

Trinity Times

"Growing in Christ, Sharing in Love"

A publication of Trinity United Church

A joint congregation of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the United Church of Christ

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Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, Pastor

Cyndy Reames, Editor

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June 2004

From the Pastoral Assistant's Pen:

This month's Pastor's Pen is from Sue Goodwin, newly graduated seminarian! As Sue leaves her position as Pastoral Assistant here at TUC, we wish her and her family Godspeed and pray for strength and wisdom in their new journey in His name.

In a May sermon entitled "What Falls Away," I attempted to articulate Christ's vision for us to live as a unified people. I had a "to-do" list at the end of the sermon that I want to share with you now. The following points encompass both actions, and changes of heart and mind we might attempt, in order to draw closer to one another and closer to God.

1. Get in touch with ourselves.

In order to prevent dysfunction from breeding dysfunction we must examine our own anger, shame and guilt. When we are in positions of power do we project it upon others?

2. Seek healing.

Are we willing to expose our emotional and spiritual wounds in order to let them be healed?

3. Accept difference.

Understanding difference is key to addressing conflict. Keep opening your heart to another's experience.

4. Tame your tongue.

Our comments express our desires to one-up others to prove we are smarter, richer, cuter, more faithful, more loved, etc. etc.

How can we draw closer if we insist on competing? Experience worship in community. Worship breeches isolation and draws us together into God's loving embrace. Practice the spiritual disciplines, especially prayer and Scripture study. Repeat the New Covenant several times each day and try to live it out.

"Worship God with all your heart, your soul and your mind and love your neighbor as yourself." Be intentional in living this out to the best of your ability.

Live each day as though it were your last. Live out your parting words. How do you want to be remembered? What matters? What can easily fall away? My hope for myself, my family, and the TUC family of faith, is that we learn humility and step away from arrogance. That we let hostility and fear fall away, and embrace God's all-encompassing love. This is no simple challenge, particularly in these turbulent times.

I have loved working with you all and will always remember my time at TUC with great fondness. Three things in particular stand out. First, is how God called me to this special church on a hill at a time when I truly needed a partner and mentor in the faith. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes has been an amazing friend and guide for me and I look forward to being her colleague in ministry in the days to come.

Secondly, our Adult Bible Study was very special for me. I have never before seen such a willingness to explore the Bible and take on homework in a study group before. Our group's desire to make the Bible relevant was inspiring and awesome.

Third, worship at TUC is fun! I have always loved being in worship and had experienced a wide range of emotions within worship space, but frankly, I never had so much fun as I had at TUC. The worship planning here is terrific and will be a powerful tool for evangelism in days and months to come.

As I turn toward receiving another call, beginning a new church in Clinton Township, I ask for your prayers. We'll be facing numerous challenges in terms of financing, staffing, and gathering together a congregation. As of today, it appears we have a wonderful location lined up. "If you plant it, they will come;" that is the hope. However your prayers will help to assure that God's will is done.

Grace, peace, and love to you all,

Sue Goodwin



Inside this Issue

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Notes from the Covenant Board

Gary Pratt, Clerk

The following are highlights from the May 11 meeting, moderated by Pastor Elsie Armstrong Rhodes.

- ❖ There was a discussion about ways we (TUC) could improve/increase our communication/publicity efforts.

1) A "How To..." handbook for publicity will be developed. Karen Kaslusky will provide the information compiled by Kit Bebbington to the TUC secretary for inclusion in the handbook.

2) Pastor Rhodes will ask Cyndy Reames to contact the UCC (NJ) Communications Team to set a date for them to meet with TUC members re: our communications ministry.

- ❖ A motion was made and passed to elect Thom Rhodes as delegate to the CAC Annual Meeting June 11-13, 2004.
- ❖ A motion was made and passed to elect Gary Pratt as delegate to the June 22, 2004 meeting of the Elizabeth Presbytery.
- ❖ A motion was made and passed to endorse the proposal made by Merl Coslick regarding sound equipment for worship; he was asked to continue his research and provide a quote to the Covenant Board.
- ❖ Debra Sprague has been hired as the new TUC secretary. (see the article on pg. 5 for more information about Debra!)
- ❖ Lorraine Kimsey has agreed to be responsible for Christian Education. Joyce Pratt will assist in this effort.
- ❖ A motion was made and passed to change the date for the June Covenant Board meeting to June 15.
- ❖ A motion was made and passed to change the starting time for Covenant Board meetings to 7:00 pm.
- ❖ TUC has become a Partner Church in Habitat for Humanity as one of its ongoing hands-on mission endeavors in the community (see article on pg. 3)

COMMUNION was served to 52 people on 5/2/04.

PORTRAIT OF PASTORAL MINISTRY: May (as presented at the Covenant Board Meeting): Worship preparation; pastoral care, program support (for All-Church Retreat planning, Art Show planning, preparation for All Teams' meeting); outreach (working on TUC brochure, neighborhood mailings; contacting and calling on visitors who have attended worship); ecclesiastical involvement (preparing for May 25 Presbytery event at which I will preach; attending NJA Annual Business Meeting on April 17; participating in the Committee on Preparation for Ministry); administrative duties, including personnel matters (interviewing candidates for the secretary position and working with the Administrative Team/Personnel Committee in hiring the new secretary); strategic planning; preparing for the Sabbath Renewal Project.)

Trinity Times is taking a break. Look for our next issue in AUGUST 2004. Happy Summer!

MEMBERS OF THE COVENANT BOARD – 2004

Rick Bigge	732-356-3613
Sue Coslick	908-719-7515
Bob Hurd	732-560-9209
Karen Kaslusky	908-822-7398
Lorraine Kimsey	908-580-9761
Phil Krieter	908-707-4031
Harry Morgan	732-469-5994
Gary Pratt	908-647-6094
Mildred Waale	908-754-6557

Members of the Pastoral Relations Committee

Greg Hoover	Yun Negri
Phil Krieter	Gary Pratt
Linda Mobus	Cyndy Reames

Give me a sense of humor, Lord,
Give me the grace to see a joke,
To get some humor out of life,
And pass it on to other folk.

Financial Report:

Ralph Pratt, Financial Secretary; Carol Krueger, Treasurer

Look for income and expense reports for May, June, and July in the August issue of *Trinity Times*.

Upcoming TUC Meetings and Events:

- June 6 (Sunday 9:30am) – Special Guest during Church School (see article on pg. 4)
- June 6 (Sunday after worship) – Heifer International Project Mission Trip begins.
- June 10 (Thursday 1:15pm) – Bible Study
- June 13 (Sunday 10:30am) – YOUTH SUNDAY
- June 15 (Tuesday 7pm) – Covenant Board Meeting
- June 17 (Thursday 1:15pm) – Bible Study
- June 19 (Saturday 8am-1pm) – RUMMAGE SALE
- June 20 (Sunday 10:30am) – Teacher Recognition
- June 20 (Sunday 10:30am) – Hunger Offering
- June 24 (Thursday 1:15pm) – Bible Study
- June 27 (Sunday 4pm) – CineMinistry (see pg. 5)
- June 28 (Monday 7:30pm) – All-Teams Meeting

A Christian Education Minute

Join our children and youth as they lead in worship on June 13 for the annual YOUTH SUNDAY. With the help of their Church School teachers (and special helper, Lynn Merrill) they have been preparing another interesting, thought-provoking, and inspiring service to celebrate what they have learned – and the beginning of Summer at TUC. Special recognition of graduates and teachers will be during worship on June 20.

Lorraine Kimsey has taken on the responsibility of overseeing Christian Education at TUC. Keep Lorraine in your prayers as she stretches her wings in this new and important aspect in the life of our children, youth, and adults.

OUTWARD BOUND ~ MISSION AT TUC

Kay Hurd, Missions Chairperson

Our mission responsibilities at TUC, and as Christians, require us to reach beyond the walls of our church. Step up, reach out, stand tall.

MEMORIAL DAY PARADE

On May 31, Pastor Elsie, along with Nancy Irwin, Lynn Merrill, and Cyndy Reames (and carrying Samuel part way), marched in the annual Memorial Day Parade through the main street of Warren despite the threat of rain. Carrying red balloons and wearing smiles, the foursome waved at the crowd flanking the streets. At the end of the march, Pastor Elsie offered both the invocation and the benediction for the tribute to veterans held at Town Hall.

WARREN EXPO BOOTH

TUC will have a booth at the Lions Expo in Warren, on June 23-26. There is room for volunteers for the following 2-hour blocks:

DATE	TIME	HOW MANY
WED. June 23	6:00-8:00pm	1
WED. June 23	8:00-10:00pm	2
THU. June 24	8:00-10:00pm	1
SAT. June 26	6:00-8:00pm	1
SAT. June 26	8:00-10:00pm	1

Heifer International Farm Trip ~ June 6 – 11

Be in prayer this week for the seven TUCers embarking on the first TUC Mission Trip: Kit and George Bebbington, Merl and Sue Coslick, Linda Mobus, Cyndy Reames, and Pastor Elsie Armstrong Rhodes. Be in prayer also for Bob and Kay Hurd, who will regretfully stay behind due to an unexpected, but necessary medical procedure.

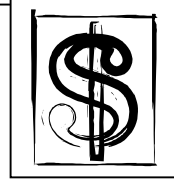
Habitat for Humanity –

Taking the Next Step

For several years, TUC has financially supported Habitat for Humanity in its endeavor to provide safe, affordable housing in communities all over the country. We have been witness to the excitement felt by families who are able to claim one of these homes as their own. And now, the Mission and Outreach Team is proud to lead TUC in taking the next step in their support by becoming a Partner Church with other churches who will be working hands-on building these homes. Phil Krieter will be coordinating the work crews from TUC who will be volunteering their time, muscle, and enthusiasm on **Saturday, July 10** and again on **Saturday, August 14**. For more information on how you can be one of the first to experience being part of this project, contact Phil at 908-707-4031 or by email at pkrieter@dovpharm.com.



FOOD BANK NEWS



The monthly **Hunger Offering** for the Food Bank Network of Somerset County will be collected on **June 20**, which is also Father's Day. In honor of our fathers, let's load up the "basket" with some of his favorite non-perishable foods while still remembering the basics: stews, soups, tuna, pastas and sauces, rice, cereal, vegetables and fruit, peanut butter, canned meat, and powdered milk. Even Dads appreciate "luxury items" such as coffee, cookies, bar soap, shampoo, and shaving cream. Please bring your contributions forward on June 20 during the singing of the last hymn and put them in the basket or on the communion table. And remember, you may also write a check to "Trinity United Church," earmarked "Hunger Offering."

If you drive and are looking for a ministry, we need someone who would deliver TUC's contributions for the Food Bank to the distribution center once a month. Contact the church office at 732-469-5044 for more information.

Visit-A-Church

This month, we are being issued a personal invitation to visit First Congregational UCC Church of Downers Grove, IL at www.firstcongdn.com. The invitation comes from "Bill," a visitor in worship on Sunday, May 16. He sent this e-mail:

"I was the "Chicago visitor" at last Sunday's service. Thank you so much for a wonderful and inspiring service, great music, and warm hospitality. Elsie and Sue, thank you for your warmth and wisdom, and, Sue, congratulations on the world class event of your graduation!

"Now, my invitation - if any of your congregation should be in the Chicago area, we would love to have you visit our church. If you are in the area, please come by! We would love to welcome you."

TUC ALL-CHURCH RETREAT – December 3-5, 2004

December may seem like an odd time for getting away, but at TUC, we believe in doing things differently! So, from Friday evening, December 3 through lunch on Sunday December 5, we are "retreating" from the hustle and bustle and taking time to make deeper connections with one another, and to God, at a church-wide retreat at the Stony Point Conference Center in Stony Point, New York. We will all be housed in our own "building" at the center and have use of a large meeting room for all the fun and games being planned. Brochures detailing the facilities, costs and some of the activities being planned by the Task Force (including a Variety Show!) will be available within the month. For now, mark your calendar for this "must attend" event!

Nurse's Prescription

Kay Hurd R.N., Parish Nurse

Volunteering, for your own health and the health of others, is a great way to decrease our episodes of depression. It is a blessing to be a blessing. We have been created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26; Rom. 12:4-8). The word used in the New Testament is a personal commitment, promoting individual and community development and is accomplished by God's power and to His Glory. Jesus elevated service from a lowly, powerless state to a lifestyle that reveals God's interest, mercy and involvement in our lives. We are encouraged to live out our love for one another, in gratitude for what Christ has done for us. (Mt. 25: 35-40; Rom. 12: 2-21; John 4:7-21)

There are many great reasons for including service in our lives. We can offer tangible help to others in need, share our love for God, experience personal satisfaction that we are able to make a difference, feel more connected to other people, and live the lifestyle that Jesus has called us to.

If you are already a volunteer, thank you for all you do and we encouraged you to continue to "Be a Blessing". For others who are interested in getting involved in service, consider the following:

- ❖ Start with prayer and ask God to help you be his light, heart, hands and feet on earth.
- ❖ Consider your knowledge, talents and abilities.
- ❖ Look around you to determine if there are persons who are in need.
- ❖ Then do what has to be done.

You will find the problems of others are so much greater than yours and that by helping them with the solutions, your stress levels will hit bottom, your blood pressure will go down, you'll get a spring in your step, and life will seem a whole lot better!

Be about your Father's Business.

Words from Worship

Sue Coslick, Elder, Worship Commission

Numbers that Matter: Worship Attendance

May 2	39 Adults	13 Children/Youth
May 9	41 Adults	6 Children/Youth
May 16	60 Adults	10 Children/Youth
May 23	40 Adults	8 Children/Youth
May 30	39 Adults	8 Children/Youth

On Sunday, June 6, **Zo Ramamonjirivelo**, an administrator with the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar, will be joining us during Church School, sharing stories of her church and ministry. We are pleased to have her with us during worship as well.

Zo is volunteering her service in May and June in our presbytery office while she gains administrative experience at the governing body level. The Synod of the Northeast, of which this presbytery is part, is in an international partnership with the Church of Jesus Christ in Madagascar. The Church has 3 million members, 4000 churches, and 1000 pastors to serve them – with limited financial and technological means. With her visit among us, we enhance that mission

partnership. She is as delighted to learn from us, as we are from her.

We are delighted to have her with us today. Greet her when you see her as a sister in Christ.

STRAWBERRY SUNDAY – JUNE 20

In celebration of Father's Day, in recognition of teachers and graduates, and just because we want to, the Worship Planning Team is sponsoring Strawberry Sunday, an after-worship fellowship featuring, you guessed it, STRAWBERRIES! If you like these seasonal, red orbs of delectable sweetness (and even if you don't) plan to join us as we kick off summer at TUC.

Summer worship hours at TUC begin **July 4**, with worship starting at 9:30am. On this Sunday and again on August 1, worship will be outside, with communion by intinction. Summer worship at TUC promises to be a continuation of the unexpected and exciting services we already enjoy. In August, Pastor Elsie is planning a series of sermons on "prayer" that you won't want to miss. And of course there is the...

♪ **Summer Music at TUC** ♪

While the choir takes a hiatus, we are treated to the talents of other musical members and friends of our congregation. Quartets, duets, solos, instrumentalists, and more, provide an ever-changing sound of joy during the worship services. To blend your gift of music, sign-up for a Sunday during July or August on the sign-up sheet posted on the sanctuary bulletin board. Whatever Sunday you choose, you will be responsible for the introit and the anthem; and remember to let Debra in the church office know the titles and composers of the pieces you will be doing by Wednesday prior to your Sunday, so she can include them in the bulletin.

Adult Christian Education at TUC was the focus of a meeting on May 19. Several topics were explored as potential areas open for discussion in the fall. Included were a series on Christians and Muslims; discussion on the Bible's call to advocacy; a series on ethics with special guest lecturer, Professor Gregory Hotchkiss; and an intergenerational discussion inspired by the book, *The Gospel According to Dr. Seuss*. Watch for more details on these and other possible subjects beginning in September 2004.

Community ART SHOW Makes A SPLASH

The definition of "SUCCESS" is as varied as the number of people you ask to define it. For the artists participating in this first-ever TUC sponsored event, selling their paintings was the mark of success. For those viewing the varied, unique pieces of art exhibited, having their breath taken away or their horizons broadened meant success. For coordinator, Kit Bebbington, success was measured by the sense of camaraderie the show engendered among the artists. From whatever viewpoint, using whatever yardstick was employed, the Community Art Show was a SUCCESS!

What's happening in and around TUC

“Project Healthy Bones”

This active, joyful, exercise and fitness group meets at 10am each Wednesday and Friday at TUC. If you are interested in joining or you want more information on becoming involved, contact leaders, Don and Laura MacGregor at 732-469-2012.

Yoga: Stretching Into New Territory

The gentle exercise known as Yoga is back at TUC in a big way! Each Sunday at 7:30pm, Mary Beth Healey leads a class that includes stretching and breathing exercises. For information on joining this session, contact Mary Beth at 908-722-9434.

Beginning July 20, certified Yoga Instructor, Yvette Halpin will be leading sessions on Tuesday mornings at 9:30am and Tuesday evenings at 7:30pm. For more information and to register, contact Yvette at 732-271-8786.

A CapPals

Join voices with others seeking ways to turn their love of a cappella singing into outreach opportunities. The group meets every other Saturday, 10am until 11:30am at the church. For more information on becoming a member or if you have an opportunity for this group to perform, contact Harry Morgan at 732-469-5994.

KNITTERS AND CROCHETERS UNITE

The total is now **three** beautifully handcrafted, colorful sweaters contributed by the knitters and crocheters of TUC. If you knit or crochet, your skills can be put to use in this definitely hands-on mission opportunity, *The Guideposts Sweater Project*. To pick up copies of the patterns or to learn more about this unique project established in 1996, contact Carol Krueger at 908-647-5870.

CineMinistry / Readers' Club

These two popular groups have decided to join forces, alternately sharing the time slot of **4pm** on the **4th Sunday** of each month. In June (or June 27), CineMinistry will act as host for the viewing of *Bruce Almighty*. Jim Carrey stars, bringing his comedic timing and unique sense of pathos to this irreverent look at what might happen if a regular guy is given the powers of God. Bring your favorite movie-munchies and join us at the church as we watch, then discuss, the movie. For more information on CineMinistry, call Thom Rhodes at 732-748-3370. And remember, all CineMinistry events are open to the community.

The next book being read by the Readers' Club is *Nickel and Dime* by Barbara Ehrenreich. The discussion on this installment will be July 25, the **4th Sunday** of the month, at **4pm**. Bring “finger foods!” To make the discussions more community-friendly, we will meet at the church. So, invite your friends to read the book along with you and join the fun. For more details, contact the church office at 732-469-5044.

The Journey: Spirituality Disciplines

The purpose of this "group" is to continue our study and development of the Christian Disciplines and to offer support to each other as we endeavor to incorporate them into our daily, 21st century lives. Our first assignment is to re-read the chapter on Simplicity, and to begin working on the first of the ten controlling principles (as listed on pages 90-95 in the book, *Celebration of Discipline*). Sunday, June 13, following morning worship, we will meet to share our experiences. Contact Carol Krueger at 908-647-5870 if you are interested in being part of this on-going journey.

From the Editor:

Even if your talents lie in areas other than writing, you can be a reporter for *Trinity Times* by jotting down the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY, and HOW of TUC events or activities, then giving the information to me either in the mailbox labeled NEWSLETTER by the church office or at newsletter@trinityunitedchurch.org by the 20th of each month. Your help will make *Trinity Times* an even better communication tool and source of information...and my job a lot easier.

If you have a list of TUC birth dates and anniversaries, even one you consider outdated, please let us copy it! Write down the names and birth dates and anniversaries of the members in your family. Then get the list to me! We'd like to begin including this information in the January 2005 issue. Thanks!

HERE'S DEBRA!!!

About the time the ruling elders at TUC were deciding that they should hire a church secretary from outside the congregation, the elders at First Presbyterian of Stirling were deciding the same thing, putting Debra Sprague – she was “Debbie” only during a period of rebellion in high school – out of her recently acquired part-time job. When asked why she chose this type of work, Debra responded, “Why not?” Although she is officially active as a Pampered Chef consultant, Debra admits that realistically the role of church secretary fits better with her role as “mom” to 12-year-old twins Megan and Shaylyn and 10-year-old Tierney. Her sense of humor and love of music make her a natural here. In her own church, she is involved in the band, the bell choir, and the adult choir, heads the Christian Education Program, and is one of the regular liturgists during worship. She is also the leader of Megan's and Shaylyn's Girl Scout troop and active in Tierney's troop as well. All three girls play instruments and sing, just like their mother.

Debra says the most challenging part of her new job at TUC is knowing where things are and whom she should talk to about what, but she is learning. The most rewarding part is working with Pastor Elsie and meeting all the lovely people who make up TUC.

Next time you are “in the neighborhood” stop by and introduce yourself to this newest member of our TUC staff. You are guaranteed a cheery greeting, a sunny smile, and a warm-fuzzy feeling when you leave. And remember, her name is *Debra!*

Sunday Sermon Notes

Worship begins each week at 10:30am

June 6: "Of Galaxies and Grass"

Psalm 8, Romans 5:1-5

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching
Trinity Sunday ▪ Communion will be Served

June 13: Youth Sunday

Worship led by the Children and Youth of TUC

June 20: "Deep Calls to Deep"

Psalm 42

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching
Teacher Recognition; Father's Day,
STRAWBERRY SUNDAY
Hunger Offering will be received

June 27: "But, first, I must..."

Galatians 5:1, 13-25, Luke 9:51-62

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching
New members will be received

Scriptures listed can be read online at
<http://www.blueletterbible.org/index.html>

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.

Trinity United Church

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Sharing in Love"

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