

# The Weekly Tidings

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Come Together, Grow in Faith, Serve the LORD

## Thanksgiving Baskets and Mitten Tree

Once again, HTELC will be assisting Operation Blessing with procuring items for Thanksgiving Baskets. Items can be placed in the Narthex and will be delivered to them to Operation Blessing. The items being requested are stuffing mix, cranberry sauce, turkey gravy (no glass jars, please), pie crust mix (no filling) and brownie mix. They are also asking for gift cards to Hannaford's, Market Basket and Aldi's. These are to be used to specifically purchase ready-made rolls and butter.

HTELC has been asked to hold the Mitten Tree collection earlier than usual. This will allow these desperately needed items to be distributed as the cold weather sets in. The tree will be erected in the Sanctuary during the four (4) weeks immediately preceding Advent. This will be October 30 – November 20. All sizes of mittens, gloves, hats and socks are greatly appreciated. Last year we were reminded that adult sized work gloves are greatly needed.



## College Care Packages

We are collecting names of college students for the annual College Care Christmas Packages. Please send the name and school address of your student to Bobbie Febbo. Also, indicate if your student is on a semester or trimester term and the date this term ends. Please respond by November 1 so that we can prepare for mailing on the Monday after Thanksgiving. Include your contact info in case we need to clarify any information with you. A donation box will be in the Gathering Area from November 6 to November 20. Please help us to fill these packages with goodies for our college students.



## Pastor Luther's Article: October 13, 2022

Earlier this fall we lost one of the great Christian writers of the past century, Frederick Buechner. Buechner was a Presbyterian minister who started out as a school chaplain and then became more of a writer than anything else. If you haven't read him before, I urge you to pick up one of his books. *Wishful Thinking* is a good place to start, as it is a good, short introduction to both Buechner's passion for the Bible and his great wit.

Although Buechner was an extraordinary writer and teacher of the faith, he honestly didn't have much patience for church, as he was the first to admit.

"I don't go to church all that regularly," he once told an interviewer, "and one reason I don't is very often when I go I am bored out of my wits. I find myself being addressed by preachers who, I assume, were led by some initial passion for Christ, for the truth, for God, for 'the More' we're all seeking. That's what got them there. But apparently, what once got them there is now buried under all the debris of having to run a church and keep it going."



I suspect we all feel this from time to time. The challenges of endless meetings, balancing budgets, fixing boilers, and yes, even putting up with boring sermons, can sometimes so dominate our experience of church that we forget what brought us here and is at the heart of it all – the living Christ.

This coming Sunday we are going to resume our Adult Forum hour by taking up the question "what is church?" I'll lead the discussion with some preliminary thoughts, but my hope is that my presentation will lead us into a conversation about who we are, and who God is calling us to be, as "church." This seems like an important and timely topic as we are reemerging from the pandemic, facing the continuing secularization of our culture, and embarking up the call of a new pastor. I hope you can join us.

## Property Team

Parking lot and driveway maintenance work started on October 10, but the schedule has changed due to the weather. Cleaning of vegetation from cracks and around the perimeter has been completed as scheduled, but sealing of the cracks could not be done on October 11 as planned because of rain. Crack sealing was completed on October 12, but the remaining major surface sealing and line painting has been rescheduled to the week of October 17, again, due to weather considerations. As of this writing, the surface sealing will be done on Tuesday, October 18. The lot and driveways will be closed to vehicle traffic and parking October 18-October 20. This estimated schedule is subject to change if weather dictates.

I previously reported on an operational problem with the skylight windows in the ceiling of the sanctuary. My discussions with the manufacturer and some local window service companies did not identify any solutions. The general consensus seems to be that the windows are old and, perhaps, at the end of their useful life. The windows are functional as permanent skylights (closed and not leaking), so I have decided to unplug the power supply for the windows to eliminate any possibility that the windows might open inadvertently or in a spurious manner. In the event we encounter any leakage, we can plug in the power supply temporarily and cycle the windows open and closed to, hopefully, resolve any leaks.



On occasion, someone will ask me why the light on the ceiling fan in the sanctuary always seems to be on. The answer? It is always on, because the light no longer responds to the remote control unit. It has not been a high priority problem on my to-do list. Some research indicates that the remote units do malfunction with age. Another possibility could be a problem with the electronic controls in the fan unit itself. I plan to buy a replacement remote control and see if that will solve the problem. Another workable solution may be to wait for the bulb to fail. We do not really need the light. Yes, I know. The bulb is consuming energy for no good reason.

This summer, the Newington Fire Department completed a routine annual inspection of our facility and identified several deficiencies, the most significant of which involve operational issues with a couple of our emergency exit doors. I believe the problems have been resolved,

and I am hopeful that the Fire Department will be satisfied when they return for a follow-up inspection later this month.

I'll close this report with a reminder to the congregation regarding the precarious nature of ongoing property team work that depends so heavily on volunteers. Nearly all of our property volunteers have gained experience over the years (gotten older) and the ongoing demands for our time are increasingly challenging. I can recall when we routinely had a dozen or more volunteers available on any given Thursday morning to tackle things that needed done. These days, it is not unusual to have half that number ... some days less. Some weeks even the basic minimums do not get done. Certainly, not all our work gets done on Thursday mornings, and we still have some very reliable, skilled and helpful volunteers doing important work as their schedule permits, but, overall, we operate largely in a reaction mode, taking on issues that find us in the course of time as our facility ages. Perhaps I should say the "curse of time" if I can be allowed to take liberties with Robert Pollok's famous poem. I think my personal skills regarding planning as well as ongoing use and recruitment of volunteers are at least partially responsible for the current situation. I am hopeful that the next Property Team leader will have the skills, insights, and energy to turn this all around. Perhaps it is time for a new and different approach. What worked well twenty years ago, is probably not appropriate today.

David Mercer, Property Team Leader (Pro Tempore)

## Stewardship

The Annual Stewardship Fund Drive is at the halfway point. You should have received your Third-Quarter Statement by now. It will give you an indication of your giving this year so that you can plan your giving for next year. It is important for us to show any potential candidates that we would be able to call and support a pastor. We are a congregation that is faithful to our beliefs and lively in our missionary work. We have so many different missions that we, as individuals, and that we, as a congregation, support. A visible way to show that support is to fill out and return your pledge card.



This Sunday, October 23rd, you will be given a Time and Talent form so that you can indicate how you would like to serve the local church or the church at large. The chairpersons of the various ministries hope that you will find an area where your interests intersect with your time to give. It is both an exciting time and time of many needs here at Holy Trinity.

We hope that your excitement can help us work together for our Church and the World.

## Church Office

Last month, I wrote an article about a homeless man named Jonathan who had begun living in a tent at the wooded area near the Church building. I wanted to provide an update to the congregation about his circumstance.

In early October, after careful deliberation with Judy Evans and Pastor Luther, along with recommendations from Council, Holy Trinity decided that we were to give Jonathan two weeks' notice to leave the area and find a better place to tent – by October 24.

On Monday, October 24, I dropped off Jonathan with his belongings to the area across from the Portsmouth Walmart on Lafayette Street.



Unfortunately, Holy Trinity is not set-up to handle long-term requests like we've done so with Jonathan. We were happy to give him access to a phone to call resources, and to occasionally help him with food and living supplies, but we decided we cannot set a precedent to let other homeless people tent nearby. Above all, we could not be responsible for any of his actions in case he is injured (or worse), or in trouble with the law. Additionally, helping Jonathan has taken up a lot of my time and energy, and we've begun noticing how dependent Jonathan is on receiving help from the church without taking many steps forward himself. We tried to get him to Crossroads, but it soon became apparent that he preferred to sleep outside in a tent. Here's a quick update of how our church has helped Jonathan since my previous article last month. We've helped him with clothing at Savers, a few gift cards from Walmart, and small items to help him sleep outside. A few of our members have donated food, one of whom made him a home-cooked meal immediately after reading my article in September. This same member also donated spare toiletries.

In early September, he needed a birth certificate and a debit card mailed to the church. Jonathan received his birth certificate and debit card in the mail on Friday, September 23, and easily activated his card that same day. The next week, I drove Jonathan to the Social Security Administration Office for a card. Sadly, the SSA could not give him a Social Security card until he had a photo ID or a recent medical bill, neither of which he had. Jonathan had to wait almost a full month to get a medical bill in the mail from a Hospital in Alabama, and then after a frustrating follow-up appointment with the SSA Office for an hour, they agreed to send a Social Security Card in the mail. That card arrived at our church's mailbox one week later, on Thursday, October 20. Jonathan was successfully able to get a photo ID at the Dover DMV, thanks in part to Crossroads for allowing him to use their address on the Photo ID application.

During the last weekend, he's applied and interviewed for a job at the Old Navy in the Crossings, here in Newington. The good news he told me: they want to hire him. As of Monday, he's waiting on a background check in order to formally receive the job.

Thank you to everyone who has supported Jonathan and helped guide me towards the right thing to do in this unusual circumstance. I'm happy we've set him on a good path to gain employment and end his homelessness, but we need for him to start becoming responsible for himself. I wish nothing but good luck for Jonathan. Or, in Jonathan's words, "God Bless You, my brother-in-Christ".

## 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.*

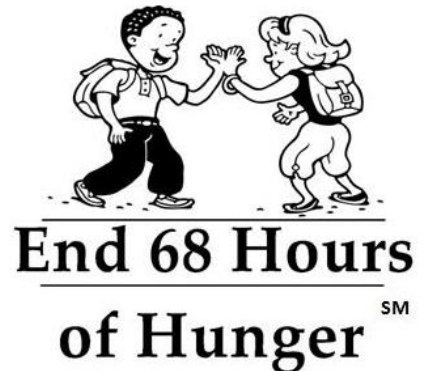
*Our team is responsible for packing food bags for children on 6 Thursdays and 1 Wednesday throughout the school year. Our next packing date is **Wednesday, November 9th**. We pack at the **First United Methodist Church, 129 Miller Ave. Portsmouth** and we **meet at 6pm**. Depending on the number of volunteers, it takes around 45 minutes to pack 50-60 bags.*

### **End 68 HOH Scheduled Packing Dates for HTELC 2022-2023**

Nov. 9 (Wednesday)  
Dec. 15  
Jan. 26  
Mar. 9  
Apr. 13  
June 1

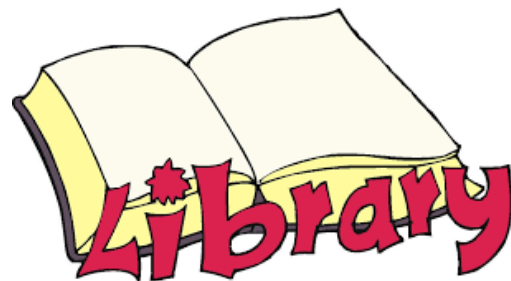
*We welcome all volunteers! If you are interested in joining our team please email us ([mckenna.kathy.62@gmail.com](mailto:mckenna.kathy.62@gmail.com)) or Lauren Gianino([pqlg813@comcast.net](mailto:pqlg813@comcast.net)).*

*Let us know if you have any questions.  
Kathy McKenna & Lauren Gianino*



## Library News

Do you know Mma Precious Ramotswe, the famous Botswanan lady detective? Do you know her friend Grace? Have you met the good husband of Zebra Drive? These folks were some of Barbara Galle's favorite characters.



Barbara founded our present HT library, and because of her, we're fortunate to have a large collection of Alexander McCall Smith novels. Smith is the creator of Mma Ramotswe, and he introduces us to her through his No. 1 Ladies Detective series. We have all 23 books, and the series holds the record for most frequent check-outs. Check one out, read a few pages, and you'll know why. Those of us who have visited our friends in Tanzania appreciate how beautifully the writing captures the language cadence, the customs, and much of the thinking processes of our Isimani friends.

A few years ago Alexander McCall Smith spoke at the Portsmouth Music Hall in the "Writers on a New England Stage" event where he was asked by an audience member how long it took him to write a book. His answer: "I write one each week." Besides the Lady Detective books, he's produced at least six more series, 18 children's books, and 13 full length academic journals on law, medicine, and bioethics. Oh, and there are a few single novels here and there, and he's just beginning a series about the French.

One would think, then, that the man stays in front of his word processor 24-hours a day. Not so. Smith holds LLB and PhD degrees from the University of Edinburgh where he taught Medical Law and is now Professor Emeritus. Along the way he chaired the British Medical Journal, co-chaired the United Kingdom Human Genetics Commission, served on the International Bioethics Committee of UNESCO, and helped found several universities throughout Africa.

No wonder Barbara chose Smith as a favorite! If you have yet to read him, start with the No. 1 Ladies Detective (shelves on the sanctuary wall) and then move on to the Sunday Philosophy Club and Corduroy Mansions (circular rack). Enjoy!

### **Rev. Don Fultz has passed away**

Holy Trinity would like to pass on our deepest sympathy to the family of Pastor Don Fultz. Pastor Fultz passed away recently. Many of our members have met Rev. Fultz, as he visited our church many times. Pastor Fultz is the founder of Bega Kwa Bega, and all of us who have traveled to Isimani knew both him and his wife.

## Kairos Outside: November 11-13

Some members of Holy Trinity have served on Kairos teams. Kairos, which means "God's time," is an inter-denominational Christian ministry to incarcerated women and men. Franklyn and I have the opportunity to serve on a Kairos Outside Weekend Retreat Nov 11-13. Kairos Outside is, as the name implies, a ministry to women outside the walls. They aren't incarcerated themselves, but they have been, or are the mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, or significant others of men doing time.

We are asking for people to pray for the weekend and guests. The names of people who commit to prayer are written on strips of paper, which are made into chains, similar to the chains over the Church Office door. The chains will stretch from one side of the meeting room to another.

**"Relieve the trouble of  
my heart and bring me  
out of my distress."  
Psalm 25**

A Kairos Outside weekend is free to everyone who participates, whether guests or team. The upcoming weekend will cost \$150.00 per person. As members of the team, we are selling meal tickets at \$5.00 each. The tickets are placed at each table setting, as a sign that someone cared enough, to pay for several meals. Other donations are gratefully accepted. Checks should be made payable to Kairos of NH, with Kairos Outside in the memo line.

Flowers at Dawn is another opportunity to serve. People gather at the Sarto Center in Hooksett at 6:30 am, with 1 -2 dozen flowers in hand. The flowers will be distributed to the guests, some of whom have never been given a flower in their lives.

Checks can be given to either Franklyn or Alice Vosburg. Your assistance is gratefully accepted and deeply appreciated.