



# Messenger

## TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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

Advent to Epiphany 2016

### TREC - The Reimagining of the Church

*"It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope."*

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger

#### Inside this issue:

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Dear Trinity Friends,



For the last few years, the Episcopal Church has been on a journey into the future via a long ago past. Jesus began a movement when he sent his followers out, two by two, into the world, without so much as an extra cloak. He just told them to go and be with whatever community they found. They were to go and be the presence of Christ in town centers, coffee houses, train stations, and living rooms. They weren't supposed to invite people to church (which didn't even exist then) or get people to believe in anything except peace and love. Jesus expected them to go and be the Kingdom for those they encountered.

Somewhere along the line, the church happened and people were expected to come and fill the pews. The culture helped with that. But, not anymore. We who are the church must admit that old model isn't working as well, if at all. Thanks be to God that we are a part of The Episcopal Church, which is being wise at this time. At the national level and here in Connecticut, we are looking to the original model - going out into the community and learning from it what God is doing in our neighborhoods. We are being challenged to move from being "the church" to being participants in God's mission.

Your Vestry, Wardens, the Council Chairs

and I, are in learning mode about how we best navigate through this change. First step is The Rev. Canon Timothy Hodapp, Canon for Mission Collaboration at the Episcopal Church in CT (ECCT), will meet with us this week to start the process.

ECCT has made significant changes in its structure and budget as a part of TREC-CT. As we are all called to enter into this new thing, Bps. Douglas and Ahrens want the CT clergy to have support and training in this new way of being God's people. I am gratified that I have been chosen to participate in a four-day workshop/training in Cambridge, MA, in April, that is helping leaders prepare for this shift. It is exciting.

I know something about being unable to resist God's call. That call is no longer just for ordained leadership but for all of us. God has already figured out where we are going. It's up to us to listen, discern, and choose.

Peace,

*Sharon+*

### A New Thing A Foote

It has been much in the local news that Foote Park, which has been owned and run by the Foote Family Trust for over 50 years, is being transferred to the town of Branford. What you may not have known is that Trinity Church and Zion Episcopal in North Branford are named beneficiaries of that trust. Wallace Foote was a member of Trin-

## A New Thing A Foote

Submission deadline for the following *Messenger* is the 15<sup>th</sup> of the current month. 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

*Design* Ann Freeman

*Editor* Bill Baskin

*Photos* Peter Otis, unless stated

*Copy/Fold/Mail* Jane Dougherty,

A color issue is on [trinitybranford.org/news](http://trinitybranford.org/news)



### Trinity Leadership

Senior Warden: Ann Freeman

Junior Warden: Andy Campbell

Parish Clerk: Bobbe Otis

Treasurer: John MacDonald

### Vestry

Maryann Allen, Neil Anglemire, Judie Cavanaugh,

Dave Howell, Mary MacDonald, Ed Monico,

Kathy Sanchez, John Seibyl, Jen Zehler

### Staff

Parish Administrator: Jane Dougherty

Sexton: Nancy Williams



ity and had a great affection for Zion.

Up to this point, Trinity has received an annual modest disbursement (\$15,000) from the trust. That amount has gone into our general operating budget and we were grateful for it. The transfer of ownership of the park creates a whole new circumstance for Trinity and future disbursements. The trust, which will maintain assets of around \$11 million, will continue to support the maintenance of Foote Park and begin to make much more significant disbursements to both of the churches. If the town accepts the transfer of the Foote Park properties, we will receive a \$73,000 distribution in 2016 to be applied to a long list of capital projects here in our expensive, historic buildings. That list includes the restoration of our oldest Tiffany window, necessary repairs to the organ, flooring and mold abatement, replacement of the deteriorating red doors into the Parish Hall, and several other repairs.



What this will mean for Trinity's budget is we need to replace the \$15,000 (5% of our revenue). Capital needs have never been funded from our annual budget, we have worked hard to manage our small endowment to stay up with needs,

and been able to borrow from diocesan funds when needed. It will still take \$1,000 a day to maintain the ministry, programs, and the staff of this parish. The trustees of the Foote Trust are clear that they will not fund our operations. The blessing for us is that we will be able to manage our building needs and keep this historic treasure in good shape into the future for generations to come. Hallelujah!

## Report From Annual Convention

Jim Atkinson and Dave Smith, Trinity's Diocesan Delegates, attended the 231st ECCT Annual Convention along with Sharon. We thank them both for using their time on Trinity's behalf, and for filing reports.

Jim advised that most of the activity was focused on the work of TREC-CT, and the proposed restructuring of the diocese to better fulfill God's Mission. Details are still being worked out on the structure that will supplant the Deanery system (the grouping of churches for collaboration). Some changes have already taken place to reduce expense, like moving "the money pit" Diocesan

## Worship Ministry

House to the more cost-effective Meriden facility, and some staff changes. Work is ongoing to make liturgy less gender-specific, but no change is expected in dogma or doctrine.

Dave's report summarizes the 12 resolutions, the voting status, and the impact on Trinity. His entire report is an addendum to this newsletter.



## STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY

### For Generations To Come



This fall's Stewardship campaign has highlighted the many things Trinity does for our church community, Branford, and the wider world. Through six Sundays, Rev. Sharon provided eloquent statements of Trinity's commitments to ministry through: Worship, Spiritual Education,

Pastoral Care, Outreach, Parish Life, and Buildings & Grounds. Our stewardship of these activities yields generous gifts to all whom we serve as the body of Christ. Without Trinity, a multitude of good things would not occur.

Our annual campaign delivers more than two-thirds of the \$1,000 per day required to keep those good things coming.

Thank you for your tireless support of Trinity through the annual campaign, and your other donations of time, talent and treasure throughout the year.

On November 15, Commitment Sunday, we recognized pledges for Trinity's ministry next year. Additional pledges and envelope commitments have since come in. As we go to press, we have received \$228,00 in pledges, towards a goal of \$269,000. We hope to receive additional pledges to avoid reducing or cutting any of our programs.

We will keep you posted. If you have not yet sent in your pledge, please do so now in order to permit the Vestry to finalize our 2016 budget by mid-December. Every gift is appreciated. Thank you.

Also, you will be notified when the 2016 Giving envelopes are ready for pickup. Please remember when you come to church to look for your packet and take it home. Don't find one? Please jot your name down on the clipboard form and the Stewardship angels will make them magically appear the following week. Thank you!



## Worship Ministry

The Worship Ministry welcomes two new acolytes.



Rachel Pepe



Sarah Memmott

### Christmas Survey Findings

There were 88 responses to the survey, which is a 38% representation of the active membership. As surveys go, that's a strong participation rate. Thank you! The survey verified our worship services are set at the best time for most people, so there is no change in the traditional times of early Christmas Eve 5:00 PM and 10:30 (Concert) with late service at 11:00 PM and Christmas Day 10:00 AM. More people attend the late service than the other two, and include the concert as part of their tradition. One-third of respondents are out of town or attend service elsewhere.

### Christmas Poinsettias

Memorial donations for poinsettias are used to purchase the poinsettias and greens that decorate our beloved Trinity so beautifully for the Christmas season. There is not a set fee since you are not purchasing a poinsettia, as in some places, but rather your donation goes towards the purchase of all the poinsettias and greens. So, please feel free to contribute whatever you feel you can afford.

## Worship Ministry



People who contributed in the last two years received a notice during the week of November 22nd asking if they want to continue their contribution this year.

For anyone new to Trinity Church, or who has not contributed to a plant memorial in the past, forms are available at the back of the church and on the table in the Parish Hall lobby. To insure that the plants, greens and memorial lists are ready for Christmas, the deadline for submitting memorials will be **Wednesday, December 16th**.

If you have any questions about this or weekly altar flower memorials, please contact Ruth Knowlton, whose phone number is in the directory.

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### Advent and Christmas Music

This year, on each of the Sundays of Advent, the Trinity Choir will offer a different musical setting of the canticle Magnificat, the Song of Mary. The text of this canticle is from the Gospel according to Luke where Mary has gone to visit her cousin Elizabeth who is pregnant with John the Baptist. When Elizabeth praises Mary for her faith, Mary responds by singing this paraphrase of the Song of Hannah from the Old Testament Book of First Samuel.

At 10:30 PM on Christmas Eve, the choir continues the tradition of presenting a choral music prelude to the festive Eucharist at 11:00 PM. This year there will be some congregational carols included in the program.

### Reminder

Healing services with Eucharist are now offered twice a month - second Wednesday at noon, and fourth Tuesday at 7:00 PM.

## Outreach Ministry

### Thanksgiving, Turkeys, and Trucks!

The Humphrey family - Paul, Kim, Alyson & Adam - maintain contact with Peggy Wellknown Buffalo, Executive Director, and Susan Kelly, Program Director, at The Center Pole, Crow Reservation in Montana, and share an appreciative letter recently received. The Crow Nation receives support through Trinity's Outreach Ministry, which helps to feed about 300 people. Together with another Episcopal Church out of VA, we keep their Food Bank open.

### In Montana ...



*email from Montana: 8:15 AM. Unloading our 1 ton of Thanksgiving potatoes, etc, in the snow. Bucky, Peggy's grandson, drives the forklift. We are extremely thankful for our friends at Trinity, and for you Paul, and your family. Happy Thanksgiving! **Kun Na Di wa a chili.** Translation: May you have many good days.*

### And in Branford ...



Another Thanksgiving with turkey dinners on so many



## Outreach Ministry *Continued*

Branford tables that otherwise might have been empty, thanks to your generosity. Trinity and St. Theresa's combined order froze the money till at BigY ringing up that long register tape!

Trinity's turkey dinner count - 143 + 35 supplements, + many \$7 BigY coupons. St. Theresa - 135 turkey dinners + 78 supplements. Add to that \$1,071.69. cash goes to the Branford Community dining Room. Well done!

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### Spirit of Giving

"I was thinking about when we were kids we loved to have that little gift for mum and dad, no matter how awful it-



was! And I remember how my parents loved receiving them and that they actually kept them. I think it's why I love to buy gifts now for people. There are a

lot of kids without an allowance, which means they lose out on that joy."

And so the Christmas angels will transform the Parish Hall into a mini-Target retail Christmas shop on December 13! Imagine tables covered with all kinds of colorful merchandise, waiting for 30 children from the Branford Counseling Center to shop for Christmas presents for their parents. Since Christmas gifts are best as a surprise, the accompanying parent has to be whisked away and treated to a hot cup of chocolate while the children "shop". Trinity-friendly volunteers would be perfect for hospitality. Is this something you would enjoy doing?

Peggy Esposito, head Christmas Angel, purchased all the gifts, so you can bet there will be a lot of really fun stuff. The children make their choice for their parent(s), or whomever their responsible adults are, and use monopoly money to make their purchase. True to retail-style shopping, next stop is the wrapping station. The child chooses the wrapping paper and bows and the nice lady, or man, will wrap the present. And don't forget to write out the gift card! Peggy is happy to receive anything needed to wrap - Christmas paper of all kinds, bows, tape, gift cards, etc. The wrapped gift goes home in a real Target bag!

"I'm doing this because Christmas is more than opening presents. I love the excitement of how good it is to give a gift

and the anticipation of giving. For a child, it's fun to independently pick something out. This means a lot to parents, too."

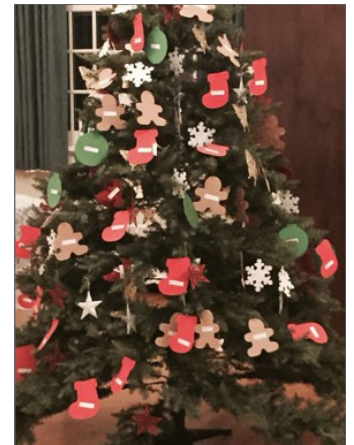
We hope anyone who loves the idea behind this initiative will join in to make it be all that Peggy envisions. Contact Peggy (listed in the membership directory) if you can do hospitality, or shopping, or wrapping. Items for present wrapping should be dropped off in the office please, or bring to church on Sunday and we'll get them to the right place. Thank you!

PS - Our first mom and child called the office today to register. They are excited!

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### The Family Giving Tree

The Family Giving Tree is loaded with stars and gingerbread men and other ornaments. Each Branford Counseling Center family is represented by one set of ornaments, so that all their gifts arrive together. It looks adorable, thanks to Jen Zehler, Joe Brummer and Rick Cain! Each ornament lists the item to be purchased. **Be sure to sign your name on the master sheet against the number of the ornament you took.** And remember, wrapped presents are due back under the Giving Tree by **December 13th**. Thank you, one and all.




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### Trinity's Closet

Kathy Sanchez (right) helped out at her last Trinity Closet before she moves to North Carolina in January. She has officially passed the torch to Ellen D'Agostino (center) and Dru Dodd (left), to continue this ministry, which warms the hearts, minds, and bodies of many less fortunate than we.

We feel so much gratitude towards Kathy for so many ways she has participated at Trinity. She's on the Vestry, Altar Guild, Outreach, Silent Auction/Fair, on Stewardship in the past, so much contribution. To say you will be missed is such an understatement! We hope for, and look forward to, many return visits.

## Outreach Ministry *continued*



Thank you, most sincerely, to all who donated, and all who volunteered.

## YOUTH

### Violence as a Norm

By Gabe Simerson



I can say with adequate conviction that kids my age - the ones raised primarily in a post 9/11 world - have become desensitized to violence and terrorism.

The ironic side effect of such desensitization is that we actually think about violence and terrorism much more; the fact that it seems so normal means we

think about it without the pretense of isolation and novelty that must have once accompanied it. "All my friends think ISIS is attacking when we hear a plane," Trinity parishioner Lauren Elmasry joked once. But the fear is real. Thirty years ago, terror attacks weren't so commonplace in the news that they could earn the title of the "latest."

Similarly, when a woman with mental health issues disrupted a Trinity service several months ago, there was a shared thought among the youth in the church: "This is going to be the next mass shooting." These are kids who live just miles away from Newtown, who have heard in the news and in political discourse about the role of mental health in the actions of mass murderers. They're kids who live in a time when church sermons almost regularly cover mass violence, because it happens so frequently. "I am tired," Rev. Sharon once said, of preparing another sermon after a mass shooting. These are kids who, instead of considering a crime and inferring a cause, see a "cause" and infer a crime. Because it's become a theme.

## Youth

One, then, must wonder: will an increased occurrence of violence provoke any more action from those youth who hear about it? Or will we become gradually less urgent in our response, as each successive death blends into the rest and becomes one more drop in the storm we've grown to accept?

### History of the Church Organs

by Wendy Healy

Thanks to Gabe Simerson, we now have a written history of the church's organs, dating to the 1890s when the first one was built for Trinity.

Gabe, 17, a pianist who now studies playing the organ with Simon Jacobs, Organist at St. Thomas's Church, New Haven, felt that since the organ is so central to our worship its history should be documented. "I was reading the First Congregational Church's website and thought that if they have an entire online page dedicated to their organ, there's no reason why we shouldn't, and I'd love to do it."



So Gabe researched the church archives and wrote "The History and Description of the Organs of Trinity Church, Branford."

"We were lacking the story of a very important part of our worship and I thought I was the guy to do it. I discussed the idea with the Rev. Sharon and she said, 'Go for it.'"

Gabe, who goes to Hamden Hall Country Day School Hamden, also sings in the choir, rings the bell for worship, is a lector, and feature writer in *Messenger* as the voice for our youth. He hopes that the organ history will be added to church website and printed copies made available. (Coming soon!)



## PARISH LIFE MINISTRY

### Couple Married at Trinity Return for 50th Anniversary Celebration

By Wendy Healy

Fifty years ago in 1965, Sandra and Charles Whittingstall were married at Trinity on Thanksgiving Day at 5:30 PM. Being married at the church where she grew up was thrilling to her, and she recalls

## Parish Life

how beautiful the altar was adorned with a festive cornucopia.



Although they've made their home in Groton all these years, they chose to spend their 50th anniversary at Trinity and worshipped with us on November 22 at 8:00 AM. They placed flowers on the altar to bring back that same warm feeling from their wedding day in 1965.

Why did they choose to make Trinity part of their 50th anniversary celebration? "It was my husband's idea, actually," said the retired nurse. "I had very fond memories of growing up there and I always love going back to Trinity. It's absolutely beautiful."

The Whittingstalls are no strangers to Trinity. They worship with us in the summer when they spend time at their second home on Summer Island in Branford. Some members may also remember Sandra's mother, Helen Aubrey, who was a longtime parishioner until her death in 2011. "Mom was a special lady," added Sandra. "She was very caring, very giving, and one thing that she taught us was to smile at people. It makes their day and makes yours, too, and doesn't cost you a thing."

Among Sandra's happiest memories of Trinity was her time spent in youth fellowship. "We had a blast every Sunday night." As a teen, she said, she would often stop into church while walking home from Branford High School. "I would go in and sit in the back row. It was peaceful and pretty - just sitting in there by myself, contemplating life at age 16."

Although they now attend Union Baptist Church in downtown Mystic, because that's where the grandchildren go, Sandra has strong roots in the Episcopal Church. "I'm very thankful that Trinity is still there, and I'm really looking forward to attending."

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### Music Together® @ Trinity

"I'm pretty excited about this possibility," was what Sara Anglemire said to us. And so the possibility has come to be. A community group calling themselves Musical Folk (part of the Music Together® organization) are Trinity's newest tenants. Trinity already hosts office space to the Branford Early Childhood Center (BECC) administrator Robin Comey, so we're seeing a theme that Trinity's space is being used towards devel-

oping emotionally and spiritually strong children. What could be better?



Music Together® offers their own research that shows developmentally-appropriate music experiences support the developing child in growing capacities. Robin Comey corroborated that claim, stating "Research shows that critical early brain and child development is fostered through strong parent-child relationships and interactions. Music

is one of the best ways to develop pre-literacy and language skills that will nurture the development of the whole child and give a good foundation for future learning."

"We love your church and the room downstairs that you showed us, and we are pretty excited about the opportunity of renting from you," said Liz McNicholl, Director of Musical Folk. Liz and another teacher, Jennifer, plan to schedule classes in the Youth Room on Wednesday and Saturday mornings, beginning in January.

Trinity parents interested in joining this unique musical experience, and needing financial assistance, should contact Sharon (not the program leaders). For more information on the program, visit [www.musicalfolk.com](http://www.musicalfolk.com).

Tell your friends and family! Bring your neighbors! Thank you, Sarah!



We welcomed into Holy Baptism Chloe Grace McAdams (pictured) and Ariya Elizabeth Shelton.



## Parish Life Ministry *continued*

### Scout Troop 424 Makes Its Mark

Scout Troop 424 have their first Eagle Scout - Jacob Sturrock. For his community project, Jacob rebuilt the dilapidated loading dock at the Shoreline Trolley Museum, to make it safe, attractive, and functional. Well done! Congratulations on your achievement.

**Congratulations to Sue and Jim Atkinson** on their 5th and 6th grandchildren - twins Jocelyn and Lana are making a difference on how Sue and Jim spend their time! Three cheers for grandparents!

### Holly Party at the Rectory

Rev. Sharon and Peter invite you to join them in this (now) traditional December fellowship. Between 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM on December 12, enjoy an outrageous array of homemade cookies and a glass of mulled wine.

And please, take home some holly!

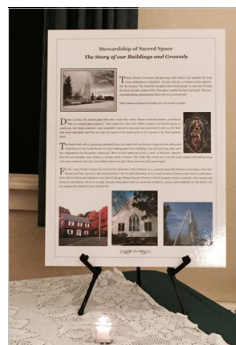


### Tree Lighting Night Open House Brought in Hundreds of People



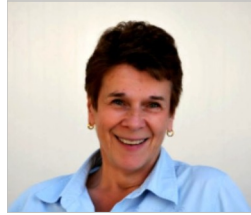
A very big thank you goes to the parishioners noted in these photos, for their many hours of preparation, and the hours on hand to offer hospitality. Thank you, thank you!

We told our story on storyboards for Worship, Outreach, Pastoral Care, Parish Life and Buildings & Grounds.



## From The Senior Warden

### Vestry Nominations



**Ann Freeman**  
**Senior Warden**

The Nominating Committee for Vestry 2016 has been formed, and is currently seeking the names of individuals interested in becoming either an Officer - Sr. Warden, Jr. Warden, Treasurer, or Parish Clerk - or a Vestry member, or Diocesan Convention Representative. Those who are nominated will be presented and voted on at our next **Parish's Annual Meeting, January 31, 2016**. Kathy Sanchez and Ed Monico co-Chair this Committee.

### Vestry

The basic responsibilities of the Vestry are to define and articulate the Vision; to support God's mission by word and deed; to focus on strategic issues and new initiatives; to uphold a fiduciary responsibility for the Parish; and to select the rector when needed.

Officers are elected for one-year terms. Vestry members are elected for three-year terms. Each year, three of the nine vestry positions change. Vestry meets once a month on the third Tuesday, except July. Meetings generally last for two hours.

### Requirements

- Complete Safe Church Training (provided)
- Clear a background check, confidentially handled by the Rector.

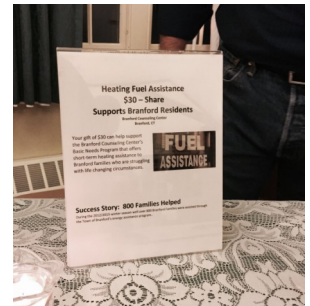


## Finance Ministry

Many of you generously donate stock to Trinity as part of your annual pledge. When you make your request for stock to be transferred to Trinity, it takes weeks for the funds to actually reach us; and we cannot credit your giving statement until the funds have actually been received. So please make your donation in plenty of time for the funds to reach us before year's end. Any funds received after we close the Trinity books for the year (which is shortly after mid-January), will be applied to next year's pledge. Thank you!



# Parish Life Ministry *continued*



**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**

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## Save the Date!



It's not too late to participate in the Branford Needs Assessment Survey. Survey forms are at the church — call the office for assistance.

## Sunday, January 31st, Annual Parish Meeting

There will be one 9:00 AM service on the last Sunday in January, immediately followed by the Parish Annual Meeting. Everyone is invited to stay and participate.

- Hear about the 'state-of-the parish' - there are many accomplishments to celebrate;
- say "thank you" to departing members of leadership;
- Exercise your vote to elect new leadership and add your voice to resolutions;
- Be informed about church finances;
- Let your voice be heard!
- Pick up your Annual Report.