

# The Weekly Tidings

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Come Together, Grow in Faith, Serve the LORD

## Property Team

So ... Where is the new church sign? I have written about various projected (promised) dates from our supplier, Stewart Sign Company in Sarasota, Florida.

If you have followed the various dates as they have come and gone, you know it has been frustrating for all of us. But, there really is a sign! Manufacturing was completed in June and our sign (all 1400 pounds of it) was loaded onto a truck to our installer, NH Sign Company in Auburn, NH. They have received and inspected it and are ready to begin the installation process. The first step will be to take down the old sign, install the concrete foundation for the new sign, and install the new mounting hardware on the foundation. This first phase is scheduled to be done on July 20. After the new concrete has sufficiently cured (about a week), they will return and install the sign on the foundation. The sign should be operational by the end of July. *Dave Mercer, Property Team Leader*



## Operation Blessing

We have not been requesting items for Operation Blessing throughout the pandemic as OB had a surplus of items and little storage space. Now, however, the situation has changed. We are in a great need for the following items. MEN'S CLOTHING, girls and boys clothing size 5-20. (No need for infants clothing to size 4). Also needed are PJ's, socks, and undies for all. Betty Smith and I have been volunteering there every Friday so we can keep you informed of the needs. The clothing, bedding, food and household goods are given free to those who qualify. Operation Blessing staff thank you so much for your past donations and for what you may be able to help in the future.



Thanks to Barry and Phyllis for continuing to bring the items to OB. Lois Laurence

## Church Office Article

Early in July, Holy Trinity members and attenders received in their inbox an email from someone impersonating Rev. Dave Snyder (our supply Pastor this past Sunday), and from Rev. Grace Gravelle (the Pastor from HTELC in North Carolina). I'm thankful that many of you passed on this information to me and didn't respond, or stopped responding once the scammer asked for Gift Cards. This past Monday afternoon, another email scam went out to our members from someone impersonating Rev. Snyder, with a vaguely different email address than the one everyone received on Friday. **Remember, no leader or Pastor from our church would ask you for a gift card, especially over email.**

The only good thing to come out of this potential scam is that we have learned how the scammers are getting our church member's personal information – by signing up within our Elexio directory. We never announced Rev. Snyder's arrival at our church online, except for in our Thursday afternoon Tidings newsletter. That tipped me off that the scammers are able to read our newsletter, and only people who receive our newsletter have an account within Elexio.



How can we stop this from happening in the future? As your Office Coordinator and administrator for our Elexio directory, there are four steps that I will take to prevent this from happening again.

First, over the past week, I've taken a closer look at all people who have access to the directory. If I didn't recognize a person's name, their access to the directory was revoked. (If I mistakenly revoked your directory access, please contact me directly and I will fix the matter). Next, for anyone who makes an account within Elexio and requests access to the directory, they will now need to call the Church Office or talk to me in-person before I give them permission to use the directory. This will hopefully deter the scammers from getting back into the directory easily.

In addition, when we receive another scam email like these, please continue to forward the emails to the Church Office. From now on, I will ask anyone who has received a scam email to

report the original scam email to <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov/> and explain the situation. Additionally, you can forward the original email to an Anti-Phishing Working Group: [reportphishing@apwg.org](mailto:reportphishing@apwg.org). Everyone who has forwarded me one of the scam emails since last Friday has been instructed to do these steps.

Finally, I have printed out two flyers from the Federal Trade Commission that explains how to detect these scams. Both flyers will be available beginning this Sunday next to the bulletins for anyone who wants a copy. I'm encouraging everyone who has received a scam email in the past to take a flyer home and read it.

I'm frustrated that this happened again with such frequency. With these steps, I'm optimistic that we will deter the scammers from harassing our congregation, eventually leading to them being caught and stopped for good.

Mark Donahue, Church Office Coordinator

### **President's Article**

This Sunday, July 17 we are blessed to have the graduates of the School of Lay Ministry participating in our worship service. We have a number of graduates of this program who worship with us or the Indonesian congregation regularly. The School of Lay Ministry is sponsored by the New England Synod and is a 2-year course of study that provides opportunity for spiritual growth and learning. According to the Synod, the program "is organized as a two year commitment of study. One year focuses on Lutheran theology and confessional heritage, church history, world religions and current ministry issues. The other year studies include the Old and New Testaments, biblical studies, leadership and the arts of ministry. Each year begins and ends with a mandatory retreat."

(<https://tinyurl.com/23a7phda>). The graduates of the program are working together and will participate as lectors and ushers, and will provide a message as a testimony of their faith. Please support our friends as they share their faith journey with us.



## Immigration News: Claudine

Many of us enjoyed getting to know Claudine while she was living in Dover. This is an update on where she is now and what's happening in her life.

Claudine is an immigrant from Cameroon who was introduced to Holy Trinity through the Seacoast Interfaith Sanctuary Coalition. Cameroon is in the midst of civil war, and things became so dangerous for Claudine that she had to escape, leaving behind a daughter, grandchildren, and an aging mother. She arrived in the States about four years ago, applied for asylum, and was assigned a lawyer. Finding a way to earn a living and support herself was immediate—housing, food, and legal fees. In Cameroon she'd been a paralegal, but she wouldn't have qualified for a similar position here without advanced education. But something she could qualify for with minimal training was to become an LNA, which she did in rapid time. With the current desperate need for medical aids in the States, she'd be able to find work wherever she ended up. Things were looking positive.

But then she hit a snag, a rather large snag. Through miscommunication with her assigned attorney, she missed a court date and was immediately arrested and put in detention.

How long she spent in jail, we're not sure, but we know that she was moved several times with the final period of incarceration in the Stratford County Detention Center. And that's where the Seacoast Interfaith Sanctuary Coalition (SISC) found and rescued her. Church funds were collected throughout Dover and surrounding communities, her bail money was paid, and SISC found a room for her to rent in a member's home. She procured a job in a Dover nursing home.

Then SISC contacted Holy Trinity and asked if, along with Portsmouth Jewish Temple, we'd like to companion Claudine; we immediately agreed. We set up the "Team Claudine" and got to work. Over the next five months we helped with grocery money and provided transportation. Most of all, we each had the blessings of friendship.

Things seemed to be going well, but Claudine continued to be challenged again and again. She lost her job due to a misunderstanding. Her host family moved away, and she had to seek out new housing. But enterprising Claudine found herself a temporary job and new housing.



One day a phone call came from a medical facility near Hanover. They needed help. If Claudine could be there the next day, they'd have both job and housing available. Intrepid, brave, and more than a little desperate, she boarded the next bus and became a "traveling LNA."

Her journey continues. Today she shares an apartment with another Cameroon woman in Las Vegas, Nevada. Things may change again soon. Back in her home country on the other side of the world, her mother suffers from dementia. Claudine wants to see her one more time, hopefully before her mother no longer remembers her. With donations collected by the church she attends in Las Vegas and from Portsmouth's United Unitarian Church, her new attorney is helping her apply for a Temporary Protected Status (TPS) travel authorization that will allow her to leave the US for a visit to Cameroon.

As her life changes, SISC will continue accompanying her. She and I often message back and forth. Every one of her notes ends with "I pray for your blessing in God every day." Let's continue to do likewise.

### **End 68 Hours of Hunger**

Our End 68 Hours of Hunger mission has concluded along with the Portsmouth school year. With our small group of dedicated volunteers we were able to pack 352 bags of food, supplying almost 2,500 meals to families with children in Portsmouth. A big THANK YOU to everyone who helped us pack this year, and to the congregation of Holy Trinity for financially supporting this endeavor. Watch the Tidings for start up information in September when school resumes. Looking to volunteer in the community but don't have much time? Come and join us one evening a month! *Lauren Gianino and Kathy McKenna*

