TRINITY'S GOOD

Volume 9 Issue 2

Return to the Lord Your God . . .

These are the words that begin our Lenten acclamation preceding the Gospel reading, replacing the more familiar "Alleluia" verse: "Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love." (Joel 2:13) Most of us when we think about the Lenten season immediately place the description of "penitential" upon the season. We use the liturgical color of purple (black on Ash Wednesday) during the season, we focus on the maudlin characteristics of the Lenten discipline from the Ash Wednesday liturgy of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. Some have even attempted to put the Good Friday pall on the entire season with the focus on the crucifixion throughout the 40 days.

While there is some merit to experiencing Lent as penitential, the earliest forms of Lent (from the Latin word for lengthening—as in the daylight increasing) were shaped with a focus on the Baptismal preparation of the catechumenates (those learning the discipline of the faith). It is this reason that the Christian church of today is now reclaiming the baptismal character of the season with its Gospel focus on Jacob's well, the Pool of Siloam, and the burial cave of Bethany.

The 40 days of Lent were used primarily to assist those neophytes in the faith with a journey that lives out the drowning, rebirth images of being baptized into Jesus Christ (either at the Easter Vigil or on Easter morning). This return of the "wetness" of Lent helps us in this time when Christendom (that the predominant culture accepts and practices Christianity) is essentially dead. Columnist Stephen Carter has termed this era of American life as a "culture of disbelief."

This is a wonderful opportunity for the church to once again learn how to make Christian disciples again. Along with sacrifice, confession, charity, suffering, mercy, we must add new life, restoration, healing, and growth.

I hope that each of you will hear the call to, "Return to the Lord," this Lenten season. If you have drifted away from your usual active participation in the life of the Church, there is no better time to get reacquainted with your church home, your God, and your life in Christ than to rededicate your life here at Trinity. While some of the faces have changed during the last year, your spot in the pews is still waiting to be taken.

Please join us as we begin the Lenten journey on Ash Wednesday, February 6. Our mid-week Lenten observance begins with Soup Supper on the succeeding five Wednesdays at 6:00 p.m. Come and join us as we start our mid-week Lenten worship services with a focus on "The Questions of Jesus." Highlighting these services will be a pulpit rotation from several of our neighboring Lutheran congregations, each week focusing on a different question that Jesus posed to his listeners. Participating with us in the rotation will be Christ, Nauvoo; St. Peter's, Coatsburg; and Zion, Liberty.

Peace and grace to you during Lent,

Pastor Hale

February Birthdays

2/01 Lydia Gutting
2/02 Sandi Watts, Wyatt Brown
2/03 Kim Krieg
2/04 LeAnn Fecht, Jacob Ufkes, Delmer Schlueter, Elton Holtsclaw
2/06 Ruby Heyen, Jared Schwartz, Carl E. Hartweg
2/09 Scott Shipman
2/11 Aaron Brodie
2/12 Jesse Holtsclaw
2/13 Jerry Bartell
2/14 Cindy Menn
2/16 Cory Clostermery, Leanne Pollock
2/18 Kyle Kirby
2/19 Brad Ufkes
2/20 Helen Seigfreid, Jolene Gronewold
2/23 Ethan Johnson
2/24 Trey Geissler
2/25 Carol Vest
2/26 Joyce Jurgens
2/27 Angie Ufkes
2/29 Alex Bentzinger

February Anniversaries

2/08 Bill & Tiana Kirby
2/10 John & Linda Hartweg
2/14 Lawrence & Marjorie Harrell
2/24 Mark & Traci Harrell
2/27 Eric & Tonya Boyer
2/28 Melvin & Dorothy Wetterich

Blood Pressure Checks by Health Ministries Team

The nurses of Trinity will be doing blood pressure checks for the congregation on the second Sunday of each month in the Welcome Center. These checks will be held before and after church.

Choir Practice

Choir practice will be held on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome, so if you are interested in singing, please join us!

Committee Night

Committee Night is Tuesday, February 5. The following meeting has been scheduled:

5:00 Worship & Music

Financial Update

As of December 31, 2007

Current

Amt. Budgeted YTD - $147,770
Amt. Received YTD - $130,297
Amt. Spent YTD - $123,453
Current Fund Balance – $6,844

Benevolence

Amt. Budgeted YTD - $18,135
Amt. Received YTD - $21,686

Thank you for your faithful giving as together we live out our mission of Celebrating Christ's love as we welcome, encourage, and serve God's people!

Donations for Shepherd's Pantry

The food pantry could use the following items that aren't always available each month from the state food pantry system:

Boxes of dry milk
Cans/jars of spaghetti sauce
Pancake batter
Syrup
Fruits and Vegetables

Shepherd's Pantry would appreciate any donations that members are able to make. Thank you for your help.

Lenten Soup Suppers

Lenten soup suppers will be held each Wednesday, February 13 through Wednesday, March 12. The light meal will start one hour prior to services. Volunteers are needed to host the soup suppers. A sign-up sheet will be located in the Welcome Center. Any questions, please contact Jody Miller.

Welcome Center Update

As of December 31, 2007,the amount given to the Welcome Center totals $366,594. Of this amount $56,850 was given through December 31, which compares to $48,331 given through December 2006. Total cost of the project was $548,653 plus interest to date of $22,277.17. In 2007 we reduced the Marine Bank loan by $33,000, leaving a loan balance of $157,000. In 2006 we reduced the principal $40,000. In addition there are $62,000 of our own funds on loan to the Welcome Center. On January 10, 2008 the construction loan ended and our loan payments are due each month in the amount of $2,412.29.

On December 31, 2007 there were $31,565 of additional funds available for debt reduction and interest. If all of these funds were used to reduce the principal, this would leave our bank loan liability at $125,267. This compares to our projected bank loan at the end of three years of $181,332. As of January 18, 2008 we have paid an additional $33,712 of principal.

Let's continue to work together as we pay down our debt as quickly as possible. Thank you for your ongoing generosity. **Together**, we are living out our congregation's missions of Celebrating Christ's Love as we Welcome, Encourage, and Serve God's people.

Trinity Prayer Ministry

This **ministry at Trinity** is for anyone who wants to join us in prayer one day a week. Come to the Welcome Center at **7:00 a.m.** on Wednesday mornings. Prayer request slips are located in the pew racks. They may be filled out and put in the collection plates, or you may call Connie Schulz (357-6667) or the church office (357-2468) to request prayer. These names are used for the Prayer Ministry only and not in the prayer chain or Sunday morning prayers.
Together we live out our congregation's mission of celebrating Christ's love as we welcome, encourage, and serve God's people.

News From Our Sponsored Children

Dear Trinity Lutheran Church,

How are you people over there? Let me hope you are okay. I am fine and school starts its next year on January 8. Greetings from my grandparents. They are all doing well.
Thank you for my Christmas gift of $10. This is the same as 16850k. Out of this money I bought a kilo of sugar, a loaf of bread and a kilo of meat.
Thank you for your love to me. Happy Christmas and a good new year.

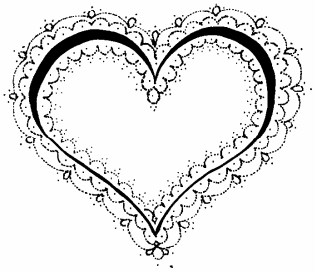
With love from Derric Watala

Souper Bowl Collection

Trinity's confirmation class is again collecting for the annual *Souper Bowl of Caring* project. On **February 3** during worship, we will take a special offering by passing pans and bowls down the pews. These pans and bowls help to remind us that not everyone, even in our local community, has enough to eat each day. With your help and support, we will be giving others the food they need. On Saturday, February 23, our class will again go to the Salem Evangelical United Church of Christ in Quincy to make and serve a meal. Thank you so much for your support!

Church Council 2008 Officers

Officers for the 2008 church council were elected on Sunday, January 27. President - Brent Ufkes, Vice-President – John Schwartz, Treasurer – Dave Hartweg, and Secretary – Jody Miller. They will be installed during worship on Sunday, February 10.



Church Council Highlights
January 18, 2008

Council members present were Pastor Hale, Linley Bartell, Kathy Graham, Ryan Schardon, John Schwartz, John Peterson, John Dittmer, Tammy Snyder, Dave Hartweg, Max Gronewold and Brent Ufkes. Absent were Jody Miller and Angie Fecht.

John Schwartz called the meeting to order. President Brent Ufkes arrived a few minutes later and assumed the duties of chairman. Pastor Hale led devotions by reading 3 interpretations of the wedding feast at Canaan.

Minutes of November meeting were reviewed. Motion to approve the minutes was made by Linley Bartell. Seconded by John Schwartz. Motion carried.

Pastor Hale reported he had received notification that Jennifer Hartweg had been approved as an ordained minister.

Financial Secretary's Report – Report reviewed. It was noted that the end of year plea for contributions for the Welcome Center was very successful. Motion to approve by Pastor and seconded by John Schwartz. Motion carried.

Treasurer's Report – Dave Hartweg reported that the Welcome Center loan will be paid down $32,000. The balance of the note will be renewed as a 5-year note at 5.25% interest. John Peterson moved and Kathy Graham seconded to approve the report. Motion carried.

Christian Ed. (Angie Fecht) – Reported that the confirmation class will be collecting for the annual Souper Bowl of caring on February 3. They will also prepare and serve a meal at Salem Church of Christ in Quincy on February 23. In addition, they will serve the annual Easter breakfast. A free will offering will be collected. The first planning meeting for VBS is set for February 4 at 6:30 at the Christian Church.

Evangelism (John Peterson) – John reported the committee is considering various ideas for a summer program such as an outdoor concert. It was suggested that Trinity produce a new brochure along the lines of the last one, but with updated information. These would be made available to visitors, community members, and other interested parties.

Fellowship (Jody Miller) – A sign-up sheet for the Wednesday soup suppers will be posted in the Welcome Center.

Finance (Kathy Graham) – Kathy reported the investment portfolio is remaining stable even though the stock market is down.

Memorial (John Dittmer) – John said he had contacted Kurt Wilhite on the sound system proposal. Details of the system are still being reviewed, but the general bid amount should remain the same. The proposal will be included in new business at the annual meeting.

Property (Max Gronewold) – No report.

Social Ministry (Tammy Snyder) – No report.

Stewardship (John Schwartz) – No report.

Worship & Music (Linley Bartell) – No report.

Youth (Ryan Schardon) – No report.

Pastor's Report – Pastor Hale commented on the coming annual meeting. There will be a change of council members and committee assignments will be reconfigured. Pastor mentioned that several members have been ill or in the hospital and would appreciate being informed of any others. He discussed pulpit rotation in the coming weeks during Lent. There is nothing to report from the regional parish group.

Old Business – *Youth Activity Room:* There was a general discussion on a possible youth building project. Ryan reported that the youth group seemed to be more in favor

of making improvements to the basement so the council will put it on hold for now.

New Business – *Nominating Committee:* A new nominating committee will be formed consisting of 2 council members and 4 lay members. The tentative list is: John Schwartz, Linley Bartell, Matt Snyder, Delmer Schlueter and Debbie Housewright.
Audit Committee: An audit committee will also be formed. The members of the committee are Brent Ufkes, Brad Schardon, and Alan Housewright. Max Gronewold was recognized for his contribution to the council and Trinity.
Constitution: There was brief discussion to review and revise the constitution to accommodate some of the items discussed.

John Schwartz moved and Kathy Graham seconded adjournment. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Recorded by John Dittmer

HUGS (Helping Us Give Support) in Hancock County

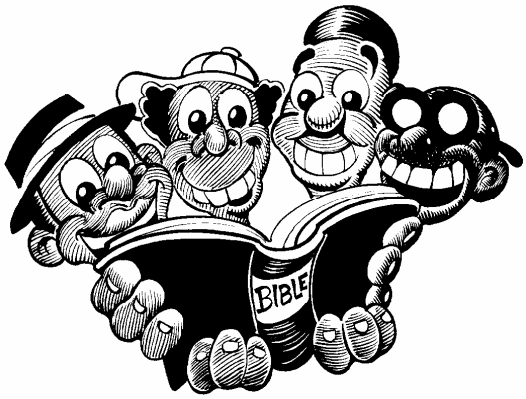
The HUGS Support Group will meet Tuesday, February 5, 2008, at 5 PM at Memorial Hospital, Carthage, in the Executive Board Room

The program will be presented by the Deborah Schuster, Registered Dietician at Memorial Hospital of Carthage. Deborah will present relevant information to improve nutritional health. The program is for anyone dealing with cancer or those who want to reduce their risk factors for cancer. The public is invited to attend.

Please feel free to call Florine Dixon, CNO at the hospital 357-6565; Stephanie Willey at the Hancock County Health Department 357-2171; Jetty Calvert at Carl Sandburg College 357-3129; or Deb Limkemann at the Sherrick Drug and Medical 357-3353 regarding the upcoming program or wanting a speaker about the HUGS Cancer Support Group and purpose for the community.

Northwest Conference Youth Lock-In

Extreme Faith! We're taking it to the eXtreme at the Northwest Conference Lock-in! Find out about the obstacles, dangers and rewards of living out your eXtreme Faith in Jesus! All Northwest Conference Youth (and their friends) are invited, grades 7 – 12. It will be held on Sunday evening, March 2, from 4 – 10 p.m. at the Mt. Sterling YMCA. Cost is $5 plus a snack or beverage to share. Register by February 25 by calling Pat Caley at 222-5085 or 228-0153 with your numbers. You pay at the door. Hope to see you there!



Dedication of the Recently Renovated Immaculate Conception Catholic Church

On Tuesday evening, February 12 at 7:00 p.m., Bishop Jenky will preside over the dedication of our recently renovated church in Carthage. Along with the dedication, young men and women from the churches of Nauvoo, Carthage, Dallas City, Hamilton, and Warsaw will be present with their families for the conferral of the sacrament of Confirmation.
We invite you to participate in this joyous celebration of not only the enthusiastic faith of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, but also the joy, the unity, and the determination of Christians passing on the faith in Hancock County.