



# Messenger

## TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Published by Trinity Episcopal Church — on the Green in Branford, Connecticut

### Conversations: Listening Our Way To The Future

Rev. Sharon and Peter have returned from sabbatical!



Watch for a photo travel-log of history, landscapes, churches and wildlife, coming soon!

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For 1500 years, the church was at the very center of western civilization. We were born, lived, and died in Christendom. But today all that is changing. The church’s mission as the body of Christ is still what it always was, but the world in which the church finds itself has transformed almost beyond recognition. We seem to be at the dawn of a new Apostolic Age, where we are closer to the church of the earliest Christians than to the church of the 1950’s. It’s a new world, and that world does not know us.

Before Rev. Sharon left for her sabbatical, she challenged us to think and talk and listen and pray about how God is calling the members of Trinity to be Christ’s body in this new post-Christendom world. While she was away, fifty members of the church took part in Conversations with the Congregation. We shared stories of our lives at Trinity and beyond its walls, of the things we are most proud of in our community. Listening to sermons. Taking part in the fair. Singing Handel’s Messiah. Sharing with our neighbors through Trinity’s Closet, and helping to found Branford Cares. These are just some of the things that were mentioned.

We are going through all the data now and will report back soon on the patterns and trends that emerged from the conversations.

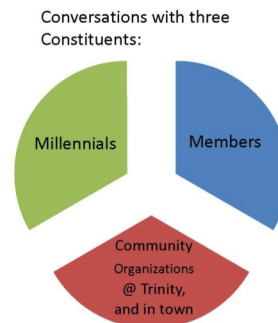
Our plan is to focus on three groups in discerning how to move forward: our own members, community groups both inside and beyond our walls, and Millennials, the generation of 18-34 year olds who often reject mainstream religion.

And so we need to continue to reach out to other groups in Branford, to the Fire Department and the Libraries, to AA groups and to the Girl Scouts and the Boy Scouts, to learn what the dreams and needs of our neighbors are.

And, we need to reach out to Millennials, who may consider themselves to be “spiritual but not religious,” but who share our passion for community service and who want to be part of something bigger than themselves.

As we have these conversations, we can look for strategic partnerships that can enable us to

### The Plan



- To listen and learn:
- Who are we? What do we do best?
  - What are the priorities in the community?
  - How can we better impact the quality of life in our community?
  - What makes us relevant to the next generation?
  - Where might there be strategic and programmatic opportunities for mutual ministry?

## Conversations *continued*

reach beyond what our own resources permit to create life-altering solutions to problems. And as we work with our neighbors, we will build relationships with them and our lives will become interwoven. As Bishop Ian said, “It is through collective stories of community that we begin to feel a sense of how God is moving in and amongst us and the people of Branford.”

Frederick Buechner wrote, “The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” Buechner was speaking of individuals, but the same is true of communities. We need to identify those places where Trinity’s deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet. What we do best can be our strength into the future, and the Holy Spirit will be our guide.



Please help us to listen to discern where God is calling us as a community. Everyone can be part of this project to **be** the church—to build meaningful community—outside of Trinity’s walls. What connections do you have? Would you like to join a community conversation? Please reach out to Rev. Sharon, the Wardens, or any Vestry members. Only through connection and conversation can we move forward together.

Want to know more? Visit the Episcopal Church in Connecticut website — click on the direct link below.

<https://www.episcopalct.org/beliefs-and-practices/participating-in-gods-mission/>



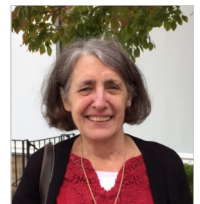
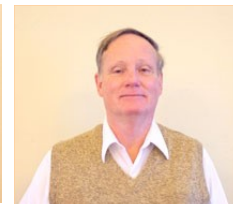
In thanksgiving for the new shrubbery bed in front of the repaired ramp and sidewalk. Donation by ECW in memory of Judy Nelson, design by Rodney Hayes.

## Worship Ministry



**Sandy Baldwin**  
**Chair**

The Choir welcomes two new members to the tenor section: Jack Nelson, a senior at Branford High School, is the new tenor section leader, and Andy Swepston (middle) is a newcomer to Trinity, along with his wife Lucille (right). The choir would welcome other new members, women especially are needed. If



you are interested, please stop by the organ console and speak with Ron Baldwin any Sunday after church.

We also welcome Lucille Swepston as a lector at the 10:00 AM service.

The Altar Guild is still looking for new members to help ready the altar for services. Members are assigned to a team of two for a month. The team meets on Saturday to set up for Sunday; and then they decide who cleans up after each service. Not only do we offer one-on-one training, but the directresses have prepared a step-by-step instruction book, with pictures. If you would like to consider this ministry, please speak with Nancy Collins, Betsey Bray, or Sandy Baldwin.



And, the nursery has a new location—in the playroom contiguous to the Godly Play classrooms (previously the Middle School room). The playroom has new flooring, new area rugs for babies and toddlers to crawl on, outlets are child-proof, sunlight pours in, air quality is great – in short, it’s a safe space for babies and young children. Staff of the Musical Folk also hold classes for toddlers and parents in this great space!

Cheryl Memmott and April Rowe continue as our trained nursery attendants; and they invite moms and dads to check out the space and allow them to introduce themselves.

## Worship Ministry *continued*

### Meet our Intern – Margaret McGhee

I'm very excited to be starting an internship with Rev. Sharon at Trinity this Fall. I've already met many members of the congregation, and am so grateful for the warm welcome I've received. I'm looking forward to getting to know you all over the next year. I was asked to write a quick note introducing myself, so here goes.

I've lived in a lot of places—New Orleans, eastern Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington DC, New York City, and now Connecticut—and I've worked in rather a lot of careers—computer programmer, lawyer, legal technology consultant. I'm also a science fiction geek—but please don't spread that around—and a bit of a theater geek as well.

I didn't grow up going to church; but I stumbled into the Episcopal Church a little over a decade ago. I stumbled in, and I never left. I



*Margaret, left, chatting with Carol Schaller at breakfast*

fell in love with the liturgy and the music, but I stayed above all because I found God here—in word and sacrament, and in community. The unexpected grace I experienced all those years ago has shaped my life ever since. I'm now a postulant for the priesthood, and in my second year of seminary at Yale Divinity School in New Haven.

My internship at Trinity is part of my education at Yale. Under Rev. Sharon's guidance, I will focus on worship/liturgy and the communication ministry. I'm hoping that you can all help me learn the ins and outs of parish ministry (and, of course, what not to do!). Please tell me your names early and often—and please be patient as I try to learn them all.

(Oh, and can someone please give me the recipe for the pepper jelly I bought at the Fair? I think I'm in love.)



## Pastoral Care Ministry



**Cathy Seibyl  
Chair**

There are two recent developments in Pastoral Care that have enhanced our Healing Prayer Ministry and Meal Ministry.

Members of the North Branford Zion Episcopal Church's Healing Prayer ministry are now joining us in our monthly Compline Service, the 4th Tuesday at 7:00 pm in the Guild room. This is a beautiful evening service, without Eucharist, where prayers for world peace and healing are included. Over the Summer months we added contemplative music and, most recently, Bill Bray has gifted us with his guitar, voice, and original compositions.



It is such an intimate, peaceful and meditative little service. Please come and join us. Come and pray for peace within this broken world we live in; and come if you are in need of prayer or have loved ones in need of prayer.

Under the guidance of Mary MacDonald and Nancy Williams, the Meal Ministry has



acquired an upright freezer. There is now room to freeze all the meals from the "big cook-offs", where folks gather on a Saturday afternoon for several hours and cook chicken soup, chili, chicken casserole, meatballs and sauce, plus the 'comfort food' standby of mac 'n cheese. These meals are now ready to go out in our parish community, at any-

time. If you are interested in helping with these cook-offs, or dropping off a meal, please don't hesitate to contact Mary at [mealministry@trinitybranford.org](mailto:mealministry@trinitybranford.org).



## Outreach Ministry

Everything we do as Trinity Church is a part of God's work in the world. That work directed out into the community is our Mission. It is an ever-changing response to need wherever it is found. Trinity dedicates a portion of our budget to this work. The question is always, "What are we called to do now?" The front page article about challenges to the church, and our conversations to discern that mission right now, are particularly important to our Outreach work.

How should we respond to those in need?

Should we be doing all of the same things?

What new concerns exist in our community?

Is there a better way to do this?

To answer these questions, and to further explore the information that emerges through our Summer *Conversations*, we plan a followup *Conversation*. Please, be part of that. Date, time and place will be announced soon.

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### Trinity's Closet: Hospitality and Hope

Your help is needed to make our November 5th Trinity's Closet event a success. We need your time and/or donations. Volunteers are needed to help setup (late Friday afternoon, 4:00 PM, November 4th) and/or service our guests (8:00 AM Saturday). Any amount of time is greatly appreciated.

Donate any of the items below.

- Household cleaning supplies, such as laundry detergent, dish washing soap, Fantastic, Windex, etc. .
- Personal items, such as toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant.
- Paper goods, such as toilet paper, Kleenex, paper towels.
- New pillows (watch for those white sales!)
- New or gently used blankets, sheets, towels.
- New or gently used Fall/Winter clothing.

Clothing and purchased donations can be left on the collection table in the Undercroft (across from the office of the Children) If you have any questions please contact Ellen D'Agostino or Dru Dodd at [trinitycloset@trinitybranford.org](mailto:trinitycloset@trinitybranford.org).



## Spiritual Education Ministry



**Martha Monico**  
**Chair**

We began our church school year with what has now become a tradition---a pancake breakfast. This year we added a little more love, as the middle schoolers helped prepare the food and serve our families. And of course, they ate, too! The middle schoolers will also be doorkeepers in the Godly Play classrooms whenever they are not in church or meeting on the first Sunday of the month as a group.



*Left to right: Martha (back), Jen Zehler, Carroll Ryan, Cathy Seibyl, Matt Radulski, Celia Toche (back) and Amanda Henry. Missing from photo: Cheryl Memmott.*



We are excited to welcome new Godly Play classroom doorkeepers, Ruby DeGoursey (left) and Cheryl Memmott (when there are no little ones in the nursery). Amanda Henry (in photo above) joins the Sunday School teacher roster. Amanda is the Assistant Director and a teacher at Madison School for Young Children. (Amanda's daughter Nellie attends Godly Play, and her husband Chris is the bass section leader in the choir. Welcome to the Henry family!)

We have returning families, new families, and children moving into different classrooms. Just like the season of Fall, all of these changes and transitions are part of what fills life with wonder and beauty. Here's to a wonderful church school year! For more information about the Godly Play programs, or to enroll your child/children, please email Jen Zehler @ [godly-play@trinitybranford.org](mailto:godly-play@trinitybranford.org).



## Parish Life Ministry

The 109<sup>th</sup> Fair was a hot one! There were colorful displays of items for sale from one end of the Green to the other. Many hours of labor (by just a few people) was reflected in homemade goods and food items, a beautifully presented Silent Auction, and planned fun for kids. Three cheers for the team leaders and the volunteer coordinator! They made the magic happen, while reporting that there were fewer volunteers this year. Even so, the fellowship was as wonderful as ever among those who were present.



*Flattery-will-get-you-a-sale staff person Ken Sause, sells a must-have gem to Toni Schmitt and friend. Who could resist Ken's persuasion?*

A very special thank you goes to Jen Zehler, who stepped up to be Fair Chair in late May, despite an already-planned Summer travel schedule. Somehow she made the time to work on many organizing and coordinating details to pull things together, and even wove in new ideas, too. The Fair was publicized in church and in town; but overall donations, and volunteer and customer turnout, was lower than in previous years. We anticipate the net income will reflect the reduced traffic.

A very big thank you goes to everyone who donated goods and/or time, helped with setup, sales and cleanup, and donated money to help offset expenses. Truly, we are most grateful. And, of course, every year Peter Otis documents the fellowship, fun, and teamwork, so that everyone can "share the day", whether present or not. Thank you, Peter!

A well-attended Fair debriefing produced the following thoughts:

- we are motivated by tradition and we need the income. Those present suggested a survey go out to pinpoint to what degree the congregation is willing to support continuing the Fair.
- despite personal challenges, there are committed and

determined minded members to produce goods for sale, but that's not enough when our congregation is smaller and a growing number of our members are unable, or less able, to do the physical work involved;

- that leadership/team leaders identification, and a planning meeting, need to be in place at the beginning of each year, with ongoing communication as needed;
- that the competition is great on our designated weekend – multiple and very large Fairs are in neighboring towns;

Here are some of the suggestions that were made;

- Join the Sidewalk Tag Sale in July;
- host an inside Silent Auction and entertainment evening;
- Christmas Fair (but that would compete with other churches);
- hold an inside market during the Branford Festival;

The idea that excited everyone the most was to talk with the Friends of the Library about sharing the Green during the annual book sale (assuming that it returns to the last weekend in September). The weather is cooler, the big Fairs are over, the book sale brings in hoards of people, Sunday School is back, and most vacations are over. We plan to have a conversation about a collaboration and will see what emerges. Wish us luck!



*– Friendly wait staff at the breakfast tent. Left to right, sisters Nancy Gillette and Brenda Feniola, and Deb Bradley.*

If you missed the Farmer's Market, there's a few preserved jams in the Parish Hall that would make nice Christmas presents, hostess gifts, etc. The jams are delicious!

## Parish Life Ministry *continued*

### Trinity hosts a wedding

Gail Collins and James Carey will marry in late October. Gail is a lifelong member of Trinity, and part of the Robinson/Collins/Bray multi-generation family attending Trinity. It's lovely to see tradition continuing. We wish you both good health, and much happiness, and God's blessings through all the years. *(photo by Jim)*



Welcome back First Sunday Breakfast Crew! Chef Mitch Rucinski kicked off the year with a favorite—blueberry pancakes. Lexi Brown and Claire Barnett (lower right) helped serve breakfasts—thank you all!



*Good to catch up!*



*Judie Cavanaugh welcomes Audrey Hanniford*



## Buildings & Grounds Ministry



**Andy Campbell  
Chair**

We continue to welcome new groups to share our space. Connecticut Advocate for Parkinsons (CAP) offers Tai Chi, and Dancing with Parkinsons (DwP), through the Neighborhood Music School, New Haven, are the newest members of our community users. In addition to consolidating babies/toddlers/children's play programs into space contiguous with the Godly Play Worship Center, nearby Jen Zehler may be found in the Center for Children's Spirituality office in what was the donations collection room.

Needless to say, we have been forced to improve the efficiency of every inch of space! We spent the summer consolidating or throwing out accumulated (and ridiculously old) "stuff", to make room for ongoing space and storage needs. The last of the musty, nasty downstairs carpet has been removed, replaced with inexpensive but durable sheet flooring, thanks to the Foote Grant, which turns inhospitable space into usable space, and will make do until the permanent renovation can be accomplished. As a result, breakout spaces for the community groups are clean and more flexible.

### Annual Foote Grant

Under the 2015 Probate Court revised administration of the Foote Family Charitable Trust (FFCT), for the first time this year, Trinity received \$73,000 from FFCT to fund a specific subset of projects from our Master Capital Improvements list. (Previously, FFCT had awarded Trinity \$15,000 annually as operating income. That ended with this new plan, approved by the Probate Court Judge.) The award will vary year-to-year.

Beginning this November, and then every year, Trinity must submit a full report on the status of the currently funded projects, and also make a full Grant Application for the next years' award. The Trustees award about \$350,000 annually among the beneficiaries, of which Foote Park is primary, then Zion and Trinity, and then several other Town programs. Annually, Vestry will weigh our competing priorities on the Master Capital Improvements list, which includes Church/Parish Hall/Parish House and Rectory buildings, and potentially pieces of the Lower Level renovation, if not covered by other grants. Items are approved at the discretion of the Foote Committee.

## Buildings & Grounds *continued*



**Bob Barnett**  
Chair

### Lower Level Renovation

The Lower Level Steering Committee continues to meet every two weeks, working with architect Tony Terry to complete a feasibility study for the renovation of the Undercroft, kitchen, and all the contiguous space, including the choir area underneath the Parish Hall. Tony is meeting with primary users of all these spaces to determine needs for the future. Design improvements have to incorporate flexible, multi-user space, support modern technology and media, be aesthetically light and pleasing, and easy to maintain.

The biggest challenge of the project is fitting an elevator, and fire-rated stairs, and a wheelchair ramp terminus into the “open” stairwell area inside the Parish Hall doors. This has been studied exhaustively in the past, with no way forward being found, and again as a “must-have” for this project. It’s final - all three needs will not meet modern building code requirements in that space. But modern technology now offers an elevator that will leave room for the fire-rated stairs, but not a terminus for a wheelchair access ramp. But, a stair lift in the entrance lobby will allow people using walkers or canes to ascend the 3 steps from street level to parish hall-sanctuary level. Therefore, wheelchair visitors will continue to use the ramp access to the church, connect on the same level to the elevator at the Parish Hall foyer, and enjoy the programs in the Undercroft. Together at last! This is progress given the very real challenge of a historically-protected building.

Tony brought in structural and mechanical engineers to examine what’s causing our downstairs water/mold issues, the fix and its cost, as well as the cost of asbestos removal. These environmental abatement issues have to be resolved before the actual renovation work can begin. The cost will be almost \$100,000. We are actively searching for an experienced grant writer, and grants to apply for to enable these projects, in addition to grants for the renovation.

Tony and I have presented two updates to Vestry—one on the interior space improvements, and the other an optional exterior visionary idea suggested by Tony, to incorporate a new and distinct entry to general use space. This would create an inviting presence on the Green, with improved landscaping, and signage. In addition to the entry, the Parish Hall itself would be upgraded for more public and parish events including sound attenuation, air conditioning, audio-visual capability and coat storage.

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, Margaret McGhee

*Design* Ann Freeman

*Copy Editor* Bill Baskin

*Photos* Peter Otis, unless stated

*Copy/Fold/Mail* Jane Dougherty



### 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, Dave Howell, Mary MacDonald, Jen Zehler

### Staff

Parish Administrator: Jane Dougherty  
 Sexton: Nancy Williams  
 Bookkeeper: Mary Colwell Hally



The feasibility study/concept design drawings and cost estimate for the renovation is due by the January Vestry meeting. The project will have to be phased and sub-divided into many smaller projects, unless an angel donor comes along.



**Trinity Episcopal Church  
1109 Main Street  
Branford, CT 06405**

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

**Parish Office 203-488-2681**

**trinitychurch@trinitybranford.org**

**www.trinitybranford.org**

***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**

Trinity Church "Messenger" (USPC 611040) published by Trinity  
Episcopal Church, 1109 Main Street, Branford, CT 06405.  
Second Class Postage Paid at Branford CT.  
Send address changes to above address.

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

## **Scarecrows on the Green**

**Friday, October 21 – Sunday, November 6, 2016**

**See Trinity's Scarecrows**

**Creation and assembly by our**

**Middle School Youth**

**Join the Fall Fun!**



Free will donations used by Branford Garden Club for the continued Beautification of Branford.