

The Newsletter

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THE PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE

There is a rather fatalistic and sardonic proverb which draws on the inevitability of death and the burden of taxes. Benjamin Franklin framed it this way in 1789: "In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes." Those of us old enough or who have lived long enough can certainly attest to the wisdom of Franklin's insight.

And, yet, for people of faith, there may be a pretty different way of construing reality and approaching human finitude than that for which Franklin allows. It has to do with living forever, a concept perhaps far more amenable to theology than biology.

When Janet and I participate in our annual summer house swap with dear friends – the Landells going to our family camp in Maine and the Lombards going to their home on the Cape – we find ourselves almost nightly enjoying delightful music of all sorts at a local bandstand, on a town green, or at a school or park in the various mid-Cape communities surrounding us. One night this past summer after we had just settled in for an evening's performance in Yarmouth, my wife called my attention to a couple just arriving nearby. Printed on the man's shirt was the claim, "My goal is to live forever. So far, so good." I thought to myself, "I like the spirit expressed by those words."

As a matter of faith, I am persuaded that, as spiritual beings, we do live on beyond our physical deaths both as spirit now shed of its enfleshment and through the values, ethics, and virtues we have not only seen in Jesus Christ but sought to embody in our own lives of faith. There is something of the Divine which not only creates, inhabits, sustains, and redeems our lives but which transcends all matter and time to connect us infinitely and forever with the essential goodness, truth, and wholeness of the universe, making us one with the One who is, was, and ever shall be. So, the goal of living forever is not only possible but well nigh probable.

The other part of the saying on the man's shirt, "so far, so good," causes me to chuckle a bit even as I recognize the contingency of life and the uncertainty of our days. There are no guarantees this side of heaven, except that God will be with us in all the circumstances of life. Quite frankly, some days might have seemed better if, when the morning alarm sounded, we had simply rolled over and gone back to sleep. But even when the days hang heavy on the human heart or the future seems murky and the meaning of life perplexing, even when we have given life our best and it has responded with its worst, perhaps, if we look hard enough or persevere long enough or hope and trust deeply enough in the God who gives us life and redeems our days, we, too, might discern the graces surrounding our lives and the fundamental goodness at the core of our existence. Perhaps we, too, might confess at the end of the day, "so far, so good."

Blessings,

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7 - KICK-OFF SUNDAY

One service at 10:00 a.m.
CHURCH SCHOOL BEGINS

WELCOME BACK BRUNCH

To celebrate the beginning of a new church year!

Hosted by the Fellowship Committee
 Quiche, muffins, punch, cake, fruit
 Everyone welcome -- No charge

WORSHIP IN SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 7 Communion	Service at 10:00	Rev. Dr. John Lombard preaching
SEPTEMBER 14	Service at 8:30 Service at 10:00	Prayer & Holy Communion Rev. Dr. John Lombard preaching
SEPTEMBER 21	Service at 8:30 Service at 10:00	Prayer & Holy Communion Captain James Yee preaching
SEPTEMBER 28	Service at 8:30 Service at 10:00	Prayer & Holy Communion Rev. Dr. Karin Case preaching

**HAVE YOU PARTICIPATED IN OUR
 8:30 A.M. SERVICE ON SUNDAY MORNINGS**

The 8:30 a.m. service will resume on September 14.

Taking place in the church parlor, the 8:30 a.m. service is a half hour Service of Prayer and Holy Communion. It includes scripture readings, collective prayer, silence, musical responses and the celebration of communion by intincture. If you would like to spend a quiet half hour with a small group of worshipers, why not give the 8:30 service a try? Everyone is welcome.

EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

SING PRAISES TO THE LORD



Sundays, September 7 & 14:

Anyone who loves to sing is invited to join "Sunday Only Choir" on either or both of these Sundays. We gather in the choir loft at 9:15 a.m. to

learn a simple anthem for the 10:00 a.m. service. While no further commitment is necessary, this is a good way to 'dip your toe in the water', to see if choir might be for you!

CANVAS BAGS FOR SALE – THINK (AND ACT) GREEN!

At the brunch on Sunday, September 7th, the Christian Education Committee will be selling TriCon canvas bags to tote your groceries, library books, kid's toys, meeting notes, etc. etc. in an environmentally conscientious way. Bags are only \$5 each with a TriCon logo – buy several – reuse, reduce, recycle and display your church affiliation!



The deadline for the October Newsletter is September 15.



Spiritual Enrichment

Begins Monday, September 8, 9:45 a.m.

Mark your calendars for the first fall meeting of Spiritual Enrichment. This group:

- Gathers on Monday mornings at 9:45 a.m. in the parlor (except on holidays when the church is closed).
- Explores faith issues, scripture and personal spiritual growth.
- Shares struggles and joys, beliefs and doubts, and ways we can seek to live a Christian life.
- Supports each other by accepting all opinions and beliefs in an atmosphere of confidentiality.

Newcomers always welcome!

Monday, September 8 Opening Session

Peg Hoover and Diane Frost, facilitators

Mondays, September 15 and 22

"Breathing the Air of the Spirit"

Marsha Martin, facilitator

Monday, September 29 Faith Circles

Peg Hoover and Diane Frost, facilitators

SPIRITUAL WRITING GROUP

Our new Spiritual Writing Group will have its first session from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, September 9 and will meet every other Tuesday.

Writing to a selection of provocative prompts, the group will explore questions such as why we are here and where we are going. Sharing our writing, we will experience the expansive nature of our hearts, minds and souls. All are invited. Please contact Charity Tremblay at catremblay@comcast.net or 978 371-0471 if you are interested or have any questions.

CALLING ALL COMMITTEES

**Fall All-Committee Convocation
Tuesday, September 9, 2008, 6:45 p.m.**

As we open the fall season at TriCon, Church Committee has initiated a new idea --

the All-Committee

Convocation on Tuesday evening, September 9th. Everyone who serves on any committee at TriCon is invited! The evening will begin with time for fellowship in the parish hall at 6:45. We will then gather in the sanctuary for opening worship and announcements. At 7:30 we will break out for our individual committee meetings, and then gather back in the sanctuary just before 9:00 to wrap up and adjourn by 9:15.



The convocation promises to be very engaging for all TriCon committees. Rather than working solely in small groups with our own individual agendas, we will have a chance to see our church community as a whole and recognize the powerful contribution of our members who serve in a rich variety of ways, all to the common good. We can share the enthusiasm and support the plans of all our committees as we look together to the coming season. So, from Diaconate to Women's Union and the fourteen other committees that fall alphabetically between, we look forward to seeing you there.

*"Now there are varieties of gifts,
but the same Spirit; and there are
varieties of services but the same
Lord; and there are varieties of
activities, but it is the same God
who activates all of them in everyone.
To each is given the manifestation of
the spirit for the common good."*

I Corinthians 12:4-7

READING THE SPIRIT BOOK GROUP

Thursday, September 11 at noon



The Filipov Forum speaker on Saturday, September 20 will be Captain James Yee, former Muslim chaplain at Guantanamo Bay and author of "For God and

Country: Faith and Patriotism Under Fire." The "Reading the Spirit" Book Group will discuss this book on Thursday, September 11 in the church parlor. Come join in - bring a lunch, bring a friend! (Copies of Captain Yee's book are in the church library or may be purchased from the church office for \$10.)



NEEDED **Fall and Winter** **CHILDREN'S clothing**

Please think of Merrimack House this month as you pull out your children's fall and winter clothes. Kids and youth living at this family shelter in Lowell need good used shirts, pants, jeans, winter jackets and shoes for the coming season, baby things, too. You may place items in the marked boxes in the parish hall during the month of September.

JOIN JUNIOR CHOIR

The Junior Choir, open to 2nd through 6th graders, will begin their year on September 14th. Join us in the parish hall at 9:15 a.m. We will learn a simple anthem for the morning church service. Following the service, there will be a parent information meeting/rehearsal. Regular rehearsals will begin on September 21st. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Emily Roos at 781-643-1519 or emilyroos@verizon.net

A NEW MEETING SPACE

Over the summer the LEAP Pre-school, our weekday tenant in the Church School wing, has made a number of changes and we have cooperated with them in creating a new shared multi-purpose room on the first floor in the wing. This new – yet to be named - space will serve LEAP during the day as a staff lounge and planning space and we will use it on weeknights and weekends for meetings. Furnished with comfy sofas and chairs and a great work/conference table, we anticipate committees will be lining up to be scheduled in our new room.

During coffee hour, wander down the corridor to the Church School wing and turn right. Straight ahead you will see our new meeting space. For now, we are calling it the “new Parlor” – help us come up with a better name!



THIRD TUESDAY PRAYER FELLOWSHIP

Beginning in September and continuing for six months leading up to Lent 2009, interested members and friends of TriCon are invited to gather from 7:30 – 8:45 a.m. on the third Tuesday of each month for a time of prayer, fellowship, and reflection. Participants will read together “Prayers for a Privileged People” by Walter Brueggemann as a basis for reflection, conversation, and prayer and each participant will assist in planning and providing a light breakfast for one session. Facilitated by John Lombard, the group will begin on September 16. Copies of Brueggeman’s book are available through the church office for \$14. Registration deadline is noon on September 10. A minimum of 10 participants will constitute the group. Come and be challenged and changed!



JOIN THE KNITTING GROUP

Wednesday, September 17 at 2:00 p.m.

Everyone from beginner to expert is welcome to join the new knitting group in the church parlor! Stop by on September 17 or call the church office for more information.

LET'S TALK POLITICS AND RELIGION Jesus' and Ours!

**Wednesdays, September 17 and 24 and
October 1 and 8 at 7:30 p.m.**

Given the excitement of the upcoming Presidential election and the significance of the issues facing our country and our world, why not join fellow believers in a spirited conversation of the interplay between politics and religion. Open to all, the group will gather in the church parlor. Using a brief segment each evening from "Golden Rule Politics: Reclaiming the Rightful Role of Faith in Politics," the conversation will be facilitated by John Lombard and will explore a variety of issues dealing with whether or not people of faith should be involved in politics and, if they are, how so, how should Christians apply moral values in politics, especially in a pluralistic society with competing points of view where people of good will may disagree; how does separation of church and state apply to life in an election year; how does the faith community advance the common good?

In preparation for the series, participants are asked to read "The Politics of Jesus" by Obery M. Hendricks, Jr., copies of which are available in the church office for \$12. While not the immediate focus of the group discussion, "The Politics of Jesus" will serve as a helpful backdrop to understanding Jesus as a first-century revolutionary and the implications of Jesus' vision for all who claim to be Christian. The "Washington Post" stated that "The Politics of Jesus" was "essential reading for Americans trying to move beyond the corrosive standoff between the religious right and the secular left," and Jim Wallis, a Philipov Forum speaker, said, "This is a must-read for everyone who seeks to understand and live out the revolutionary implications of following Christ."

Sign up deadline is September 14 and a minimum of ten people will constitute the group.



Join the Choir

Senior Choir

The Senior Choir is a fun-loving, hardworking group that sings together from mid-September through Memorial Day. Repertoire ranges from Tudor anthems, to Mozart and Mendelssohn, to newly composed works and jazz. There are ample opportunities for singing solos or in small ensembles as well. Rehearsals are on Thursdays from 7:45 - 9:15 p.m. and Sundays at 9:15 a.m. We take a brief recess after both Christmas and Easter. If you would like to join the choir, or for more information, contact director Vickie Wagner at 617-522-0510, or by email at vwag@aol.com.

Thursday, September 18, 7:45 - 9:15 p.m.

Midweek Senior Choir rehearsals resume. New members are welcome.

Instrumental and vocal soloists are also welcome to participate. Please contact Vickie Wagner if you're interested in sharing your musical gifts in a worship service.

UNITED HOMES SHELTER MEALS

We provide a hot meal once a month to the 100 homeless men who receive food and lodging through the United Homes Shelter in Dorchester. Cooking takes place in the church kitchen after Sunday coffee hour. Drivers are particularly needed to take the meal to Dorchester at 4:30 p.m. You may drop off the food or you may remain to serve it. Servers return to Concord about 7:30 p.m. (If you are not serving, you may return to Concord immediately after dropping off the meal.)



The upcoming meal schedule is:

- October 5
- November 2
- December 7

If you would like to volunteer on a particular Sunday, please be sure to sign up in the parish hall or call the church office ahead of time so we can plan for cooks and drivers.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

We will be celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism on Sunday, October 19. If you would like to have your child baptized on that date, or you would like to be baptized yourself, contact the church office at 978 369-4837 by September 20th.



Concord
CROP Walk
for the Hungry
Sunday, October 19
TriCon Church

Starting at TriCon Church, this year's CROP Walk will be a 7 km walk, along a beautiful route in Concord, including the Buttrick mansion overlooking the North Bridge. Each year Church School and youth groups, families, and individuals from TriCon contribute to this effort by walking, sponsoring walkers, or helping with coordination. Along with the camaraderie of the walk, there is a banner contest, live music, refreshments, and a tee shirt design contest. Money raised supports both local and global efforts to address hunger relief, clean water projects and other crisis relief.

Be there at 1:30 for music and registration. The walk steps off at 2:15.

Information and walk papers will be available later in the month of September in the parish hall or church office. Also, check out the website for details on the wonderful success of past walks, how to do online pledging, and where the money is allocated.

www.concordcrop.org

(Rain date: October 26 at TriCon)

WOMEN'S UNION
Save the Date!
Wednesday, October 29 at noon

“SOUL FOOD”
Our Faith, Our Food, Our Life
with Susan Hamilton

Are you eating more, and enjoying it less?
 *Join **"Soul Food,"** a faith-food journey focusing on:

- *Connecting God's Gift of Food to Our Daily Life*
- *Exploring the Symbolism of Olives & Olive Oil, Bread, & Seeds in the Bible*
- *Appreciating Nourishment from the Sky, Sea & Earth*

This two-week seminar explores the Biblical symbolism of olives, bread & seeds; and cooking with the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea, and the vegetables of God's green earth.

We will share stories of faith and food; taste new recipes; and take time to contemplate our spirit of living. Come to the table. Re-awaken your joyfulness in faith and food.

"Soul Food" meets from 7:15 to 9:00 p.m., on Wednesday evenings October 22 and 29, in the TriCon kitchen. Sessions include: prayers and meditations, recipe-tasting and cooking techniques, focused on themes of faith and food. Sign-up during coffee hour, or e-mail: FamilyEcon@aol.com. Need more information? Susan welcomes your calls: 978-371-0067 or 978-317-6913.

Group leader: TriCon member, M. Susan Hamilton, holds an M.S. Human Ecology. She leads workshops in Food Awareness and is a Food Specialist for national companies in research lab-test kitchens. Her essays and recipes have appeared in publications including: *The New York Times*, *Toques Blanches*, *Connecticut Magazine*, *Tennis*, and *Woman's Day*.



A DAY AWAY:
“THE FIRST TO FOLLOW”

Join us on All Saints Day, Saturday, November 1st from 8:30 – 4:00 for a day away retreat focusing on “The First to Follow,” the disciples of Jesus. Using a brand new book by the late John R. Claypool, we shall look in depth at the various followers whom Jesus first called. In fact, one of the very first things Jesus did in his ministry was to reach out to twelve ordinary individuals and draw them into a circle of close companionship with him. Facilitated by John Lombard, the group will look at the lives of the twelve apostles, their relationships with Jesus and with each other, and what the dynamics of that community can teach us.

The retreat group will be twelve adults, no more or less. All will be expected to attend an orientation session in October, to read Claypool's book, “The First to Follow: the Apostles of Jesus,” to research, prepare and present a profile on one of the disciples, and to offer a brief sketch (two minutes) of one of the disciples as part of a Sunday worship service during Lent 2009. Cost of the day for materials, resources, Claypool's book, break and lunch service is \$25, non-refundable and payable at the time of registration. Sign up today!



38TH ANNUAL ANTIQUÉ SHOW AND SALE

**Friday, November 7
10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

**Saturday, November 8
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

We have many volunteer openings. If you are interested in being on the committee or helping with the show in any way, call Judy Walpole at the church office for more information.

A volunteer form for the Antique Show Café is included in this newsletter.

CALLING ALL WOMEN OF TRICON

We are looking ahead to our annual Women's Retreat on November 14-15 at Rolling Ridge in North Andover. We must give the retreat center an initial count by September 30 so please sign up in the parish hall or call the church office ASAP! Contact Marsha Martin at 978 897-6142 with any questions.

FLOWERS FOR THE ALTAR

If you would like to donate flowers for the church altar, November 23 and 30 and December 28 are available. Sign up in the parish hall or call the church office.

LATE BREAKING NEWS

The heavy rains of the summer have created a significant problem for the church basement. The outside drain in the areaway entrance blocked up and was just not able to handle the volume of water. Therefore, water flowed in over the threshold. On the other side of the building, the basement window wells filled up and overflowed. Consequently, we have had to rip up carpet, baseboards, lower kitchen cabinets and a significant amount of drywall. Clean-up efforts are underway but repairs will take some time.

NEWS FROM OPEN TABLE

During the renovations at First Parish in Concord, the Open Table Food Pantry (normally held at First Parish) has been serving meals at TriCon. There have been delays in the renovation process and it now appears that we will be hosting Open Table until January.

The work at First Parish has also resulted in our having more than our normal number of rentals. If you are in need of church space, please do not assume a room is available. You should check with the church office before scheduling.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

YOUTH GROUP

Senior High Youth Group

Welcome to Senior High Youth Group! Whether you're a returning student, new to the church, or an incoming freshman, welcome! We've got a lot of great things planned for a really fun year.

Giant Packet O' Info

Watch for your very own Giant Packet O' Info -- a mailing around Labor Day to every senior high student. The packet has all you need to know about Sunday Night Youth Group, Wednesday Night Discussion Group, the 2009 Mission Trip and the Fall Retreat. Youth Group announcements will be published in the church newsletter. You'll also receive monthly Youth Group mailings and special mailings for Confirmation Class and Mission Trip participants. You are always welcome to call or email Karin Case (978) 369-4837 revdrkarin@aol.com or Nick Bruning (978) 618-1629, triconnb@aol.com to request information, talk about YG, or anything that's on your mind. If you have not received an information packet by September 8, call the church office and we will mail one to you.

SUNDAY NIGHT YOUTH GROUP



Sunday, September 7,
7:00 to 8:30 p.m.
In the Youth Room on the lower level. See you there!

Sunday, September 14 - 6:00 p.m.

Parents Meeting

Sunday, September 14 - 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Youth Group

Sunday, September 21 - 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Youth Group

Sunday, September 28 - 7:00 - 8:30 p.m.

Youth Group

WEDNESDAY DISCUSSION GROUP

Talk with your YG friends about what's on your mind -- serious or fanciful. Discussion Group meets from 7:30 to 8:30 every Wednesday night in the youth room or the church parlor beginning Wednesday, September 3. All high schoolers are welcome.

CALLING ALL 9TH GRADERS

Confirmation Class starts in September!

Watch for the Confirmation Class mailing that will arrive around Labor Day. It will have all the information you need to get started. There will be a registration and information session for parents and kids on September 14th and *September 21st is the final deadline for registration.* You must have your Registration Form to the church office by that date.

SEPTEMBER

Sunday, September 14 11:15 a.m.
Orientation for Confirmands & Parents
Meet in the parlor.

Sunday, September 21
**Final Deadline*
for Confirmation Class Registration*

Sunday, September 21 11:15 a.m.
Orientation for Mentors
Lower level meeting room.

Sunday, September 28 10:00 a.m.
Commissioning in Church
Confirmands, Parents & Mentors
Please arrive by 9:45.
Confirmands, Parents & Mentors will take part in a covenant with the congregation. Sit wherever you like. (You will not need to come forward.)

Sunday, September 28 11:15 a.m.
Coffee for Parents & Mentors

In the parlor following worship
Sunday, September 28 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

First Class

Confirmands & mentors together
Meet in the parlor.

Questions? Call or e-mail Rev. Karin Case •
(978) 369-4837 • revdrkarin@aol.com

LIFE CHANGES



Congratulations to Dan Cook who celebrated his 100th birthday on August 19th and to Margaret Crockett who turned 90 on August 26th!

JUST MARRIED

Best wishes to Kristin Ferrell and Michael Martin, Jr. who were married in our sanctuary on August 15. Kristin is the daughter of John and Mary Ann Ferrell.

IN SYMPATHY

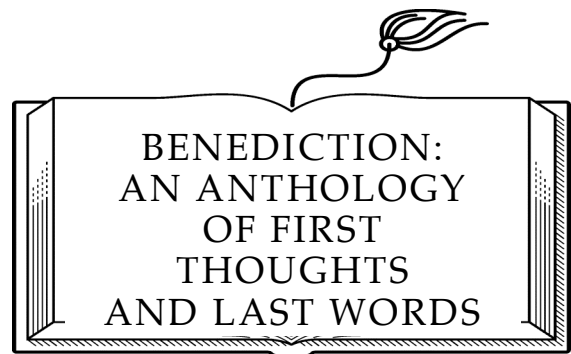
Sincere sympathy to Bobbi and Chip Benson. Bobbi's mother, Anna Louise Lane, died on July 22 in Petersham, MA.

Our thoughts are with the family of Bob E. Williams who died on July 26. Services were held at TriCon on August 24.

Our condolences to Barbara Reece and her family. Barbara's husband, David, died on August 14 in RI. Services were held at TriCon on August 20.

We pray for the family of our member, Peter Smith, who died on August 23. Pete is survived by his three children, Pamela Schweppe, Laurie Smith-Frailey and Andrew Smith. Pete's wife, Lucile, died in June and his son, Stanley, died in March.

ITEMS OF INTEREST



Have you ever wondered what you would say to others at the conclusion of a rich and full life? Given the chance, what wisdom, counsel, encouragement, and faith acquired over many years of life and living would you commend to those nearest and dearest or to the neighbor next door or a world away? What words of blessing might you want to invoke of a good and gracious God upon others, knowing your prayerful concern for them and trusting in God's benevolent ways and redemptive ways?

Over the summer a number of TriCon members and friends have been writing "benedictions" (300-350 words) as a way of passing on to future generations certain essential learnings, meanings, truths, and insights gleaned over time from God-centered and grace-filled living. These inspirational pieces, along with others submitted over the next few months, will be gathered into a booklet entitled, Benediction: An Anthology of First Thoughts and Last Words to be produced in 2009.

You are invited to be part of this special project, contributing your own original reflection on this fascinating and engaging topic. Pick up additional information through the church office and join others not only in reflecting upon the importance and power of faith and the insights and understandings of a lifetime, but taking significant responsibility for passing that on to those who come after us. For more information contact John Lombard.

LIVING INTO OUR FAITH; SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

Living Into Our Faith *"Faithful and Grateful"*

"I believe that God is more of a feeling/being rather than a man sitting in a throne up in heaven. God is whatever an individual understands it to be. Everyone goes on a different faith journey and we all arrive at different beliefs. In other words, God is everything."

Excerpt from a Confirmation Statement of Faith

"Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues but the parent of all others." Cicero

The annual Stewardship Campaign, commencing on October 5th, will be conducted by a delivery system that involves passing a pouch along a route comprised of six or seven church families. We have borrowed from a well-known delivery service and are calling our effort – TPS – Trinitarian Pledge Service but don't expect to see a big brown truck pull up to your door! The delivery will be made by a neighbor or fellow parishioner dropping off the pouch and if possible, taking a moment to chat with you.

There is no solicitation of pledges. Each individual or family considers their pledge decision privately in their home and puts it confidentially in a sealed envelope in the pouch before passing it on to the next household on the route.

If you are going to be away in early October or for any reason would prefer to receive stewardship materials by mail rather than being on a route, please call the church office and let us know.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Dr. Cynthia Bland Biggar, who has accepted a call to be pastor at the Standish Congregational Church in Standish, Maine, beginning September 1. We are happy to report that Cynthia and Ray will also be maintaining their residence in Concord, so we will still be seeing her – but not on Sunday mornings!

As the final step towards ordination, Cynthia will participate in an Ecclesiastical Council here on Wednesday, September 10th at 7:30 p.m. when she will present her ordination paper and be examined by members of the Metropolitan Boston Association Committee on the Ministry. All are welcome to attend this interesting evening and discussion.

Following a successful outcome of the Ecclesiastical Council, Cynthia's ordination service will take place here at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, September 28th with a reception following. All are invited to attend and participate in this important milestone in Cynthia's ministry.

A REMINDER TO KNITTERS AND SEWERS

Although the Material Aid Group is no longer formally meeting, their work continues. Our church community remains actively involved in the baby blanket project for AIDS babies and in the City Mission Society Christmas Shop, as well as the prayer shawl ministry. Please continue to work on your projects at home and if you need yarn, knitting needles or instructions, contact the church office. Watch the Newsletter or Sunday Events & Comments in the fall for when items will be collected, or you may call the church office for more information.

STEPHEN MINISTRY CORNER

Many people think of Stephen Ministry as a "crisis intervention program" for times when there has been a death in the family, a divorce, a dire diagnosis or other similar trauma. But Stephen Ministers also support people going through planned transitions, such as retirement, relocation, having a baby, or starting school. Such changes can engender a similar range, if not intensity, of feelings such as fear, grief, and anxiety.

Someone who has decided to give up her job in order to freelance or start her own business may feel exhilarated at being released from the 9 to 5 grind and at the opportunity of exercising creative and entrepreneurial talents. At the same time, she may feel doubt and fear about not having the financial security of a full-time job. Where will the money come from for the mortgage, car payments, health insurance, etc.?

Or take a couple who has made the decision to move to out-of-state, say to North Carolina, in order to be closer to their parents and siblings. This seems like a positive step toward strengthening the extended family bond, but such a move entails many sacrifices and losses: home, community, church, friends, etc. It is also possible that moving closer to family may involve the couple in undesirable "family politics."

At this season of the year, many people's thoughts turn to school. Most adult learners are in college, technical school or graduate school because they believe it will help them get a better job and improve their circumstances. Such study is not without its stresses. You may wonder: Will I be able to do, or even excel at, my academic work? Will all this education really prove to be a ticket to a higher-paying, more interesting job? How will I manage financially in the meantime? Will I be able to pay off my student loans?

The point is that change, even the change we initiate, is almost always a double-edged sword. We initiate and plan change because we believe that it will improve our lives, but change can have unanticipated consequences that seem to have the opposite affect. Even though planned transitions are not crises, they *can* entail challenges, and as such you may want to consider having a Stephen Minister as your companion through the transition period. He or she can listen to your anxieties and help you sort through the positives and negatives of the experience.



ORGAN / CHOIR / SPACE UPDATE

The June 8th Congregational Meeting passed the following motion:

To authorize the Moderator to appoint a Feasibility Study Committee to assess the congregation's willingness and ability to finance the Organ Committee's recommendation that includes purchase of a new organ, moving the organ and choir to the back balcony and constructing side balconies to provide handicap accessibility and expand the seating capacity of the sanctuary.

Moderator, Liz Haff is in the process of assembling the Feasibility Study Committee and Elaine Bonoma has agreed to serve as the facilitator. The model continues to be at the church for viewing. Stay tuned!

BLESSINGS FOR BURMA

Through your generous donations to the Blessings for Burma campaign, we raised \$11,000 for the Kanpelet Children's Home. Additionally, donations of over \$6,600 for cyclone relief, combined with a \$12,500 allocation from our Mission budget, allowed us to send over \$19,000 to help the citizens of this impoverished country to recover from this natural disaster.

Ba Win, our Burmese friend, now living in the U.S. carried the funds to Burma for Kanpelet and a portion of the cyclone relief funds. Here is his report on the conditions there.

Dear Friends at Trinitarian Congregational Church,

I was in Burma in June. I wasn't able to make the trip to Kanpelet but met with the people who oversee our efforts there. They were able to arrange for the delivery of the school supplies, the handmade materials, the children's notes and the toothbrushes! They will also arrange for funds to be made available to see to the upkeep of the building, gardens and animals and the needs of the children over the next year. Twee was thrilled by your gifts and feels that the Lord is indeed watching out for her children.

I went to Dedaye with Burmese friends. There were checkpoints on the roads that succeeded in keeping foreigners out; I didn't see a single Caucasian. We left Rangoon at 5:00 a.m. in a pickup truck loaded with rice, mosquito nets, and cases of ramen noodles. Outside Rangoon, we encountered the first of six checkpoints that asked if any foreigners were in the truck. Although I'm no longer a Burmese citizen, I gave the soldiers a cheery 'No!' in Burmese, and we got waved on. The flooding had receded by then, fallen trees removed, and quite a bit of rebuilding was evident; after all, the cyclone's damage was wreaked 50 days earlier.

It wasn't until the third hour of the trip that we began to see trees and utility poles leaning over. We were traveling over temporary roads built

alongside bridges over streams that lace the delta that had been dislodged. My friend, Thiri Zaw told me that on her first two trips out, the road was so thick with the stench of decaying animal and human corpses that they had had to breathe through wet towels. The road then was lined with dazed people walking around looking for relatives and neighbors. Those who survived had been in huts that had somehow not been blown down and where they were able to keep their heads above water. Others had tied themselves to coconut trees with their longyi's (sarongs), and still others climbed whatever tree they could and hung on for about 12 hours, until the winds abated. I asked what happened when poisonous snakes, which are abundant in the delta, also took shelter on the same trees. The answer I received was that the snakes appeared to be as terrified as the humans and they managed to coexist without ill effect!

We loaded 50 gunny sacks of rice and about 50 gallons of cooking oil that we picked up at the market in Dedaye onto a small motor launch, and with the river within about 3 inches of the gunwales, went downriver to Ngaphare Kyaung village where we'd been told that no one—not the government nor big international aid agencies—had yet brought any food, 50 days after the cyclone. The villagers were happy to see us and immediately did most of the work in unloading half our supplies. Where I would not have been surprised to see emaciated, malnourished people clamoring for food, these people surprised me by waiting their turn with a quiet dignity, helping each other to find containers to collect their share.

I learned that incredibly, no one was killed because they had all gathered in the granary, the only substantial building in the village. Almost all their water buffalo drowned because by the time they knew this was not an ordinary storm, it was too dangerous to go out to the fields to untie the animals and let them fend for themselves. They said they'd gotten by on rice they'd dried, coconuts, by foraging, and after they recovered their small boats and nets, bringing in fish. (Although some felt queasy about eating fish from waters bearing so many human corpses.) The big challenge that lay ahead was how they'd till the thousand or so acres that their village worked without cows or buffaloes, and without rice seeds to plant (because those too were destroyed).

Our journey to the next village was safer: with half our load gone, I wasn't as nervous when the skies opened up as they only can in the monsoon, and we got drenched in warm rain. Thiri had delivered rice and other supplies twice before so we went directly to the monastery from which food was being distributed. A few of the hamlets served by the monastery were completely decimated—villagers, animals, huts-- but the village itself lost only their animals and their brand new primary school that they had almost finished building the week before the cyclone. We were able to leave a substantial fund with the energetic and competent Abbott of the monastery to be used for rebuilding and most importantly purchasing tillers and replanting rice and other crops.

The 135 mile winds and floods easily flattened houses built out of bamboo, wood, thatch, and corrugated sheet metal, but those kinds of building materials also made rebuilding easier, especially since villagers are accustomed to building their own huts. A young woman told me that after a day or two looking for surviving family members, waiting for the waters to subside and burying the dead, there was nothing to do but to dry the rice stores and start rebuilding. Pieces of huts were lying all over the place, and you just reconstituted whatever you could find into something that would shelter you from the monsoon rain, and the hot sun that comes out afterwards. She said they didn't have any fresh, uncontaminated drinking water, but it was easy enough to make a funnel out of a banana leaf and drink your fill just standing in the rain for a couple of minutes.

What the 2-3 million people who live in the delta need is enough rice to eat at least once a day until the end of September; money immediately to buy tillers and seed rice to plant and micro-credit loans to help them rebuild community assets like schools and wells, fix canals, etc. This is extremely urgent. We decided to leave the remainder of your gift to fund the ongoing micro-credit project. This project is lending money at no interest to farmers so that they can purchase tillers and seed stock. When they pay the money back, it will be loaned to the next village and so spread throughout the delta. Thanks to the generosity of all of you, the people of the delta can resume their lives and work!

WELCOME, JEREMIAH ROOD

We are pleased to announce that Jeremiah Rood will be our Seminary Intern for 2008-2009. Jeremiah grew up in Harwinton, CT and is currently a 2nd year student at Andover Newton Theological School. Prior to attending Andover Newton, Jeremiah was a newspaper reporter in NH. Jeremiah will be marrying Amanda Dumond, a journalist for a weekly newspaper, on September 13.

Welcome, Jeremiah!

HOUSING OPTIONS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

In April the Caring Connection sponsored an informative meeting on housing options for senior citizens in our area. A file of materials relating to local housing opportunities is now available for reference in the church library. Feel free to browse.

VIGIL VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are being sought to sit vigil with the dying. As part of the Palliative Care Program, "Living Fully, Dying Well," at Carleton-Willard Village in Bedford, volunteers will be trained to sit with the dying. For many people, the biggest fear is of dying alone. Trained volunteers provide a comforting presence, actively listening and supporting the dying person, and providing needed respite to family and/or staff members. Those interested in being trained as a vigil volunteer should contact The Rev. Allan Baldwin, Chaplain, at Carleton-Willard Village, 781 275-8700 x 1210. The training will consist of four, 1½ hour sessions in September.



WELCOME

FALL OPPORTUNITIES FOR GETTING ACQUAINTED

Throughout the year, the membership committee offers both new people and long-time non-member friends of TriCon Church opportunities to learn more about our congregational mission, and to explore the significance of being a member. In September and October, as listed below, we will offer two "Welcoming Coffees" in the parlor for conversation with the ministers and other church leaders. Then in November we will have an "Exploring Membership" brunch/meeting. Your decision to join TriCon may be made following your participation in this meeting. New members will join during the worship service on November 23rd. We hope you will join us! If you have any questions, please call Mary Lou Esposito at the church office or Susan Henderson, chair of the Membership Committee (978-369-4854).

"Welcoming Coffees": Getting to Know Us

Sunday September 28th

Coffee and conversation with church leaders
11:00 a.m. (after 10:00 a.m. service) in the parlor

Sunday October 19th

Coffee and conversation with church leaders
11:00 a.m. (after 10:00 a.m. service) in the parlor

"Becoming a Member": brunch/meeting and joining

Sunday November 2nd

"Exploring Membership" brunch/meeting
11:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the parlor

Sunday November 23rd

New members join during the 10:00 a.m. worship service

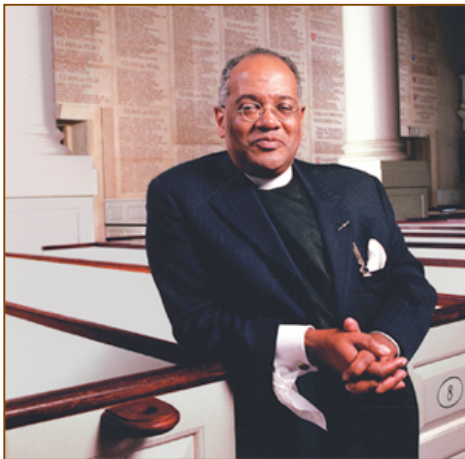
INTERFAITH

Prayer Breakfast

Featured Speaker:

The Rev. Professor Peter J. Gomes
of The Memorial Church of Harvard University

Wednesday October 8, 2008



7:30 to 9:00 am

Sponsored by the Concord Clergy Laity Group
Held at the Morrison Theatre in Newbury Court, Concord, MA

Donation \$10: Advance Tickets Available Through Your Local Community of Faith

ANTIQUE SHOW COUNTRY CAFÉ VOLUNTEERS

I/We would like to volunteer for the Antique Show Country Café.

Name(s) _____ Phone _____

Kitchen helpers prepare and serve food. (*Please note: bring your own baseball cap if possible, otherwise we have some new white ones available.*)

Thursday, November 6, 9:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Thursday, November 6, noon - 4:00 p.m.

Friday, November 7, 9:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Friday, November 7, noon - 2:30 p.m.

Friday, November 7, 2:15 - 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, November 8, 9:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Saturday, November 8, noon - 2:30 p.m.

Saturday, November 8, 2:15 - 4:00 p.m.

Call me, I can work when you need me.

Bakers make pies, cookies and bars. Pies are especially popular. Please label your baked goods and **note if nuts are an ingredient.**

I can bake _____.

I will bring my baked goods to the church kitchen on:

Friday morning, November 7 or Saturday morning, November 8.

Food donations: Please see sign-up sheet in the Parish Hall starting 9/28. Leave food donations in container marked "Antique Show Country Café" in the kitchen in October.

Cash donations are welcome. Cash donations (for perishable food) are also welcome. Make checks payable to Tri Con Church (Antique Show Café on the memo line), and leave in the church office.

Please call Phyllis Clarke 978-369-9129, Carol Miller 978-369-3755 or Cynthia LaMothe 978-369-9676 if you have questions.

