

March 2015
Volume 3, Issue 3

Trinity Episcopal Church

Lenox, MA



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SERVICES

SUNDAYS

8 a.m. - Holy Eucharist

10:15 a.m. - Holy Eucharist with Hymns and Godly Play

5 p.m. - Evening Prayer

DAILY

7 a.m. - Morning Prayer (8 a.m. on first Saturday of every month)

TUESDAY

10 a.m. - Holy Eucharist

A Message from our Rector

Dear People of Trinity Church,

It may sound a little cliché, but I think the most significant thing we have to give thanks for is the end of a very hard winter and the prospect of a short, but glorious spring. As I have been reflecting on this letter, I have found myself thinking over and over again just how difficult this winter has been. Beginning last fall and through the winter, our year has been marked by significant illnesses and deaths among beloved members of our community. The cold and bleak weather seemed to almost mirror the grief in our hearts. And over the course of the past few months, I have seen this take a toll on our life together. I don't write this try to bring us down. I write this to try to name the weight that we are carrying as a community

so that we can offer this burden up to God.

Just as surely as night gives way to day, and winter gives way to spring, death gives way to resurrection. It has been hard to see the light of the resurrection, but we can see it shining if we know where to look. We can see it in the way our community has rallied around those who are grieving. We can see it in the fellowship we shared with each other at the Garden Party. It is present in the four hundred bags of food that were collected for the Food Pantry in Lenox. And is present every time we gather to worship God.

We continue to be blessed with a wonderful community of faith. We have such a strong group of dedicated faithful people, and I am

continually surprised by what we are able to accomplish together. Over the next few weeks, we'll be wrapping up our program year. Thank you all for all that you've done over the past year – for your work and your prayers. Thank you in advance for the work that we will do together to strengthen our Godly Play program, to reach out to those in need, and to share the love of God with our brothers and sisters.

Yours in Christ,

About our Finances

As of March 31, 2015

Pledge and plate income	\$43,975
Endowment & other income	49,447
Total Income	93,422
Total Expenses	\$78,660
Surplus	\$14,762

At this point in the church year, we wanted to provide another update as to our financial position. A few things have:

1. Our pledges are considerably above budget. This is due to many pledges being fulfilled early. This provided a much needed cushion for our cash flow to cover the extraordinary costs for heating this winter. Consequently, pledge income will slow later in the year.
2. Plate income is below budget probably due to slightly below average attendance over the past few months.
3. We are about \$9,500 over budget as of the end of March, but this is entirely due to increased utility costs. In fact, all other areas are at or below budget.

Although we are in a strong position at this point, we will need to manage our costs very carefully as we come into the second half of the year. Thank you to everyone who continues to provide such generous support to our church.

If you have any questions either of the wardens, the treasurer, or the rector would be glad to speak with you.

Godly Play Children Look More Closely at the Call of

During the cold, snowy weeks of winter our fifth graders studied Moses' call by God in the dry, hot desert. They looked at the differences between the way Moses saw his ability to do the tough job of asking Pharaoh to free the Jewish slaves, and the way God looked at it. They analyzed why Moses refused the challenge at first, and how God helped him to see himself as capable of doing it—with the assistance of his brother Aaron, who was a more confident speaker.

The children also saw "The King's Speech" on a movie night at the Heims' house which showed a more recent historical figure (George VI of England who was a stutterer), who had to work very hard to meet a challenge (becoming king) that fell to him when his older brother refused to accept it. They talked about how much stronger George became when he said yes to the call, and how much good he did by leading his people during WWII. They saw his brother's refusal as a missed opportunity, and ultimately selfish.

In the classroom, the nine and ten-year-olds participated in a short play about Moses' call, and they talked about the difficulties Moses had (and all of us have) in meeting challenges. They understood that all of us confront hard decisions and difficult jobs in life, and discussed the facts that while we have the right to say no to challenges, we can count on God to help us accept them and do our best at them.

The children conjectured about what tough calls in life might await them. They agreed that while we often don't know ahead of time how much good will come of our agreeing to do hard things, we can count on becoming personally stronger by shouldering them—even if, like Moses, we do them with trepidation. They also agreed that it's important to ask for help from God and the trusted people around us, especially our families, when we are confronted with big decisions.

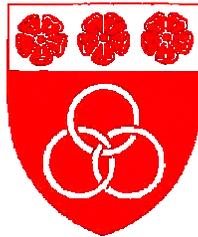
—Ann St. Clair

From the Rector - On the Partnership Conversation

In our efforts to try to figure out whether we can organize a partnership with our neighbors at St. Helena's, we have spent less time talking about *why* this partnership might be a good idea for us. Over the course of the past few months, I have seen how this partnership might provide some truly significant benefits to us as a community. Aside from improving our finances, we have a chance to build a stronger community of faith by joining together with our friends and neighbors. By working together on programs and events, we will be able to share our experience with more people, and by working alongside people with different experiences and a different approach to worship, we open ourselves up to seeing God in new ways. Before we even began the conversation, I told the parish that I was not doing this out of some sort of responsibility to St. Helena's. My focus is entirely on the spiritual health of Trinity Church and her parishioners. I continue to believe that, if we get it right, this partnership could help us grow in our life in Christ, and that's really where my focus is.

- Michael

Update on the Trinity/St. Helena's Partnership Conversation



*Open Meeting
17 May 2015
Following the 10:15 service*

Trinity and St Helena's are joint partners in these discussions. Although St. Helena's is a diocesan mission rather than a full fledged parish, such distinctions have little relevance today and St. Helena's operates independently and without diocesan oversight. There is no diocesan financial support or subsidy, and St. Helena's pays an assessment to support the diocese just as Trinity does. St. Helena's has a "Chapel Committee" rather than a Vestry, but that distinction is a historic relic, nothing more.

The main elements of the partnership discussion involve Michael being appointed Priest-in-Charge at St. Helena's (an historic leftover due to St Helena's mission status). Michael will remain Rector at Trinity, and substantially all his pay will come from Trinity. The partnership contemplates hiring a part time Priest Associate and a parish administrator. The Priest Associate will focus chiefly on St. Helena's and will

be paid by St. Helena's. The parish administrator will be almost full time and provide administrative oversight and assistance and communication expertise for both churches. This position will also be paid by St. Helena's. There are lots of other financial bits and pieces, but the bottom line is Trinity will end up with between 80 and 90% of Michael's time and energy, and he (and we) will be assisted by a professionally qualified administrator and communication specialist. Michael have a clergy colleague with whom he can discuss and plan to serve both churches.

Trinity will end up ahead financially, enabling us to address our persistent operating deficit in a responsible way. St. Helena's will end up ahead financially in that their costs for the Priest Associate and parish administrator will be lower than prior similar expenses. Michael will be responsible for two churches, but with an augmented staff serving both

places and supporting him. Trinity and St Helena's will be able to undertake a whole range of joint activities while remaining separate houses of worship and separate communities.

In all our discussions we act as two separate and equal entities. entering into partnership for our mutual benefit. We contemplate remaining separate and distinct as our relationship unfolds. The diocese cheers us on, but has no substantive role in our arrangements. We have also agreed that if at any time either church feels the arrangement is not working out, we'll unwind and go our separate ways.

There is a lot more we've talked about which we'd like to share with you. Please come to the Q & A on May 17th, and tell us what you think.

- Jeff Kittross

Parish House Renovations Begin

Our vestry has given the go-ahead for two major improvements to our Parish House:

1. *Bathroom* – A complete overhaul of our venerable bathroom to make it more “user-friendly” and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
2. *Floor* – A new floor to cover our present sad looking floor with a natural oak floor.

The cost of these two projects will be approximately \$30,000.

Work on the bathroom began earlier this week. There was a small delay to ensure that the bathroom was available for the Garden Party this weekend. Our own Joe Carry will be doing the work!

Funds to pay for these two long anticipated and badly needed maintenance projects and upgrades will be withdrawn from our endowment. We urge those of you who are able to make a special contribution to lessen our dependence on withdrawing invested funds. As you all know, Trinity depends on income from our endowment to operate the church, and funds once withdrawn generally don't get replenished. If you can help, please let us know. Steve Peters (637-1193) will be overseeing the work for Trinity and can answer your questions.

The third leg of the planned improvements for the Parish House is a permanent ramp to enable people of limited mobility access to the building. The portable ramp, all agree, has outlived its usefulness. This project will be expensive and may well involve landscaping changes and other complicated elements involving access to the building. The vestry will continue to consider how best to undertake this project, possibly in 2016. Stay tuned.

We know all will be of good cheer and Christian patience as this 100+ year old building gets some of its internal pieces replaced.