



*A Publication of Trinity United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation
4435 North Calhoun Road, Brookfield, WI 53005*

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January 2021



Out On the Way

by Pastor Susan Stull-Carr

We've been sharing the same path for over 28 months now! Who knew our time would be for such a long time, and I pray, a fruitful time for Trinity? But now, by God's grace, a new pastor has been called and you are ready to give birth to something new that has been growing within you! This is a time for endings and new beginnings. This is the way of the life in the Spirit. I've discovered that life is really about learning how to let go and prepare a way for something new to begin. Life is endless change and transition. But this is a joyful time!



It's been an awfully strange and challenging year for us at Trinity. Again, who could have foreseen what would arrive on the path as obstacles to keeping our faith strong and our witness to God's love constant? And yet, in spite of all the obstacles and challenges, we have been held together by our love for one another, and the 'Elmer's Glue' of the Holy Spirit which connects us even as we are separate from one another. It's taken some imagination to think of how we can stay connected, but we have. Through our virtual worship services, our calls, our drive-throughs, Trunk-and-Treat, we have been able to discover ways to see each other and continue to serve our community, not only our Trinity community, but into the world as well!

One of the surprises of these services came only a couple of weeks ago, when out of the blue, I got an email that had been sent to Chris, our webmaster.

TRINITY UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

4435 North Calhoun Road
Brookfield, WI, 53005
262-781-9378

Email: contact@trinitybrookfield.org

Web Site: www.trinitybrookfield.org

Office Hours

Monday-Wednesday: 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

Thursday: 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

Virtual Sunday Worship

Worship: 10:00 am

Fellowship Hour: Follows service

(During in-person worship)

Holy Communion: First Sunday of the Month
(unless noted otherwise)

Sunday School Via Zoom

Jill Gretenhart and Robin Komassa teach students from Pre-K through 7th Grade. If you are interested in having your children participate or if you have questions, contact Kathy Haass at KatydidHaass@gmail.com or Jill Gretenhart at [yippeeefun@aol.com](mailto:yippeefun@aol.com). Lessons for the upcoming week are sent via email in addition to the Zoom link. Class begins at 9:15 am for 30 to 45 minutes.

Open to the Community

Virtual Worship, Sunday 10:00 am

On Hold: Boy Scout Troop 21

On Hold: Game Nights

On Hold: Quilters

Staff & Lay Leaders

Interim Pastor: Rev. Susan Stull-Carr

Council President: Terri Allen

Director of Music: Mike Hetzel

Administrative Assistant: Marie Furrer

Cleaning Custodian: Jodie Gerard

Maintenance Custodian: Eric Dahm

Ministers of the Church:

All Members of Trinity United Church of Christ

Newsletter Deadline

The 15th of each month.



Arnold Dahm

Janice Fredrick

Peg Zahn



HOMEBOUND MEMBERS

Beverly Littmann

Geraldine Masch

Marion Wandsneider

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Out On the Way

It was from my Brazilian brother, Rolf, who was our foreign exchange student when I was growing up. He came to our home when I was in 5th grade.

Rolf has been listening to the worship services since we began them back in March. Never did I know he was listening and watching. It gives me goosebumps to think of the grace that allowed us to connect with one another in that way. He says that not only he and his family watch the service, but he's shared it with others in Brazil as well. I know that many others of you have such stories as well, and if you'd like to share them with Trinity, in the next newsletter, please do! I am awed and amazed by the Spirit's connections! Rolf and I have not spoken to each other for many years and as we continue to reconnect, I'm graced by what he remembers and how he sees that 'sullen, introverted' girl of so many years past. I'm strengthened by his support and encouragement and grateful.

During January, we'll continue walking together on God's path. There are a few more stories and images I hope to share that will strengthen your own faith and hope and joy. My last Sunday with you will be January 31st. Pastor Dan will begin at Trinity, February 1st.

It will be difficult for me not to be able to be with you in person during that last month. Of course, you know, I would love for us to be able to hug one another and say a proper good-bye, but we will find a way to say our 'good-byes' anyway. You have made my joy complete. It has been a gift to be able to serve among you for this time. Our time together has been challenging and yet joyous! Jim and I will not forget you!

Paul puts it this way in 2 Corinthians. "Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you." Grace to you and peace, from God our creator, and our Master and Teacher, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit who binds us together in unity and love.

In Christ,

Pastor Susan

Pastor Susan



For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven.
Ecclesiastes 3:1

Good-bye Pastor Susan

As you all know by now, Trinity will be saying good bye to Pastor Susan on January 31, 2021, her last Sunday Worship with us. We were very fortunate to have her with us these past 2 ½ years as she used her gifts to lead us through the process of helping the Search Committee prepare a profile on who we are as a community of faith here in Brookfield. She also helped us define what we hoped for and needed in a new settled Pastor.

As a spiritual leader, Pastor Susan led us in Worship, Bible Study, Weddings, Baptisms, Confirmations and Funerals. As an administrator, she directed, consulted or worked alongside of Trinity's staff, Committees members and Council. She offered her point of view and wisdom and tried to still the waters of frustration and discontent when they arose. You can be sure there were times when we, as a body or individually, drained her spirit. But then there were those times when, because of her wit, we laughed together and moved forward. We all wish her and Jim God's speed as they embark on a new and exciting chapter of their lives together, as a retired couple. Plans to say good bye in an outdoor setting are being worked on and will be shared as soon as possible. In the meantime, please feel free to share your good wishes in emails, phone calls or cards. It is hard to say good bye so let's say, "until we meet again..." (Roy Rogers).

Council

Worship - January 2021

Sunday, January 3

"Everywhere Witnesses"
Sacrament of Holy Communion
Isaiah 42:1-9, Luke 2:25-32

Sunday, January 10

"Go and Tell John"
Isaiah 35:1-10, Matthew 11:1-6

Sunday, January 17

"What is This Good News?"
Isaiah 61:1-4, Luke 4:14-30

Sunday, January 24

"Work Out Your Own Salvation"
Phillipians 1:3-11, Phillipians 2:12-18

Sunday, January 31

"A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven"
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, II Corinthians 4:1-15

The Light of the World

Now burn, new born to the world,
Double natured name,
The heaven-flung, heart-fleshed, maiden-furled Miracle-in-Mary-of flame,
Mid-numbered He in three of thunder-throne!
Not a dooms-day dazzle in his coming nor dark
as he came;
Kind, but royally reclaiming his own;
A released shower, let flash to the shire, not
a lightning of fire hard-hurled.

-Gerald Manley Hopkins



A GOOD "GOOD-BYE"

Ending special relationships are incredibly difficult I find. And I've done these good-byes for long enough now to know that the relationship between a pastor and the congregation/flock she serves carries a unique bond. I'm discovering that the role of intentional interim has been a different kind of relationship and so the "good-bye"-ing will also be a bit different I suspect – especially during a pandemic.

*How lucky I am
to have something
that makes saying
goodbye so hard.*
-Winnie the Pooh

As pastors serving local congregations, one of our strongest covenants is to 'let go of the relationships' that we've shared with a congregation. That means that at least for a year, Jim and I will not be in contact with the church in any official capacity. It means that I am unable to agree to provide pastoral service (i.e., weddings, funerals, special events) and other pastoral care (visits). I will not be able to engage with you in conversations about life in the church. The reason for this is clear. Many of you have formed a unique bond/trust with me. Not all, but many. I have wept with you, argued with you, challenged you. I have engaged in meaningful conversations and watched over you with loving care. I have taught you what I know and have been grateful for your listening hearts and minds. We have laughed and shared our stories. These are relationships and friendships that I do not take for granted.

Now, I need to be absent, so that you can form new connections with Pastor Dan. I have no doubt that he will provide skillful and deeply spiritual ministry among you. I am grateful to have a person like Pastor Dan, to entrust you to his care and keeping. I cherish you; the church of Jesus Christ at Trinity and we will miss you.

Susan and Jim

P.S. After many months of conversation, Jim and I have begun making plans to move to our home out on the Wisconsin River. Neither of us are sure what God will be doing with us next, but we aren't worried! God's hand has always led as we've followed doing what we love to do and are called to do! May it be so for each of you. We are looking forward to a new adventure, just as you are beginning an exciting, new adventure as well! Richest blessings.

Pastor Susan



Financial Update

As of November 30, 2020, Trinity's year-to-date Net Income was \$13,782 of which \$13,440 is a result of the monies given to Trinity in April under the Payroll Protection Plan. The forgiveness of this loan is pending and we fully expect forgiveness documentation in the next 30 to 60 days. Without this money, year-to-date Net Income at 11/30 would be \$342. However, December is always a healthy giving month, so those figures are expected to increase through 12/31. Thanks to all Trinity members and friends who have helped to keep us on track financially in 2020; an otherwise difficult year to be sure. Giving Envelopes for 2021 have still not arrived but we will set up a drive through distribution as soon in January as practical. Until then, please send your giving into the office in a regular envelope with your giving number on the Flap of the envelope. This will make it easier to differentiate giving from other mail and will make it easier for the Counters to do their job.

Council Treasurer

Terri Allen



Council 12/14/2020 Update

Below is an update and requests:

- Council members who will be making announcements during Worship in January are: 1/03 Robin Komassa; 1/10 Anna Godiali; 1/17 Jean Gichert; 1/24 Judy Marchant and 1/31 Terri Allen
- Committee Annual Reports are due to the office by January 15th.
- We would like a member to volunteer to act as Parliamentarian at our Annual Meeting that will probably not be held until late Summer/ Early Fall of 2021. For years Bob Nuszbaum handled these duties with knowledge and humor. Jay Preston, before he left for the wilds of California, ably handled this task for the last two years. By volunteering now, you will have ample time to bone up on Robert's Rules of Order.
- We would like two members to volunteer to act as auditors of Trinity's General financials and both Endowment and Memorial statements. Please contact Terri Allen if you are willing to step forward. The audit will probably take place in January or early February
- We would like to thank all of Trinity's employees and contractors for all they have done this past year, sometimes under difficult circumstances, to aid us, to help us worship, to keep our building clean and sanitized and to keep us comfortable inside or outside of our building during various services, meetings and study groups
- A special thank you to Pastor Susan for all she has done in the last 2 ½ years to keep us moving forward in faith and joy
- Thank you to all Committees for the work you have done, again under new and difficult circumstances, to keep our missions and focus on track



Do You Feel Different Now Than You Did Before COVID? It May Have A Purpose

By: **Cathy Wille**, retired pastoral/mental health counselor

Have you been feeling tired, sad, empty and lack energy more than usual? Are you feeling some disorientation and are unable to focus? Are you feeling abandoned? At the end of the day, do you feel overwhelmed or like you have not accomplished anything? This note is written to let you know that you are not alone.

Psychologists know that being connected with one another is part of our DNA. Community, collaboration, and networking are all ways we connect with one another, and at their very core give us greater feelings of security and safety. Unfortunately, that is what COVID-19 has taken away from us at many levels. Our physical safety is challenged with the possibility of illness. Many of us are challenged financially. And, of course, our relationships - family, friends, colleagues, fellow worshippers - have all been limited, with some of experiencing total isolation from our social interactions.



These changes cause us stress and trigger anxiety and depression, for some people on of these phenomena and for others both. Both of these mental conditions are often viewed with negative expectations—"pull yourself up by your boot straps" - "you obviously don't have enough faith." Those of us who have struggled with anxiety and depression have heard these platitudes, along with other comments which try to shame us into feeling differently. These feelings are real!

I would like to offer another perspective. God created us with anxiety and depression as mental states which insure our survival. I remember when my Dad, following his cancer prostate surgery, became depressed. I called the doctor, concerned. His doctor responded and said, "Depression helps us to slow down and manage the stressors in our life. In your Dad's case it is appropriate for him to be depressed, because his body needs time to heal, and the depression will slow him down so that can happen."

Our anxiety has the job of alerting us to a danger which could threaten our survival. Fortunately, we also have the thinking part of our brain that can help us mediate the anxiety. So, if we are walking through the woods and we hear a rustling in the leaves we have the ability to recognize that we saw a squirrel several feet back and make the decision not to run away. A deer that hears the same thing immediately runs away. On the other hand, if we are sleeping, wake up startled (anxious) and smell smoke, we know we need to move and get out of the house. Fortunately the thinking part of our brain allows us to discern whether or not we are in danger.



Both mild to moderate depression levels of anxiety can be managed. At the top of the list of interventions is self-care. Eating well, getting enough sleep, exercising, even if it means doing exercises we can do in a chair, tapping into our creativity, engaging our hobbies, perfecting a skill we haven't had a chance to do previously, limiting watching the news, limiting social media, slowing down, taking time to reflect/meditate/pray and giving ourselves time to "veg" are ways which allow our bodies to deal with the stress we are experiencing.

As people of faith we also have the comfort of the scriptures. In Isaiah 54:7-8, Isaiah shares that God said: "For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In overflowing wrath for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you, says the Lord, your Redeemer."

The theologian, Walter Brueggemann says:

"In it's season of abandonment, Isreal had not forgotten—and always remembered—that the performance or covenantal fidelity—even amid abandonment—consists in radical, restorative neighbor actions for those left behind. To the familiar triad of 'widow, orphan, immigrant', the prophet adds 'the poor.' Action toward the left behind who are treasured by God is a primary strategy for resisting despair in abandonment."

Brueggemann suggests that we continue to do justice and this will give us a sense of purpose and meaning which is so important to counter-ing depression and anxiety.

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All that being said, mild to moderate levels of depression and anxiety are manageable, and there are ways we can reduce the stress. But, certainly, for those in which depression and anxiety become more acute, know that there are therapists and /or doctors who can help people with talk therapy and/or medication which helps bring a person's ability to function to a point again of managing the stress

As we navigate the pandemic during this holiday some level, have suffered some or all of the above feelings. Know that God so loved the world that God gave us God's only son, that who so ever believes in him will not parish, but have everlasting life.

(John 3:16) Know that Christ's church is there and is willing to support one another as members care for another in the midst of this struggle. Know that there are ways to manage our depression and anxiety. Know that there are professionals who are there and willing to encourage us. Know that God has compassion for God's people and has been with us, is with us, and promises to be with us as we move forward during this unprecedented time. Especially at this Advent and Christmas time, Jesus will be born in us again.



Questions for Reflection:

- What are some examples of negative messages you have heard or learned about depression and anxiety?
- What are some examples of how anxiety and/or depression have been helpful for you or someone else?
- In this time of pandemic, many of us have experienced some level of anxiety and/or depression. How unhelpful has this bee for you? How has it been helpful?
- How have you experienced God Emmanual (God with us) during this pandemic time?

If you or someone you know is experiencing anxiety or depression, here are some resources to turn to for help.

- * Your Pastor and your primary care physician
- * 2-1-1 Impact (Many communities provide this phone referral service.)
- * Mental Health Association of Wisconsin (mhawisconsin.org).
- * Wisconsin Department of Health Services - dhs.wisconsin.gov/mh/dcindex.htm - includes links to general information, providers by county, helplines, hotlines and virtual support.
- * NAMI - National Alliance on Mental Illness (namiwisconsin.org). Many counties in Wisconsin have a NAMI chapter for accessing local resources.

"Wizards in Winter"

By: Trans-Siberian Orchestra

Performed at Sunday, December 13th (online) Worship!

Mike Hetzel - Drums/Bass/Rythem Guitar

Mike Hetzel, Sr. - Piano/Keyboards

Michael Whelan - Lead Guitars

We are thankful for such talented and heartfelt musicians!



Mike and Mikey,

Thank You!

I want to thank you both for all the beautiful music and singing that you have provided all these weeks of virtual service. I know just how much work you put in to make it so wonderful. The last two services were a blowout...WOW! The Siberian musicals were the best I have ever heard. BRAVO!! I know everyone would join me in saying Thank you...

Diane Siebold