

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

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, Pastor

Thom Rhodes, Editor

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Trinity United Church's winter wonderland.

## *TUC Members reach out by launching "Take-Out Church"*

"Take-Out Church" grew out of a remark made by a dear friend of mine who is house-bound. I was visiting her one day and she mentioned how much she missed attending church. The pastor, she admitted, occasionally came to the house to give her communion but it wasn't the same to her. I thought about that for a long time. It bothered me that you could get take-out pizza or Chinese food for your stomach but not food for your soul. I remembered how lonely I was for church when home with a newborn and toddlers. Packing them all up for church sometimes was more than I could handle. There must a lot of people who were homebound and missed going to church. There was a need, but I was stuck on the notion that "church" was a building that couldn't be moved on my whim.

Hearing Matthew 18:20 is what finally moved the notion forward that church was indeed a moveable feast: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them." Most of the elements people miss in a church gathering are portable: the reading of the Bible, hymns, a sense of community and caring

and worshiping God. I didn't need to take the entire church to people like my friend but just two or three people from it. I mentioned the idea at our Covenant Board retreat and folks were enthusiastic. Ours is a small church with a big heart. Thanks to an incredibly generous group of people we soon had a committee eager to bring spiritual take-out to the community. What a blessing!

Now we offer the Good News to those who call and request a Christian Service (how we love to spread the Good News!) and a Spiritual Service for those of other faiths or none who wish to hear some inspirational readings instead. We consider this outreach not evangelism so we try to provide what people need right now. Some spiritual reflection in these difficult and busy times is a calming and hope filled activity.

*Nancy Parkinson*



### **The Covenant Board of Trinity United Church**

has called the

**Annual Congregational Meeting  
for Sunday, Jan. 31, 2009 immediately  
following our 10:30 am worship**

For the purpose of receiving the annual report, voting on the pastor's terms of call, approving the 2010 budget, and electing elders and the financial secretary.



**Epiphany Times Three**  
by Kathrin Burlison

## *Season of Epiphany Sermon Schedule*

Sunday, Jan. 3, 2010

10:30 am – “In the Face of God”

The Rev. Lise Worthington, preaching  
Matthew 2: 1-12

Celebration of Communion: Distribution of the Stars  
Biblical Feast following worship

Sunday Jan. 10

10:30 am – “Called by Name”

Baptism of Christ Sunday

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching  
Isaiah 43:1-7 and Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Communion, Renewal of Baptismal Covenant

Sunday, Jan. 17

10:30 am – The Rev. Rebecca Laird, preacher

Second Sunday After Epiphany

Psalms 36:5-10 and John 2:1-11

Hunger Offering

Sunday Jan. 24

10:30 am – “What the Body Knows”

Third Sunday after Epiphany

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10;

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21

Sunday Jan. 31

10:30 am – “To Pluck Up and Pull Down;

to Build and to Plant”

Fourth Sunday After Epiphany

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching

Jeremiah 1:4-10 and Luke 4:21-30

Annual Meeting of the Congregation

(Following Worship)

## *Adult Education January 2010*

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

**Jan. 10:** “Life Style Choices” – Pat Brightman, Director of Community Relations of The Chelsea



**Jan. 17:** “Singing in Worship” – Cyndy Reames



**Jan. 24 -** “The Amazon Project” - Trinidad Rodriguez



**January 31, 2010** – Special Adult Ed Class conducted by the wonderfully engaging Rabbi Randi Muznitsky, Temple Har Shalom. The subject TBA.



## *Children's 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.



Ellen Kanarek prepares many of the auction items.

## 2009 'Tis the Season Auction is the most popular yet!

The 2009 'Tis the Season online fund-raising auction was the most successful yet!

- 466 items were donated
- A letter-writing campaign by the Fund-Raising Committee (with the help of Tom Teel) elicited 17 signed items, which generated \$633 in bids
- 143 bidders placed 1998 bids on 370 items, totaling \$9,728
- Gift cards brought in \$1439; Dining certificates brought in \$845; Kit and George Bebbington's generous donation of a week in Cancun brought in \$833.

Many, many thanks to all who baked, quilted, rummaged, obtained, referred, publicized, bid, sorted, packed, shipped, and above all, supported the church through the auction. Special thanks to Peg Mara and her army of helpers who got everything into the mail in time for Christmas delivery.

-Submitted by Ellen Kanarek-



## Advent Season Highlights

During Advent 2009, which began on Sunday, **November 29** we looked at the Spiritual Gifts of Waiting, following the theme, "For Those Who Wait." Adult Education classes studied Isaiah and John the Baptist and their messages of Hope. We also welcomed guest speaker Rehema Imani Trimiew, who

shared with us her documentary, **Sticks and Stones** and led us in a discussion on prejudice in our schools.

Each week during worship, the Advent candle lighting started us off by looking at the biblical themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love that are essential to the celebration of Advent. Pastor Elsie's sermons during the season included "Trusting the Slow Unfolding: the Gift of Patience;" "Watching for the Dawn: the Gift of Letting Go;" and "Joy in the Present: the Gift of Living in the Present."

On Saturday, **December 12**, a team gathered at the church to "deck the halls" with evergreen boughs, flowers, ribbons, and imagination. Their efforts were the backdrop for guest musicians, The Madrigal Singers of Franklin High School, who shared their unique sound and costumes during and after worship on December 13.

A snowstorm late on Saturday, December 19, caused worship to be cancelled on **December 20**. However, after it passed, the mounds of snow and frigid cold it left behind could not stop an intrepid group of carolers, who visited some of our homebound members as well as the Sunrise Adult Living Center. The group warmed themselves inside and out following the caroling at a potluck party. Lots of laughter, good fun, and friendly conversation made for a lively time.

Pastor Elsie's sermon on **Christmas Eve** was, "Let Evening Come." Worship included special guest readers, musicians, and singers, as well as Musical Director Sue Coslick. The traditional candle-lit singing of Silent Night ended the beautiful worship experience.



On **December 27**, an interactive worship focused on the Gift of Gratitude. It included special scripture readings, poetry, and a sharing of things for which we are grateful. A display of crèches, brought by various members and an array of Christmas cookies made the after-worship hospitality time especially fun.

The traditional "Choosing of the Stars" is planned for Sunday, **January 3, 2010**. Will your star be *Love, Intentionality, Worship, Playfulness, God-time, Breathe*, or one of the 60-plus other words available this year?

-Submitted by Cyndy Reames-



# From the Covenant Board

Submitted by Phil Krieter, Clerk of Session  
12/7/09 Covenant Board Meeting Highlights

- Communion was served to 45 people on Dec. 6, 2009
- Home communion was served to 3 people on Nov. 22, 2009 and to 4 people on Dec. 6, 2009
- An Exploring Membership Class will be held on Saturday, Dec. 12, 2009, 9:30 am – Noon
- A Special Covenant Board Meeting will be held on Sunday, Dec. 20 at 9:30 am, for the purpose of receiving new members [Note: the meeting was postponed to Sunday, Dec. 27 at 9:30 am due to snow and the cancellation of worship on Dec. 20]
- In the "Time of Discussion and Discernment" the CB reviewed and discussed the outcome of the Special Congregational Meeting that was held on Sunday, Dec. 6, 2009 (See below) and held a preliminary discussion of the 2010 Budget
- **Motion approved:** To hold the Annual Meeting of the Congregation on Sunday, Jan. 31, 2009 at Noon for the purpose of receiving the 2009 annual reports, voting on the pastor's terms of call, approving the 2010 budget, and electing elders and the financial secretary
- **Motion approved:** [As per the recommendation of the Mission Committee] To receive the Christmas Joy Offering Dec. 20 and 24 – monies to be divided equally between UCC and PCUSA

## Highlights of the 12/6/09 Special Congregational Meeting

[Note: copies of the full minutes will be distributed by email and postal mail the week of Jan. 13, 2010.]

- The meeting began at 12:06 pm and was facilitated by the Rev. Rhodes and the Rev. Rebecca Laird (from Drew Theological Seminary)
- The main purpose of the meeting was to discuss two motions approved at the November Stated Meeting of the TUC Covenant Board:

1. Motion: TUC to pass a balanced budget for 2010

2. Motion: To make TUC a totally accessible building, starting with the bathroom and partial paving of the parking lot close to the building and including an elevator in the foyer.

\* The Rev. Laird started the discussion by asking members to tell stories of where they have seen life-giving gifts of Christ this last year and how they mesh with core values of TUC

Rev. Laird introduced the second motion concerning making the building totally accessible.

\* One of the first comments was how the changes were to be paid for. The answer: we're going to pursue grants. Some of the items are within our means at present, such as making the bathrooms accessible, changing the ramp so that it is easier to get into the building, and partially paving the parking lot. There was general agreement that there needed to be focus on what is required/wanted before a grant can be written.

\* A second question concerned the legal requirements. We will look into and abide by the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

\* Discussion on the elevator was minimal. It was agreed to take out the words "in the foyer" from the motion as the location of the elevator was not firmly determined and could change.

\* While certain features were mentioned, the main purpose of the motion was to start the process of making the TUC building totally accessible.

\* **Motion approved:** To make TUC a totally accessible building, starting with the bathroom and partial paving of the parking lot close to the building and including an elevator. The vote was 24 aye, 2 nay, 0 abstentions.

- Rev. Laird introduced the following motion: TUC to pass a balanced budget for 2010.

\* The purpose of this motion was to determine the will of the congregation. An opinion was expressed that the covenant board will need to be trusted to come up with any cuts, if that is what is needed.

\* **Motion approved:** To pass a balanced budget for 2010. The vote was 20 aye, 2 nay; there were 5 abstentions.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m. with a prayer by the Rev. Laird.

## MEMBERS OF THE 2009 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	('12)	908-256-1346
Nancy Parkinson	('12)	908-647-7700
Robert Willitts	('11)	732-564-1508

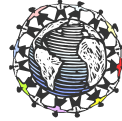
('xx) indicates year current term of office expires

## TUC Financial report

	<u>MTD</u>	<u>YTD</u>
	11/30/09	11/30/09
<b>Income:</b>		
General/Other	\$ 9,731	\$ 128,427
Designated	300	5,415
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>10,031</b>	<b>133,842</b>
<b>Disbursements</b>		
General/Other	15,225	129,856
Designated	1,000	4,300
<b>Total Disbursement</b>	<b>16,225</b>	<b>134,156</b>
<b>NET</b>	<b>[\$ 6,194]</b>	<b>[\$ 314]</b>

## Numbers that Matter: Worship Attendance

December 6	44 Adults	1 Children/Youth
December 13	60 Adults	21 Children/Youth
December 24	75 Adults	6 Children/Youth
December 27	37 Adults	3 Children/Youth



## OUTWARD BOUND ~ MISSION at TUC

Our annual Christmas offering, collected 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, the baskets were full with new gifts for adults and children through the **Elizabethport Center**. Elizabethport was started by our Presbytery as a small mission project and now represents a major social institution in Elizabeth.

We also collected new toys for the **Somerset County Jail Chaplaincy**. The chaplains at the jail make these toys available to prisoners to give to their children.

TUC's outreach to the world once again included monetary gifts for **Heifer International**, allowing people to "give a sheep" (or some other animal) to a family who will then raise it for wool to sell and meat to eat. Then, when they have baby animal they must pass on the gift to another family in the village, keeping the cycle going.

## 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** 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.

**January 31<sup>st</sup>** – 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!

## 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, at 908-580-9761. If just eight people sign up on a regular basis, they would only miss worship once every two months.

## People Care Network (PCN)

The PCN Notebook has become an invaluable tool for keeping track of the many things happening at TUC. 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

## FOOD BANK NEWS



The next **Hunger Offering** will be collected on **Sunday, Jan. 17**. 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.



## The TUC Mini Art Gallery

Space has been designated in the TUC sanctuary for displaying the work of community artists. Throughout the month of **January 2010** the quilts of our very own **Carol Krueger** 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 at 732-356-3730.

## TUC Welcomes New Members

Several new members joined Trinity United Church during our Dec. 27 worship service.

**Maureen O'Neill** of Basking Ridge joined through reaffirmation of faith. A long-time school administrator and university professor with a master's degree in learning disabilities and a doctorate in curriculum. Married to Joseph Dobkowski, Maureen set aside her teaching career to dedicate her time to her son, Kyle O'Neill, now a sophomore at Drew University.

**Margareta Warlick**, of Warren, also joins through reaffirmation of faith. A fiber and mixed media artist (but with talents that include sculpting and jewelry making), she has been a 4-H leader and a Master Gardener. Passionate about education and singing, Margareta home-schooled her children Mason, Linnea and Ross. She loves horseback riding, baking and gardening. She is married to Steve Warlick

An Environmental, Health and Safety Manager, **Stephen Warlick** loves to play bluegrass and finger-style guitar and has a passion for old-time gospel music. He works for Olympic Power LLC at the Brooklyn Navy Yard Cogeneration Plant, headquartered in Morristown. He is married to Margareta (See above) and also joined through reaffirmation of faith.

**Ellen Waldstein** grew up in Baltimore during the '50s and '60s when integration and civil rights were important issues. Despite her city roots, Ellen felt drawn to the natural world, attending the Cornell U. College of Agriculture & Life Sciences, where she also met her husband, Bob. The mother of three, Ellen worked as a Visiting Nurse and is now a coordinator for homecare and hospice admissions, and still spending time outside in appreciation of the natural world. She joined through reaffirmation of faith.

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



TUC Sign of the Times (Thank you to our sign-keeper, Yvette Halpin).



The Van Mannen family made a surprise visit Dec. 27



Christmas chreches (Nativity scenes) of all shapes and sizes were on display Dec. 27.

## 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)

### Sermon Schedule

#### January 3, 2010: "In the Face of God"

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12

The Rev. Lise Worthington, preaching

Matthew 2: 1-12

Celebration of Communion: Distribution of the Stars

Biblical Feast following worship

Epiphany Sunday

#### January 10: "Called by Name"

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching

Isaiah 43:1-7 and Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

Communion, Renewal of Baptismal Covenant

Baptism of Christ Sunday



#### Jan. 17: The Rev. Rebecca Laird

Psalm 36:5-10 and John 2:1-11

Hunger Offering

Third Sunday After Epiphany

#### January 24: "What the Body Knows"

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10;

1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21

Third Sunday after Epiphany

#### January 31: "To Pluck Up and Pull Down; to Build and to Plant"

The Rev. Elsie Armstrong Rhodes, preaching

Jeremiah 1:4-10 and Luke 4:21-30

Annual meeting of the Congregation

Fourth Sunday After Epiphany

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