The Newsletter

Trinitarian Congregational Church
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Concord, MA 01742

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February 2010

It was the day before Christmas Eve. I had been thinking of a dear friend who was my advisee at Yale Divinity School and who, subsequently, with her husband and two daughters, had spent time with our family over the years. Somehow, over time, we lost touch. It just happened. As the holiday season approached this past December, I was more determined than ever to track down our friends. I remembered that she was of another denomination, so I was not surprised that she was not listed in our UCC directory. I made a futile effort to find her through the Yale Divinity School website's alumni link but to no avail. Finally, the day before Christmas Eve, I "Googled" her name. The result led me at last to a UCC church in Connecticut where she served a specialized ministry. I immediately called the church office phone number listed on the website. Not surprisingly, as it was late in the afternoon just before Christmas, no one was in the office. However, I followed the voice prompts on the answering machine to the point of obtaining my friend's cell phone number. I called. After a few rings and on the verge of my giving up, she answered the phone. She was on the road. Without missing a beat and totally surprised, she was absolutely thrilled to hear from me.

The initial excitement of connecting after all these years, however, soon gave way to a painful tale of a marriage that had ended in divorce due to infidelity, the relatively recent death of her mother, and her ongoing struggle to accept the lesbian relationship of one of her daughters. At more than one point her voice cracked with emotion, and I could feel the pathos of the current season in her life. We agreed to get together in 2010 and "catch up" as we felt that such a connection and conversation were long overdue.

A few days later I received a follow-up email in which my friend began by writing, "I have to say that talking with you, John, was very uplifting. I am so glad that you kept searching for me." Why I felt the need to "search for" my friend is unclear to me. What I do believe, however, is that nothing in this world happens by accident or even coincidence. For me, there is a providential design to everything even when I fail to comprehend it or fully understand it or take full notice as to its implications or possible meaning. I am not sure why I felt so compelled just before Christmas to track down my long lost friend. After all, having served in ministry for over three decades and lived a prior life filled with all sorts of people and rewarding relationships, why should this one person out of any number of other people surface when it did? I do not have a clue. What I do know is that there was an insistent urging, call it an inner voice, if you will, to seek out this one person. Little did I know, suspect, or even imagine her sad and painful circumstances. Even more significantly, how moved I was that such a small gesture on my part served so fully to lift her spirit and renew her joy in the midst of a time and season when

she was mustering every bit of strength, energy, and determination to cope with a life in shambles and a spirit mired in despair, almost bereft of hope.

I wonder how many of us, were we to take the time, could identify individuals with whom we were once friendly or close or with whom we shared significant time or life experiences, and, now, for whatever reason, we have lost touch? Whether people simply drifted apart, separated in anger, disgust, or hurt, or simply "moved on," could it be that there is a "voice" deep in the human heart calling us to reach out, search for, and, hopefully, find another soul who, at worst, may be hurting and broken, yearning for a loving word or hopeful presence, and, at best, may simply be delighted and cheered to reconnect, reconcile, restore, and otherwise renew a presently dormant but formerly treasured, transformative, and life-giving relationship. I cannot think of a better, more personal, nor more possible a ministry in the depth of winter (which may get long for many) than for every single person in our church family to search out a long lost but important past connection and to reach out in hope, love, and promise to lift a spirit and encourage a life. Just maybe there is someone waiting for a kind word or a reassuring presence in what you mean to him or her.

Grace and peace,

FEBRUARY WORSHIP

February 7	**Service at 8:30**	Prayer and Holy Communion
Communion	**Service at 10:00**	Rev. Dr. John Lombard preaching
February 14	**Service at 8:30**	Prayer and Holy Communion
	Service at 10:00	Rev. Dr. John Lombard preaching
February 21	**Service at 8:30**	Prayer and Holy Communion
	Service at 10:00	Rev. Ross Lilley preaching
February 28	**Service at 8:30**	Prayer and Holy Communion
	Service at 10:00	**Intergenerational Service**

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

February 17, 7:30 p.m.

This simple and moving service offers a meaningful departure point from which to embark upon a Lenten journey. Communion will be celebrated and ashes distributed to those who wish to receive them.

EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Spiritual Enrichment

Mondays, 9:45 a.m. in the church parlor
(except on holidays)
Newcomers always welcome!

Monday, February 1
"Journey Inward – Journey Outward"
Deana Kohl, facilitator

Monday, February 8
"Shaping Community…
Faith, Beliefs and Actions"
Diane Frost, facilitator

Monday, February 15
NO Meeting for Spiritual Enrichment
Presidents' Day Holiday

Monday, February 22
Spiritual Enrichment in Lent begins

RETIRED MEN'S GROUP

The Retired Men's Group will meet for lunch on Wednesday, February 10 at noon. The speaker will be Jim Shea from the Bedford Depot Park.

Come and bring a friend for good food, good fellowship and an interesting program. If you have not attended these luncheons before and would like to attend on February 10, please call Robert Nelson (978 369-3105) or Charles Davis (978 369-6250) by February 5. The cost of the lunch is $8.00

Warrant for the Annual Meeting
Sunday, February 7, 2010, 11:00 a.m.

To the Members of the
Trinitarian Congregational Church in Concord
County of Middlesex
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

You are hereby notified that the Annual Meeting of said church will be held on Sunday morning, the *seventh of February, 2010, at 11:00 a.m. immediately following the 10:00 a.m. worship service for the following purposes, to wit:

Article 1. To receive and act upon reports of the Church officers and committees

Article 2. To choose all necessary Church officers and committees for the church year 2010.

Article 3. To appropriate money for all Church expenses and to determine the manner of raising same.

Article 4. To transact any other business which may legally come before said meeting.

Molly Molloy Ehrlich, Clerk
Concord, Massachusetts
January, 2010

*Snow date: Monday, February 8, 7:30 p.m.

YOU ARE INVITED

to a

Valentine's Day Luncheon
Tuesday, February 9 at noon

Menu: *Ham*
Salad
Biscuits
Pineapple Casserole
Cranberry Chutney

Chocolate/raspberry trifle
Valentine Punch
Coffee, tea

with special entertainment by Rene Pfister presenting

The Entire History of Love in 20 Minutes (Set to Music)!

$5.00 per person
Sign up in the parish hall or call the church office.

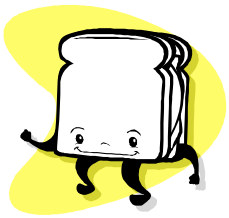
UNITED HOMES SHELTER

We provide a hot meal once a month to the 120 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 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:

- February 21
- March 21
- April 25
- May 16

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.



Caught in the Middle

Taking the Bite Out of Being a "Sandwiched" Baby-boomer

Monday, February 22, 7:00 p.m.

Organization of Financial Matters:
Being Practical and Proactive

This month's workshop will review financial planning tools that adult children and their parents can implement now – rather than later. Examples include: how and when to reposition assets, steps to identify financial risks, proactive planning and more. Families spend a lifetime protecting and caring for one another. By preparing for the unexpected – or the inevitable, families can continue caring for their loved ones for generations to come. If you haven't even *begun* to think about these issues, or if you *think* you've already made the right preparations, this workshop is you.

Our workshop facilitator has over 28 years in the financial planning field – assisting families, businesses and professionals in the accumulation and protection of wealth. Members of the TriCon community and local residents are encouraged to participate in this forum offering support and information to our growing population of "Sandwiched" Baby-boomers and their families.

A sign-up sheet is located in the parish hall. For more information or if you would like to help facilitate future lectures, please contact Donna Carlson at 978-505-1404.

PRESENTATION ON NEWFOUNDLAND

Wednesday, February 24, 7:30 p.m.

TriCon member, Charles Davis, will present a look at Newfoundland through slides and personal experience. Don't miss this fascinating program. Bring a friend!

COUNCIL ON AGING LUNCH

(An opportunity to share your time and talents!)

Please join the "TriCon Cooks" to prepare and serve a nutritious lunch for the Seniors at Harvey Wheeler Center. Cooking will take place at TriCon on Tuesday, February 23, 9:30-12:30; serving will be at Harvey Wheeler on Wednesday, February 24 from 11-1. A second lunch will be prepared on Tuesday, March 2 and served on Wednesday, March 3. To sign up call Carol Miller at 978-369-3755.

THE MANY FACES OF JESUS

Tuesdays, February 23 and March 2, 9, 16, 23, 30

What do you think Jesus looked like? What is it like to gaze into the eyes of Jesus the Christ? What image in great art best captures the biblical Jesus? These and other engaging questions are the subject of a Lenten series entitled, "The Many Faces of Jesus." The series will explore six different "faces" of Jesus: welcome, compassion, longing, humility, sorrow, and indignation. Led by Rev. John Lombard, discussion will take place 11:00 a.m. – noon with participants invited to bring a bag lunch and enjoy optional continued conversation and fellowship until 12:30; beverages and dessert will be provided. The text for the series will be Beth Booram's "Picturing the Face of Jesus" ($12.00, payable at the time of signing up for the series). Registration closes at noon on February 12th. All are welcome.

THE FACE: JESUS IN ART

Wednesday February 24, 9:30 – 11:30 a.m.
Monday, March 15, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Come see the visually stunning and Emmy Award winning PBS film *The Face: Jesus in Art*. This stirring program traces the dramatically different ways in which Jesus has been represented in art throughout history and around the world. Open to all interested individuals, participants in the morning are encouraged to bring a bag lunch for those who might enjoy table fellowship and reflection after the film.

KNITTING GROUP

The Knitting Group (AKA "The Knitwits") will meet on Wednesday, February 24 at noon. Bring your lunch and your knitting. Everyone is welcome, from beginner to expert.

INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP SERVICE FEBRUARY 28

"God, the Master Weaver: Weaving our Lives and Weaving Us Into a Community of Love"

Since the theme of this service is WEAVING, there will be a loom set up in the parish hall during the month of February ready for YOU to add several rows of yarn when you are at the church. If we all work together, we will have a homemade woven cloth that can be part of our service on the 28th. So please help with this cooperative project of our church community. You don't have to have prior experience, and all ages can take part (with some help from parents).

We would also like other handmade weavings to be part of our service. If you know a weaver who would loan one or several of their creations to be displayed, please contact Marsha Martin or the church office.

On the day of the service we invite everyone to bring a favorite woven item to church and, if possible, wear a woven item you cherish. These are all ways in which the service will be more meaningful to you personally and more special for our entire congregation.

See you in the parish hall weaving and in church on February 28!

WINTER 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 February, as listed below, we will offer a "Welcoming Coffee" in the parlor for conversation with the ministers and other church leaders. Then in March 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 March 28. We hope you will join us! If you have any questions, please call Mary Lou Esposito at the church office or Meg Howes, chair of the Membership Committee at 978 369-3158.

"Welcoming Coffee": Getting to Know Us

Sunday, February 28
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, March 7
"Exploring Membership" brunch/meeting
11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the parlor

Sunday, March 28 – Palm Sunday
New members join during the 9:00 a.m. worship service

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Let Everything That Has Breath Praise God

Friday, March 5, 2010, 11:00 a.m.

Trinity Episcopal Church

Followed by a luncheon

This year's service was written by the women of Cameroon.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT LENTEN SERIES

Spiritual Practices:
Alternative Exercise for the Soul

Wednesdays, March 3, 10, 17, 24
7:30 p.m.

Bob Brown will facilitate the exploration of various models of Spiritual practices. We have been able to invite some outstanding experts in the field and hope to expand our hearts and minds as we seek the heart and mind of God through intentional spiritual exercises. Please join us for all or even one of these gatherings.

MARCH 3
The Spiritual Practice of ***Poetry***
Dr. Mark S. Burrows, Ph.D. Professor of the History of Christianity - Andover Newton Theological School. Mark Burrows is a poet, professor, minister and theologian. He has a passion for word play and poetry that lend new meaning to the ways in which we view and communicate with God. Mark will be reading some of his favorite poems and giving us suggestions as to how poetry can be a Spiritual Practice and gateway to the Divine.

MARCH 10
The Spiritual Practice of ***Silence*** –
Guided group meditation. Discussion and Centering Prayer. 20 minutes of silence can be very intimidating to many of us. But when we stop the speeding freight train of life even for a short time, we begin to recognize the life-giving nature of simple relaxation. Come and be refreshed.

MARCH 17
The Spiritual Practice of ***Yoga***
When Harvard Divinity School Graduate, Rev. Mark Longhurst is not ministering to his youth group in Southie, he is teaching Yoga. Mark has found Yoga to be a rich and meaningful spiritual practice. His instruction will be for beginners and experts alike. We will participate in light yoga poses so come ready to gently move and stretch your mind body and soul.

MARCH 24
The Spiritual Practice of ***Labyrinth*** –
a walking meditation. Labyrinths have long been used as meditation and prayer tools. A labyrinth is an ancient symbol that relates to wholeness. It combines the imagery of the circle and the spiral into a meandering but purposeful path. The Labyrinth represents a journey to "the center" and back again out into the world. If you have walked the labyrinth before than you will want to come join us again. If you have never tried this spiritual practice, then come with anticipation of good things.

COME WALK THE LABYRINTH

March 24, 2010

As a special Lenten offering, we will be setting a labyrinth-walking mat in the parish hall for the entire day of March 24th. Come anytime between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. and experience the holy mystery of this ancient spiritual practice of walking meditation. It takes about 20 minutes to an hour to walk the pattern. Instructions will be provided.

A DAY OF PRAYING THE PSALMS

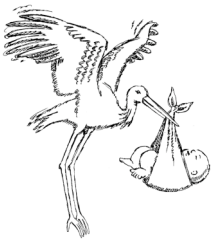
Psalms From the Edges
March 31, 2010 – 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.

The book of Psalms in its entirety reflects the wholeness of our human experience in relationship to God. Many of these poems and prayers bring into crisp focus the lament and struggles that we face in this life. There are many Psalms that cry out to God from the depths of the writer's heart and demand action, justice, restoration and deliverance. This is ground-zero, hold-nothing-back, raw, unfiltered type prayer, and God hears our cry of lament and answers our prayer.

During Holy Week, on Wednesday March 31st we will be gathering together from morning to night to pray these psalms together as a congregation. There will be several organized sessions along with quiet reflective times. More information will follow in the March Newsletter or call Bob Brown at the Church office.

LIFE CHANGES

New Baby



Congratulations to John and Laura Hunt and big sister, Margaux. (Joseph) Spencer Hunt arrived on September 15.

Our sympathy and prayers are with the family of Natalie Lawrence who died on December 24 at age 88. A memorial service will be held in the spring.

Our condolences to Carolyn Thomas and her family. Carolyn's husband, Charlie, died on January 8. Charlie and Carolyn Thomas were active members of TriCon and faithful choir members until their move to Maine in 1991.

The deadline for the March Newsletter is February 15.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

SUNDAY NIGHT YOUTH GROUP
in the Youth Room on the lower level

Sunday, February 7 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
Youth Group

Sunday, February 14
NO Youth Group

Sunday, February 21
NO Youth Group

Sunday, February 28 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
Youth Group

MISSION TRIP
Sunday, February 14 to
Sunday, February 21

WEDNESDAY NIGHT
DISCUSSION GROUP
Every Wednesday from 7:30 – 8:20 p.m. Talk with your YG friends about what is on your mind. All high schoolers are welcome. **NO Discussion Group February 17.**

2009-2010
CONFIRMATION CLASS

Sunday, February 28 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Confirmands
The United Church of Christ and Trinitarian Congregational Church
Read: *Words for the Journey*
Chapter 31, Race and the Church
Chapter 35, Gender

ITEMS OF INTEREST

HOLIDAY GIFT BAG UPDATE

We received over sixty letters of thanks from the inmates of MCI and NCC for their Holiday Gift Bags. Excerpts from a few: "To receive your very caring gift bag on this lonely Christmas, makes hope spring eternal and rejuvenated my faith in good people." "As a 53 year old, first time inmate, with no one to share or communicate with, the holidays are a very lonely time. Yet your gift and the kindness and love of God shown in it has given me a renewed sense of hope and belief." "The handmade card really made my day…….Your group opened my eyes that some people can look past our mistakes." "I would like to thank you for the thought/thinking of me."
Check out the notebook in the library with all the letters. Thank you for your participation.

Many thanks from the entire TriCon congregation to Charity Tremblay and Laura Lindop for decorating the Christmas altar. It was lovely!

OFFERING ENVELOPES

Please pick up your offering envelopes in the parish hall. If you would like to receive envelopes but are unable to pick them up, call the church office and we will make other arrangements for you.

STEPHEN MINISTRY CORNER

Home should be a safe harbor, a place you can always expect to be warm and welcoming, a place you can go to lick your wounds when the world has dealt harshly with you. A home should be a place where people feel free to laugh, hug, and grow.

But for some people, home is a place where they are constantly walking on eggshells to avoid the seemingly random violence of a spouse/partner, a parent, a sibling, or an adult child. As a rule, most victims of domestic violence are women/wives, but men and boys are sometimes victims of domestic violence, as well. Children also fall prey to the wrath of their parents or older siblings. Even seniors living with an adult child can be beaten by that child.

Domestic abuse does not always mean physical violence. It can be mental or emotional actions, like taunting, belittling, trying to control.

As yet, there is no definitive explanation for why some people become violent and abusive. Various conditions may contribute to these actions. Alcoholism and overuse of alcohol often accompany abuse. Some blame job loss or financial difficulties for their inability or unwillingness to control their temper. Many of those who are violent were abused as children. And, of course, we must recognize that we live in a society saturated by violence – on TV, at the movies, in videogames -- and that violence against women is a world-wide phenomenon, from a Yale grad student to the scores of civilian women who are raped and murdered in war zones around the globe.

Regardless of the causes of an individual's violent actions, those who live with such an individual would do well to break out of the cycle of abuse, for their own sake and that of their children. Fortunately, Concord has resources to support those who seek safety. The Concord Police Department has won the Concord-Carlisle Human Rights Council's Climate for Freedom Award for their work with victims of domestic violence. In 1998, the Concord Police Department and the Concord Network for Women's Lives collaborated to form the Domestic Violence Victim Assistance Program (DVVAP).

If you are a victim of domestic violence, DVVAP can help you address all those issues that keep you from stepping out of a violent situation, such as sacrifice in your style of living, anxiety about where you (and your children) will live, a feeling of shame that you are living in such a situation, especially if you've made efforts to "put up a good front" so no one will suspect the truth. DVVAP's toll-free number is 888-991-4639, or you can call one of the Stephen Leaders, Carol Gupta (978 371-0018) or Demi Ayres (978 369-4250). Stephen Ministry can support you as you take those first tentative steps towards safety. All inquiries are strictly confidential.

Please don't delay. Get help today.

CELEBRATION VII, TOGETHER BUILDING BRIDGES

March 12-14, 2010

Join other women from New England as they gather to celebrate the UCC faith in Burlington , VT. You can register by going to uccwomenscelebration.org.

FROM THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE

The library is a cozy place to stop and contemplate, read, or have a private conversation - keep it in mind!
Keep your eyes on the books in the parish hall - they are rotated seasonally and are available to check out, along with the window displays in the library.

We have two new acquisitions that may be of interest: for those of you who missed the last Filipov forum (or want to review it!), there is now a DVD available in the media section of the library. Also for your interest is a new book, "Our Fractured Wholeness". The author, Diana Ventura, is a student at the BU school of divinity. She was born with cerebral palsy, and in this book shares her story. In doing so, she shares what it means to live with and overcome brokenness of all kinds. As she reflects on her own experience and that of others, Diana offers understanding and insight. There is a mystical path through the landscape of suffering, she says, and those who travel it can find God and healing even in the midst of pain and sadness. Readers who join her on this journey of prayer and faith will be better equipped to meet the everyday challenges of living with brokenness with hope, dignity, and true love. Check it out!

TRICON EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Part-time paid position for childcare in our nursery during the 10:00 a.m. service - 18 years of age or older - please contact Carrie O'Brien at 978-369-4837.

MEET THE TRICON DIACONATE

Carolyn Andrews and her husband, Ray, raised their children Lisa and David in the TriCon community. Carolyn says "Serving on the Diaconate has provided a way to give back to the church community. I wasn't sure how I could serve, but found a rich range of possibilities and a niche which fitted me wonderfully."

Isabel Bailey has enjoyed being part of the TriCon community throughout the years and has served on different committees, as well as being involved with the Church School. Now that her children are grown, Isabel enjoys being able to participate in the workings of the church and supporting the worship. Isabel says, "Being active with others in the church supports me and helps me get to know people more. I love the friendships and activities of TriCon."

Laurel Baumer and her family (husband Tom, Ryan (17) and Becca (14) Black) have attended TriCon for 16 years. During her career as a business systems analyst, Laurel has worked at Andersen Consulting, Harvard Business School Publishing, and now at MathWorks in Natick. A native Texan, Laurel enjoys sewing, quilting and reading, and is also a moderator at Pemberley.com, a Jane Austen website.
Laurel says, "I have enjoyed serving on the Diaconate because I like being involved in both the business/activity side of the church, as well as the spiritual. It's very easy at times to become mired in the details and the mundane, so I appreciate being reminded of why we are all here in this church community."

Kate Bird has been a member of the church for close to 30 years. Kate and her husband, Sam, were married at TriCon and both of their "20 something" children were baptised and confirmed in this church. Kate says she is the last in her family to serve on the Diaconate. Both girls were Youth Deacons and Sam served two terms as a Deacon. Their experiences influenced Kate's decision to serve. They all became intimately involved with the leadership and had a direct say in our constantly evolving and meaningful worship services. Kate has felt the power and the responsibility of being a Congregationalist and has developed relationships with quite a diverse group of fellow deacons bringing many different worship backgrounds, traditions, history and wisdom to the table each month, all informing and adding to make our church unique and relevant.

Bill Cooley is an active duty Air Force colonel living on Hanscom Air Force Base. Bill and his wife Janet have 3 daughters: Kelly and husband Richard, live in Texas with 1 year old, Owen; Katherine is in VA attending Law School; and Rachel is a Junior at Bedford HS. Bill serves on the Diaconate because 1) he was asked, 2) the rigorous training and discipline demanded of the Diaconate leverage his military training, 3) he enjoys washing dishes, and 4) as a life-long member of the Disciples of Christ (his father was a minister in the DoC), the Diaconate provides a perfect cover for his clandestine mission to steal the Congregationalist trade secrets.

Carol Gupta who was raised as a Missouri Synod Lutheran, joined TriCon approximately 20 years ago, after having experienced the Congregational model at Old South Church in Boston. She has served on the Mission, Strategic Planning Implementation, and Interim Associate Minister Search Committees, and has taught Church School. She is also one of the leaders of Stephen Ministry in our church. Carol accepted the invitation to become a Deacon because she believes that it is incumbent on each of us to take on leadership roles in the church.

Nancy Haynes is a lifelong Concordian and participant in TriCon life. She has fond Church School and Youth Group memories and bonds. When she is not working on marketing issues for a local software company or volunteering Nancy can be found working out at Gold's gym. "I serve on the Diaconate because I consider it an honor to be asked and to serve my faith community in this manner. I also serve for a selfish reason as it enhances and furthers my spiritual journey and my connection to my fellow congregants."

Laura Lindop and her husband, Chris, joined TriCon 24 years ago. Laura says, "When the opportunity to join the Diaconate was presented to me it gave me the chance to take an important role in the spiritual life of this Community which has meant so much to me and my family. It is a small way of giving back."

Jim Richards describes himself as simply a microbiologist/virologist who lost his way and for the last 25 years has been engaged in biopharma businesses. Jim and his wife, Sue, were married at Grace Church in Framingham in 1988. Shortly after that Jim joined the Diaconate at Grace and served as a deacon and head deacon for eight years. The Richards moved to Sudbury and later joined TriCon, most significantly for the youth Christian Education program for their children, Derek and Kristin. Jim enjoyed the time he spent on the TriCon Membership committee but business and family pressures forced him to resign from that committee. Now that Jim and Sue's children are in college, Jim is happy to once again be able to serve TriCon as a member of the Diaconate. Jim sees the Diaconate as a genuine "service" organization from assisting the ministry to serving our fellow parishioners.

George J. "Skip" Saideh, Jr. lives in Concord with his wife, Joanne Saideh, son, Nathaniel, a freshman at Purdue University, and daughter, Jacqueline, a sophomore at Concord Carlisle High School. Skip serves on the Diaconate to give back to a community that has been an important part of his family's life since moving to Concord in 1992.

Russell Sanna was a member of a Congregational Church in a small town in Wyoming when he was growing up. It was a vibrant part of the community. The Church was a very "centering" force in his life, always present. Through the Diaconate, Russell has come to experience TriCon as a centering force at a community level and the larger body of churches as a centering force for societies throughout the world. Russell says, "Our oldest son is gay and during his adolescence he experienced TriCon and its open and affirming beliefs and values as a solid anchoring base outside of our family. My service on the Diaconate is, in part, "giving back" for the gifts TriCon has given to our son. I hope that the work we do generates comfort and growth for many others."

Cynthia Schweppe grew up in a large stone inner city Congregational Church with gorgeous stained glass windows which taught her the Bible stories. Cynthia says she has questioned her faith several times. "Did I have any and if I did, what was it? I always find that the Statement of Faith of the UCC most closely resembles mine." This is the third time Cynthia has served on the Diaconate, in addition to having served on and chaired both the Mission and the Stewardship Committees. Cynthis feels the Diaconate is the one committee "whose work reflects our everyday lives. We struggle with the tension between the nitty-gritty of our tasks and the need for engaging in our spiritual growth. It is a joy to engage in that struggle with other members of our congregation."

Chuck Stevenson joined TriCon shortly after moving to Concord in 1980. He became a choir member and continues that contribution to the life of the church to this day. Chuck was first a member of the Diaconate in the 1980's and in the mid-nineties he served as chair. In addition to several terms on the Diaconate, Chuck has also been on the MBA Committee on Ministry. Chuck and his family have long considered the TriCon church community to be their extended family and serving on the Diaconate is one small way to contribute to the continued health of this family.

Phil Swain and his family began attending TriCon 12 years ago. Phil is an attorney in Boston, and his wife, Roseanne, is an elementary school teacher in Concord. Their daughter, Kimberly, is a freshman at UCLA, and Jennifer is a senior at Concord Carlisle High School. Phil joined the Diaconate because he wanted to become involved in the spiritual organization of the church, not just the serving of communion on the first Sunday of the month, but the entire worship experience, including the arrangement of special services and other worship related events, as well as nuts and bolts tasks like the scheduling of ushers for the service each week (with which he has been very involved).

Jane Turner Michael became a member of the Trinitarian Congregational Church shortly after moving to Concord with her family in 1989. She taught many years of Church School, served on the Christian Education Committee, and is presently serving her second term on the Diaconate. Jane's three children, Elyssa, Adam and Christopher, now all in college, "grew up" in this church. Jane firmly believes that "it takes a village to raise a child." She became a Deacon to continue to learn in the Christian faith and to serve her family's "village" in sincere gratitude. Jane works in Alumni Relations at Harvard Business School.

Earl Van Horn has chaired the Stewardship Committee, helped start the Caring Connection, and served on the Diaconate in the past. For more than 10 years his TriCon participation has consisted primarily of singing in the choir. To increase his involvement at TriCon he decided to rejoin the Diaconate because of his interest in the spiritual and worship activities of the church.

Micki Van Horn began her participation at TriCon by singing in the Choir with her husband, Earl, and has been participating with the knitting group by knitting at home and sending in the completed items for the City Mission Society. She joined the Diaconate as a way to further contribute to the TriCon community and as a way to meet more of the TriCon family.

Jerry Vigneron grew up in Concord and is a long-time member of TriCon. He is the principal in a management consulting firm, located in Concord and has served several terms as the church's treasurer and on the search committee that brought John Lombard to TriCon. Jerry has also served as assistant treasurer and on the membership committee. He is an active member of the Concord Independent Battery Association and was a member of Concord's Zoning Board of Appeals for several terms. Jerry has two children: Peter is a journalist and Hannah a junior in college now studying in London. "Serving on the Diaconate has proved very rewarding spiritually and also distinctly different from the administrative assignments I've had at TriCon"

Elise Woodward is in her second term on the Diaconate, serving as Chair. She has been a member of this church since she and her husband, Alan, moved to Concord in the early 1980's. They have two grown children. Elise works as an architect and was elected to the Board of Selectman in Concord in March 2009. "The Diaconate provides an opportunity to participate in building community at TriCon -- especially the spiritual community that enriches my understanding of life's events. The committee's focus on the spiritual life of our church is a constant reminder to be mindful of the opportunities I have each day to connect spiritually with the individuals I meet."

Chris Zamore who is originally from Boothbay Harbor, ME, teaches English at Belmont Hill School and also coaches skiing and sailing. His wife, Alice, teaches at Belmont Day School. They have lived in Concord for eighteen years during which time their son Ben, now a junior at USC, attended Church School and Youth Group. Chris joined the Diaconate after previously serving as a Church School teacher, Confirmation Mentor, and, eventually, as a Chair of the Christian Education Committee. On the Diaconate he helps with the Confirmation program and the Filipov Forum, two programs which appeal to his long term interest in education.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

WARMING HEARTS WEEKEND

The Concord Clergy-Laity Group invites special donations to assist Concord's families in need of a little warmth. Gifts will be distributed according to need in consultation with the town's Social Service Coordinator. Please share your generous spirit in worship on February 14.

CREATING A BOLD, NEW FUTURE

Awakening the Dreamer,
Changing the Dream Symposium –
Saturday, February 27, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
See the bulletin board in the church reception office for more information

VOICES OF FAITH

For over a week we have been deluged with heart-wrenching images and voices of the Haitian people, both at ground zero of the 7.0 earthquake in the western hemisphere's poorest country, as well as in the faces and eyes of relatives in our own metropolitan Boston area who have waited frantically, fearfully, and anxiously to learn the fate of loved ones in their native land. In a world which at times seems dominated by terrorism borne of extremists bent on the destruction of innocent people, the massive earthquake in Haiti reveals and represents a frightening view of a different sort of terrorism -- the relentless suffering of an already desperately poor people awash in despair and battling daily a sense of hopelessness. For many of us of faith, whatever that faith may be, the central questions emerging from theodicy raise their challenging and probing head. How can a good and omnipotent God allow such tragedy and suffering to happen? Why do bad things happen to good people? Why do those who sometimes appear to suffer the most seem "rewarded" with yet more pain, struggle, and strife? These are always some of the disturbing questions of faith, especially in the face of overwhelming tragedy and unmerited suffering. While the answers may prove elusive at best and unsatisfying or incomprehensible at worst, they challenge us to look for something more fundamental, far deeper, more accessible, and, perhaps, even more meaningful, important, essential, and evident. In fact, the question which may lead us to a more helpful place might well be, "Where is God in all of this?"

To the doubters, skeptics, and those of little or no faith the current humanitarian disaster in Haiti could be but one more example of a world where God, if there is one, is amazingly absent. Even to the faithful, a tragedy of such magnitude may reveal cracks in an otherwise solid belief system. But to the one who wants to search for God in the midst of the current chaos and devastation in the lives of our global neighbors to the south and our metropolitan Haitian neighbors nearby, God may well be readily apparent.

For example, God is present in the shared pain, concern, love, and care of a humanity which holds in common with every human being certain emotions, passions, and feelings as well as hopes, dreams, and heartaches.

God is present in and through prayer, binding the world's people together as one and enabling prayer's empowering agency to strengthen, direct, and support every good word and action on behalf of a suffering people.

God is present in pricking the conscience of human beings everywhere, summoning all to a renewed sense of liberating justice bathed in attitudes and actions marked by kindness and compassion.

God is present in every single act of charity, of unconditional giving of time, resources, and talent in service to the most deeply hurting and suffering of God's people.

God is present whenever people stand in solidarity with sisters and brothers anywhere who suffer unnecessarily from injustice, human sinfulness, and all that diminishes the innate worth, dignity, and value of every human being.

God is present as the essential good in the midst of all that is bad, sad, awful, evil, and overwhelming, whereby hope is tendered in a helping hand, an open heart, and a selfless spirit.

God is present wherever courageous individuals boldly confront unjust and unfair laws, structures, circumstances, and situations, seeking a just society and fulfilled life for all where essential needs are met and responsibility for the least, lost, and loneliest among us is shared for the common good and benefit of all.

God is present as love, pure and simple. Wherever love is and however it gets engaged, expressed, and enacted, there, for those with their senses attuned to Divinity at work in our world, God will surely be present.

Admittedly, it may be extremely hard for some to see or discern God at work in the current crisis and catastrophe unfolding in Haiti. After all, one could well ask, "How much worse could it get for Haitians who have already suffered so much?" Even I have my moments when the God in whom I personally believe and deeply trust is more concealed than revealed. But even if I were to doubt the reality of God and fail to know, experience, or see God's presence in the current time, surely I know in the core of my being the incredible blessings I enjoy, the abiding good of which I am capable, and the moral imperative of putting all that in service to the greater good of a needy, suffering, and hurting people. In doing so, perhaps others might see, feel, and experience God's presence even if, in the moment, it should elude me or those around me.

John Lombard

How Faith Communities Can Help End Homelessness: A New Vision

Sixth Annual Forum on Family Homelessness

Sunday, February 28, 2010, 3:00-5:00 PM

First Parish in Concord, 20 Lexington Rd., Concord.

Sponsors: **Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness and Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries.**
Co-sponsors: **Episcopal City Mission and UU Mass Action Network.**

The crisis in family homelessness is escalating rapidly. Every night in Massachusetts, 2,000 homeless families are in shelters and more than 1,000 stay in motels. Thousands more are doubled or tripled up in others' apartments, moving from one location to another.

Hear the Vision **for a new system, where shelters are used only for emergency transitions and everyone has a permanent place to live.**

See How that Vision **is being implemented despite crushing budget cuts.**

Learn How Congregations & Congregants **can become involved in programs to help end homelessness.**

Keynote Speaker:

Rev. Liz Walker

GUEST SPEAKERS:

Elizabeth Curtis, **Executive Director, Mass. Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness**
Mary Doyle, **Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership / MetroBoston Regional Network**
State legislators **from our area districts will comment on the issues.**

***Goals and progress of Mass. Regional Programs for ending homelessness*:** Elizabeth Curtis will describe the goals of the eight Mass. ICHH regional network programs and their progress in developing ways to end homelessness. Mary Doyle will cover the specific programs for ending homelessness of the MetroBoston (inner western suburbs) Network. Both speakers will focus on ways our congregations and congregants can become involved in these programs and help to end homelessness.

For more information about the Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness, contact Carl Miller, Coordinator, at NormanCMiller@comcast.net or 978-369-3755; visit the Advocacy Network & CMM on line - www.coopmet.org.