



# Messenger

## TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Lent to Easter 2016

### Something Exciting at Trinity



At the Annual Meeting on January 31st, Dr. John Seibyl made an extraordinary announcement. The neuro-imaging company that he founded in 1999 has merged with another company and from the return on his original investment, John and Cathy are making a gift in the amount of \$250,000 to launch an institute that brings together their shared passions and their love for Trinity Church. The Trinity Institute for Applied Neuroscience and Spirituality will exist as a fully-funded, independent non-profit corporation associated with Trinity Church. A representative of the church will always have a seat on the Institute's Board of Directors. The Institute will be comprised of three inter-related centers: The Center for Children's Spirituality, The Center for Restorative Practices, and The Center for Integrative Research. Each center will have its own focus and area of specialization while being integrated into the mission of the Institute, *the pursuit of human wholeness*.



*Left to right: Jen Zehler, Cathy and John Seibyl, Sharon and Peter Schuller*

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The often repeated idea from Teilhard de Chardin that "we are spiritual beings having a human experience" will be married with cutting edge neuroscience to help parents understand their children's innate spirituality and its correlation to healthy brain development. Programs for restorative justice for organizations, schools and even governments will also be informed by the latest thinking from neuroscience and by an underlying philosophy of human wholeness, rather than alienation and punishment. The Center for Integrative Research will not only engage in research that supports the work of the other two centers, but also generate its own studies, seminars, symposia, and online programs on matters relating to the human brain, mind, and spirituality. Additionally, the Center for Integrative Research will provide program assessment for the two other centers.

**"This new Institute will have a positive impact in our church and local community as well as the world at large by integrating seemingly disparate disciplines of science and spirituality in the service of practical programs addressing real needs", says John Seibyl. "We will learn**

## From The Rector

valuable lessons from our experience which we will share with **others doing similar work.**”

John and Cathy will both be engaged in the work of the Institute along with Jen Zehler, who will be the first full-time employee responsible for The Center for Children's Spirituality and administrative functions. Peter Schuller is currently serving as a consultant helping with legal, strategic, and organizational development work. Rev. Sharon is also part of the development of the Institute, serving as Trinity Church's initial representative on the Board and as advisor on spiritual development. Stay tuned for updates as the Institute comes to life.



### **Jihad - What it is and what it is not.**

As a Christian, I would be offended if I were judged by the worst moments in Christian history, and there have been many. I would be unhappy if someone assumed that all Christians think like the Westboro Baptist Church. However, if that is the only exposure that one has to Christianity, what else are they think? And so it is with Islam and particularly the concept of *jihad*. If one's only exposure to Islam is what comes through movie villains or a particular new source, it is unlikely to be a true picture. So, here is a deeper understanding of the concept of *jihad*.



*Jihad* is what we would call *spiritual journey*. It is an individual's striving for spiritual perfection. True *jihad* is personal, each individual discovering those places lacking self-control, that are out of line with the tenets of Islam. According to The Islamic Supreme Council of America, *jihad* is a concept with layered meaning. It is a struggle, mostly with one's own inner challenges. It is also the challenge to share the good news of their faith with others, to make Islam known and understood in the world.

If there is conflict that constitutes a threat to Islam, *jihad* can be performed using any-



thing from legal, diplomatic and economic to political means. If there is no peaceful alternative, Islam also allows the use of force, but there are strict rules of engagement. Innocents - such as women, children or invalids - must never be harmed, and any peaceful overtures from the enemy must be accepted.

Therefore, it is important to know what *jihad* is not. It is not a violent concept and it is not a war on other religions or cultures. Those who have claimed Islam for motivation to do harm are not following the Koran or the Prophet Muhammad. A true jihadist would never use terror.

Peace,

*Sharon +*

### **A special event at Christ Church Cathedral, our Cathedral**

Did you know that as members of an Episcopal church in Connecticut, you are also members of the Christ Church Cathedral in Hartford? The Cathedral is a place that unites us all and serves as an important sacred space for celebrations, mission and advocacy. The Cathedral's vestry is called the Cathedral Chapter and is made up of members of the Cathedral congregation and elected members from the diocese. Rev. Sharon is one of those elected members.

On February 18th, The Very Reverend Miguelina Howell will be installed as the 10th Dean of the Cathedral. The Rev. Howell is a leading voice in Hispanic ministry in the Episcopal Church and has brought vitality and vision to the Cathedral and its growing Spanish-speaking membership. The Installation will be a most festive event with a tapestry of culture woven into Anglican liturgy. On that day The Very Reverend Emsley Nimmo, the Dean of the Cathedral of Aberdeen and Orkney, Scotland, will be seated as an Honorary Canon of the Cathedral. The relationship between the Dioceses of Connecticut and Aberdeen go back to the consecration of the first American bishop, Samuel Seabury. History and new things all in one celebration!



## Worship Ministry

### Lent – Time In The Desert

Beginning on Ash Wednesday, February 10, we will enter the most self-reflective time of the year. Lent isn't meant to be strictly about giving something up, but about reflecting on what it is we truly need, removing things from our lives that interfere with our spiritual growth, and seeking an intentional experience of sacrifice.

Lent worship has a distinctive liturgical flavor. The muted colors of altar hangings and vestments reflect the somber tone; there are no Alleluias, and the structure to the service changes to include times of silence that underscore solemnity. Musical changes also help to underscore the Lenten mood and message of penitence, and the preparation for the events of Holy Week and Easter. All of the service music has been chosen with congregational participation in mind.



Beginning Sunday, February 14, and continuing for the five weeks of Lent, Sharon will share the pulpit with a different parishioner each week, who will speak about their walk through the desert-

-how hard times in his or her life strengthened their faith. Ann Collier will discuss her experience with care-giving; Bob Barnett will share his experience with anxiety and depression; Judie Cavanaugh, whose family members were first responders in the tragic 2012 Sandy Hook school shooting, will share her experience with crisis; Marlisa Mills is a two-time breast cancer survivor; and, **Bill Bray will speak about his daughter Heather's cancer, while she was in college.**



Sixty-nine people participated in the Lent Survey; the majority of respondents were Episcopal, over half of them work, and most have been at Trinity for more than 2 years. Thirty-one people indicated they would most prefer to participate in a Lenten Series, at Trinity, and there was equal interest in the options offered. Thus, you are invited to **A Mystical Lent: Prayer and Meditation with the Christian Saints, 7:00 PM in the Guild Room.** Come and deepen your Lenten experience with quiet meditation and prayer, music and poetry, from some great Christian voices.

## Spiritual Education Ministry

The weekly series begins on Wednesday, February 17, and continues every Wednesday through March 16. The program will be different every week, weaving in something new and something mindful. If as many come in person as participated in the survey, we will have a meaningful experience. Make the time for yourself. Everybody needs to escape drama and stress. Give yourself this gift - your Holy Week will be better for it.

For those who prefer to focus on Lent alone, Lenten Meditations, published by the Episcopal Relief & Development, are available in the back of the church and in the office. A daily meditation will be posted on Facebook.

### Lenten Madness Wants YOU!

And you're saying, "What on earth is Lenten Madness?" Well, it's two fun-loving, very clever Episcopal priests (the Supreme Executive Commit-tee,) who devised a basketball-type bracket system of Saints (known and unknown) each year. Each Saint is introduced by knowledgeable Celebrity Bloggers for your voting consideration. You vote for the Saint in each bracket that you would like to continue on. Votes are cast by hundreds, if not thousands of people, throughout the country. Winners of each bracket move ahead to the coveted "Saintly 16", then "Elite 8", then "Faithful 4", and the final bracket which ends with the crowning of the Saintly winner of "The Golden Halo". Quite an honor!



Trinity's enthusiasts - newly titled the PSALMS (Parishioners Swearing Allegiance to Lenten Madness - OK, I know, stretching it a little, forgive me!), share their votes and reasons for doing so with each other by email as often as they'd like. No pressure! It is great fun and a really terrific way to learn about some of our Saintly ancestors! If this sounds like something you'd enjoy being part of, just pop me, Rodney Hayes, an email and we'll put you on our list of participants. For more information you may go to [lentmadness.org](http://lentmadness.org) and print out your own bracket of Saints.



## Spiritual Education Ministry

### Diving Deep Into Scripture

Rain, cold or a blight of locusts can't keep Diane Hull away from Trinity's Spiritual Education programs. The eight-year church member first attended Sharon's *Bible 101* class last fall, and was eagerly awaiting the recent study, *All About Paul*. St. Paul, who wrote many letters to the early church in the New Testament, is one of the figures in the Bible who is often misunderstood.



"I live within walking distance of the church; and the day and time were perfect for me," said Diane. "I just can't say enough positive things about this experience." She continued, "I've done Bible studies in the past, but there were sections that were still foggy in my brain. The *Bible 101* class helped pull it all together, especially on the Old Testament."

Diane also likes the handouts, and often refers to them outside of class. "Sharon really researches the topic and does her homework; it's not all fluff. I so appreciate how much thought she puts into this," Diane added, "I loved the diversity of people - all age groups and interests - a nice group of people who each bring something to the conversation."

How would Diane rate the class? "I would put it at the top."

### Special Events For Children and Families During This Most Holy of Church Seasons

#### Good Friday

In Godly Play, the stories told during the season of Lent help the children prepare to enter the great Mystery of Easter. On Good Friday we invite families to hear the story of The Synagogue and Upper Room. The first part of the lesson evokes the Liturgy of the Word, which the



Christian Church developed from the readings of the Jewish Synagogue. The second part of the lesson evokes the liturgy of the table, which Jesus instituted during the Last Supper in the upper room. The story of the synagogue and the upper room is a joining of the Old and New Testaments, forming a model of Christian worship.

After the story, the children will have an opportunity to respond to the experience with an art activity. Please join us on **March 25th from 10:00 AM—11:30 AM** in the Parish Hall, for this important Holy Week Story. Please RSVP Jen Zehler @ [godlyplay@trinitybranford.org](mailto:godlyplay@trinitybranford.org).

### Snuggly Stories Family Event

In order to emphasize Easter as a season that lasts 50 days, we decided to have our annual Snuggly Story Event on **Saturday, April 2nd at 4:30 PM**. A donkey, praying hands, three coins, and a strip of leather. What do all these have in common?

Families and their little ones are invited to come along with Benjamin to a pajama party. The evening will begin with a Res-



urrection Egg treasure hunt in the Sanctuary, followed by the beautifully illustrated story Benjamin's Box—a fictional narrative of a young boy who lived in Jerusalem during the time of Jesus. Each item Benjamin finds corresponds to one of the eggs.

A potluck supper will follow. Trinity will provide the chicken fingers and beverages. Please RSVP to Jen Zehler @ [godlyplay@trinitybranford.org](mailto:godlyplay@trinitybranford.org), if you can attend this fun family event.



## Outreach Ministry

### Emergency!! Attention!!



Supplies for our Columbus House Ministry are desperately low. We are in need of Dinty Moore beef stew. Please remember to add one to your next shopping cart. All sizes gratefully received but if you can manage the largest size, that would be terrific.

### Community Dining Room Ministry Has An Opportunity For You!

It's rare that spots open up in our outside Kitchen Ministries, but this is one of those times. Trinity members volunteer as a kitchen crew in the Branford Community Dining Room every 8 weeks. It's generally from 8:00 AM - 11:00 AM. Requirements for the job include loves to cook, loves to work with a cheerful crew, is reliable, on time, and an all-round nice person. The experienced members of the team will be happy to mentor the newbies. Next breakfast is March 12th. If this sounds like you, please contact Joe Brummer. Thank you!

### Refugee Resettlement Research Continues

Trinity continues discussions with the office of Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS), a program of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut, as we consider sponsoring a refugee family. Several committee members recently attended a day-long training session at IRIS in New Haven; and the committee will share its findings with the congregation soon. If we sponsor a family, we would contract with IRIS. We also learned that **IRIS' goal is a six-month commitment from a church**, and that refugee families are encouraged to live independently as quickly as possible.

When asked, "What happens if, at the end of six months, the refugee family is not independent?" IRIS answered that every effort is made to assure that they are able to be self-supporting. Should they not be, IRIS added that they are then eligible to **access public assistance. After six months, the church's financial commitment ends, and other agencies take over.**

Please watch for more information over the next few weeks.



## From The Senior Warden



Year-end donation statements are being mailed out. We are dealing with new software, and it hasn't been all smiles! We have checked diligently that everyone who should be receiving a statement, but please let the office know on Monday if you have not received one.

### Council of Ministries Evolves

Through 5 years of practical experience since the Council was **created, we have realized a few things.** During this years' Stewardship Ministry work, Steve Carlson/Chair, encouraged us to focus communication on the six major ministries—Worship, Pastoral Care, Outreach, Spiritual Education, Parish Life, and Buildings & Grounds—when we talk about what we do through our ministries and what kind of an impact we make on people. Thus, the six narrative ministry story boards were created, now in the Parish Hall for members and visitors to read.

We see that the Finance and Stewardship ministries functionally interact with the Vestry as advisors and strategic partners, rather than the Council Chairs who are empowered to request and manage to a budget. With Bill Baskin stepping down as the Chair of Finance, it is a good time to transition the Finance Ministry to being a subcommittee of the Vestry, reflecting the functional relationship, with the members working under the direction of the Treasurer. Stewardship is currently seeking a Chair.

The Finance Ministry welcomes Steve Carlson, who assumes the role of Fund Coordinator. John MacDonald is the Treasurer; Bill Baskin continues as a member of The Endowment Fund Committee along with John, Yve Larrieu, Mark McElrath and Jay Pottenger; Katherine Rowe is the bookkeeper and and the **"Countesses" process all giving and record-keeping.**

Administration and Communication are inextricably linked. Communication serves at the pleasure of the Rector and all of leadership. Both are centered in the church office, serving as **critical business functions.** We think in terms of **"ministry"** when we talk about all that we do, but when telling stories about **the impact we make, it's the six major ministries that do that the best.**



## Thoughts From Our Youth

### The Church as a Black-and-White Photograph

By Gabe Simerson



A photographer, whose name I've forgotten, once said that he much prefers black-and-white over color work because it acts as an equalizer. The colors that would otherwise be distracting are consolidated into shades of one hue, causing all the elements of a scene to, for a moment, forget their differences of pigment and become one

body.

One could say, then, that a church, and the Church, are black and white photographs in their own rights, drawing in the colors of many independent lives -- the blues and grays of isolation, the oranges and reds of blazing anger, the greens and beiges of contentment -- and consolidating them into shades of the hue of fellowship.

I and my fellow youth are not "kids" when we come to church; we hear the same sermons; we sit in the same pews as judges and lawyers, teachers and doctors; we rejoice and we mourn with people who would otherwise be in their own section of the color wheel.

At church, we are one hue.



## Parish Life Ministry

### Volunteers at the Heart of Twelfth Night

By Peter Hayes

Our Twelfth Night celebration is only possible because of our volunteers. Thanks to Nancy Williams, Dru Dodd, and Judie Cavanaugh, who set the tables; Sandy Baldwin for making sure the Guild Room was prepared; Bobbe and Peter Otis for preparing the Wassail bowl; Jen Zehler, Ken Sause and the Trinity bakers; Maureen and Mike McGuinness for clean-up; and to all the cooks, servers, and dishwashers that go into an event of this size.

Everyone had a great time, enjoying this years' menu and the fellowship. The hot appetizers were a big hit. As usual, the most fun was in the kitchen with the volunteers. The kitchen crew was even able to join the party and enjoy their meals.

I'm "retiring" from being the head honcho of this event; it's time to turn over the reins. If you are interested in helping, please contact me.







Submission deadlines vary, approximately every 6 weeks. Please e-mail to **communication@trinitybranford.org**. Photographs are welcome. It is respectfully requested that material not be formatted (no bolds, underlines, bullets, truncated lines, unusual spacing, etc.), since graphic design software doesn't know what to do with it!

Articles and event notices will be reviewed by an editor. Editorial rights are reserved for clarity, and to fit space constraints.

**Messenger Contributors**

*Features* Rev. Sharon, Ann Freeman, Wendy Healy, Gabe Simerson

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**Trinity Leadership**

Senior Warden: Ann Freeman  
 Junior Warden: John Seibyl  
 Parish Clerk: Bobbe Otis  
 Treasurer: John MacDonald

**Vestry**

Maryann Allen, Neil Anglemire, Debbie Bradley, Judie Cavanaugh, Brenda Feniola, Annie Gustely, Dave Howell, Mary MacDonald, Jen Zehler

**Staff**

Parish Administrator: Jane Dougherty  
 Sexton: Nancy Williams



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**The Rev. Sharon Gracen, Rector  
Ronald Baldwin, Music Director**

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**trinitychurch@trinitybranford.org**

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***Worship at Trinity***

**Sunday**

**8:00 AM Holy Eucharist Rite II**

**9:45 AM Sunday School and  
Nursery Care**

**10:00 AM Holy Eucharist Rite II  
With music and choir**

**Televised on Channel 18  
And AT&T Channel 99  
7:00 PM Sundays**

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**HOLY WEEK SERVICES**

Sunday, March 20	Palm Sunday
Tuesday, March 22	7:00 PM Holy Eucharist
Wednesday, March 23	12:00 PM Holy Eucharist
Maundy Thursday, March 24	6:30 PM Agape Supper
	7:00 PM Holy Eucharist, Foot Washing, Stripping of the Altar, Watch
Good Friday, March 25	10:00 AM – 11:30 AM The Synagogue & Upper Room 10:00 AM - Noon Ecumenical Cross Walk – beginning at St. Mary, ending at Trinity
	7:00 PM Liturgy, <i>Were You There?</i>
Easter Saturday, March 26	A day of waiting
Easter Sunday, March 27	8:00 am and 10:00 am Holy Eucharist—Glorious music at both services, the <i>Hallelujah Chorus</i> for all to sing.

