. The basket is always kept in the narthex (the little entry way off the sanctuary). Remember, the Food Bank Network of Somerset County can purchase 10 times the amount of food per dollar that we can as individuals.

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.

Bidding ends soon for TUC's 'Tis the Season Online Auction



By the time you read this Newsletter there will be only a few days left to bid in the annual online auction. Just log in to the TUC website (trinityunitedchurch.org) or directly to the auction website (tuc.cmarket.com) and bid away. With 322 items available (at this writing), the auction has already registered over 324 bids and has raised over \$2,300! A special thanks to the Fundraising Committee organizing this amazing event, 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, Yvette Halpin, 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 fundraising 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.

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 2009**, the works of **Cathy Gilbert** will be on view.



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.

TUC Members in the News!

In case you haven't been checking out the local gazettes:



Kit and George Bebbington were noted in *The Courier News* for their award-winning M&M costumes during the annual Halloween festivities at the Warrenbrook Senior Center. (Photos courtesy Kathy Johnson – Courier News)



Joyce Pratt was featured in the *Echoes-Sentinel* for her new seeing-eye dog Kia. Both Joyce and Kia went through extensive training to make certain they were compatible. Joyce and Gary now live at the Stony Point Retreat center. (Photo courtesy Denis Kelly – Echoes Sentinel)

And, of course, **Ernie Cottrill** was featured in the *Star Ledger* and *NJ Monthly Magazine*, *Echoes Sentinel* and the *Warren Showcase* for his incredible work with the Warren Giving Gardens. The magazine honored Ernie with its Seeds of Hope Award. (Photo courtesy John Emerson *NJ Monthly*)



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

November 29: "Trusting the Slow Unfolding"

Scripture: Psalm 25:1-10 and Psalm 40

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching

First Sunday of Advent

December 6: "Watching for the Dawn"

Scripture: Psalm 27 and Luke 1:68-79

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching

Second Sunday of Advent

Celebration of Communion

December 13: "Joy in the Present"

Scripture: Psalm 30; Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians 4:4-7

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching

Third Sunday of Advent

Special music by The Madrigals of Franklin High School

December 20: "Even As We Hope"

Scripture: Psalm 33:20-22 and Luke 1:26-55

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Hunger Offering will be received



December 24: "Let Evening Come"

Scripture: Isaiah 9:2-7 and Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Celebration of Communion ~ Special Music by Tim Walton

December 27: Creches, Carols, and Cookies

Scripture: Psalm 148 and Colossians 3:12-17

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Scripture and other readings, Christmas Carols
Bring Creches and Cookies to share

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