

January 23, 30 & February 6, 2021

# The Weekly Tidings

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Come Together, Grow in Faith, Serve the LORD

## Ash Wednesday worship services

Ash Wednesday worship services will be held on March 2. Services will be held in-person at 12:00 PM & 7:00 PM in the Sanctuary. The 12:00 PM service will be livestreamed and posted on [htelc.com](http://htelc.com).



## Weekend at Calumet March 4-6, 2022

Due to the ongoing uncertainty with the pandemic, we are going to push off the Women's Retreat for another year. However, Calumet is open and the Conference Center rooms are still available. Calumet is asking for masks to be worn inside common areas and eating in the dining hall is more socially distant. The cost of a room in the Conference Center is \$210 for the weekend. Rooms vary in the number of beds from 2-5, with 2 rooms with 1 bed each for a lower fee. Fee for the meal plan (Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch) is \$64 per adult and \$32 per youth (ages 7-17). Children 6 and under eat and stay for free. So grab your family or a friend and enjoy what Calumet has to offer. Please contact [Julie@calumet.org](mailto:Julie@calumet.org) or call 603-539-4773 to reserve your room. Other questions- [carsonsl@maine.rr.com](mailto:carsonsl@maine.rr.com)



## Reconciling in Christ Celebration - POSTPONED

Our Reconciling in Christ Celebration (originally scheduled last Sunday, January 30) will be rescheduled for Spring, presumably around March, April, or early May. Please look out for more details in the next few weeks.



## A Word from your Interim Pastor

Dear friends in Christ,

I am disheartened to report that yesterday (February 2) Punxsutawney Phil emerged from his hole and saw his shadow. According to tradition, this means we're in for six more weeks of winter. Of course, those of us who live in New England are used to winters that seem to go on and on, so I'm not sure this is exactly a news flash.

Moreover, as Ground Hog's Day skeptics will point out, in the 136 years these ceremonies have been held at Gobblers' Knob, Phil's forecasting batting average is less than forty percent. The truth is it's anybody's guess when the darkness of winter will yield to the light of spring.

But yesterday was much more than Ground Hog's Day; it was also Candlemas, that day on the liturgical calendar that commemorates the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple. And for Christians, Candlemas is a time of year to remember that we have a more reliable guide in Christ than Punxsutawney Phil, and that (unlike the winter sun) the "light of Christ" never fades, even in the darkest and coldest of times.



So, what is Candlemas and why do we celebrate it on February 2? Here is the story in a nutshell:

At the time of Jesus' birth, Jewish tradition dictated that on the fortieth day after giving birth the parents would go to the temple to present their child to the Lord. Forty days from Christmas day brings us to February 2nd, which is why we celebrate Candlemas then.

What Luke reports (Lk 2:25-40) is that when Mary and Joseph took the infant Jesus to the temple that day, the wise old man Simeon, moved by the Spirit, took the child into his arms, proclaiming: "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

These words of Simeon's, of course, quickly became known as the nunc dimittis, the beloved canticle of "Christ's light" that to this day is a cornerstone of evening prayer and compline. In many churches, special services are held on Candlemas in which this story of Luke is re-told and the church's candles for the year are blessed in a ceremony featuring the eternal light of Christ.

But for me, I have another memory of Candlemas altogether. When I was a graduate student at Stanford many decades ago, our resident poet was Denise Levertov. I once had the thrill of hearing her read some of her poetry, including this little gem, called "Candlemas," in which she tries to capture the mystery of this day:

With certitude  
Simeon opened  
ancient arms  
to infant light.  
Decades  
before the cross, the tomb  
and the new life,  
he knew  
new life.  
What depth  
of faith he drew on,  
turning illumined  
towards deep night.



In these dark and cold days of winter, I hope this same light of Christ burns brightly in your home and heart. And if it is not, or has been dimming of late, I invite you to go back and re-read the story of Simeon and Anna, and allow yourself to be drawn in by its luminous simplicity.

In Christ's radiance,  
Pastor Luther

## Afghan Immigration Support: Team Seacoast

Afghan families are being settled in the Seacoast! Through the auspices of Ascentria Care Alliance (ACA) of New England, a Neighborhood Support Team is being organized to support and companion each family. Let me tell you specifically about one such team—Team Seacoast.

With its leadership centered in Durham, Team Seacoast is made up of 40+ volunteers from churches, synagogues, and other organizations around the area. To become Team members, individuals registered through ACA and went through a background check. Two people were picked to serve as co-chairs, and various committees were organized to divide the work. Committees include Welcoming, Housing Set-up, Fund-raising, Finance, Cultural Training, Education, Health, Transportation, and more.



Once committees were in place and the house rental finalized, ACA arranged for our family's arrival. Our family—mom, dad, and four children, ages 2 through 11—arrived in Portsmouth on a Friday, spent the weekend in a local hotel, and moved into their new home on Monday. Team Seacoast had exactly five days to prepare the house. We scrubbed and painted. We sent pick-up trucks throughout Seacoast towns to collect and deliver donated furniture. We sewed curtains, shopped for groceries, plumbed the kitchen sink, installed smoke alarms, collected bath supplies, set up beds, gathered toys, even filled back-packs for the two school-age children.

With very few exceptions, everything—right down to brand new living room furniture—was donated. Throughout the process, Team Seacoast has been blown away by generosity.

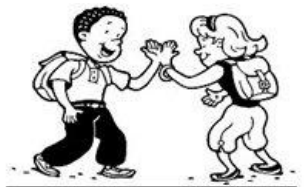
Team Seacoast is concentrating on welcoming a family to Portsmouth, but more NSTs are active as well. There's one welcoming a family in Exeter and another south on the NH-MA border. This is exciting work! Welcoming new immigrants: that's something America's always been about.

## End 68 Hours of Hunger

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church has a team that packs food for the program 'End 68 Hours of Hunger' for the Portsmouth schools. This program provides food for children in need that sustains them for the weekend when school is not in session. Kathy McKenna and Lauren Gianino are the Team Coordinators for our church. Our team is responsible for packing food bags for children on 7 Thursdays throughout the school year. We pack at the First United Methodist Church, 129 Miller Ave. Portsmouth and we meet at 6pm. Depending on the number of volunteers, it takes between 45 minutes to an hour to pack 70-90 bags.

### End 68 HOH Scheduled Packing Dates for HTELC 2022

- Mar. 17
- Apr. 14
- May 26



## End 68 Hours of Hunger

This school year we are welcoming back volunteers! If you are interested in joining our team please email us (mckenna.kathy.62@gmail.com) or Lauren Gianino(pglg813@comcast.net). \*\*\*Due to COVID-19 safety concerns we are requiring that all volunteers be vaccinated and masked. Let us know if you have any questions.

Kathy McKenna & Lauren Gianino

## Pop-Up Pantry - Year end Review

The incredible packing team members of Nina Opderbecke, Mark Beliveau, Eileen Kackenmeister and Julie Moore were responsible for the 1,223 bags that were given out at our outdoor pantry this past year!! When you see them, please give them a big thanks! We never once missed our Wednesday morning ministry due to weather! In addition to our bags of staples, we also provide eggs, milk, bread and fresh vegetables when available from our local farmers. A big thank you also goes to Mark Donahue who takes down the tables/signs for us each week! Thank you so very much for your continued support. February Wish List is VEGETABLE OIL!



## Correction from our Past President

I want to apologize for my error for something I said when I read my annual report. I said that three individuals had agreed to come forward to be a team to lead the property team This is not completely accurate information. I sincerely apologize for my error. A person is still desperately needed to serve as the lead organizer of the Property Team. Contact Mark in the Church office if you are interested in learning more.  
- Cristina D.



## Mitten Tree

A tree will be in the Narthex and clothes pins will be available. I am hoping that we will have plenty of warm mittens, gloves, hats, scarves and even socks to distribute in our local area. The tree will remain up until February 20. Items will be distributed on Monday, February 21. Thank you so much for your anticipated generosity.



## Transition Team

WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK.

Three questions have been written on the white board outside of the kitchen. The Transition Team is collecting the answers to these questions. We ask all folks attending services at Holy Trinity to answer these three questions so that we can process the data and present it to the congregation. Please send your answers to the church office if you cannot be here in person. If you have not attended services in person, the three questions are as follows:

- What Brought you here to Holy Trinity?
- What Makes Holy Trinity right for you?
- What will keep you coming back?



## The Holy Trinity Staff thanks you....

On behalf of the HTELC staff, we want to say thank you for your generosity show to us last week through the cards and gift we received. It is great to know and feel we are appreciated in our jobs. It is an honor and our pleasure to work with you here at Holy Trinity. Thank You.



## Graduation Sunday

Graduation Sunday will be celebrated in June. If you know someone from Holy Trinity who will graduate from High School, College, Grad School, or another school this year and would like to be recognized, please speak with the Church Office or Helen Goransson. Any graduating Seniors who wish to apply for our annual Faith and Service Award, please contact Helen Goransson at [heleng@Bondgarden.net](mailto:heleng@Bondgarden.net).



## Prayer Tree - Email List

Holy Trinity has a “Prayer Tree” email list where our members and attenders can reach out to each other when we need our prayers. Please notify the Church Office if you would like to be added to the “Prayer Tree”.



## Contemporary Choir Rehearsals

Contemporary Choir Rehearsals are starting up again. Meet with Jon Koelker on every other Tuesday at 6:00 PM in our Sanctuary. Our next rehearsal is Tuesday, February 8. The following Tuesday rehearsal will be February 22.

