

The Newsletter

Trinitarian Congregational Church
54 Walden Street
Concord, MA 01742

978 369-4837, Fax 978 287-0406
www.triconchurch.org
triconchurch@aol.com



April 2010

The Pastoral Perspective

It is easy to lose sight of Easter's central message amidst the seasonal secular trappings which, admittedly, hint at some sense of newness, birth, or rebirth. Colored eggs, chocolate bunnies, new clothes, Easter lilies, and the "springtime" cycle of life certainly suggest new life. But Easter's profound mystery and miracle easily transcend such earthly delights by the Resurrection's incomprehensible claim: Jesus has risen from the dead, and now everything is different!

Imagine, if you will, what it must have been like for those earliest followers of Jesus to have discovered in the empty tomb and along the Emmaus Road and elsewhere that God had decisively entered into life in the Resurrection, acted definitively to reverse the sinful attitudes and actions of a wayward people, and changed forever the essential rules by which humans were to engage one another, live their lives, and redeem the world. How incredible it must have been for that first tiny band of followers to discover the fulfillment of all the promises God had made to their people over the centuries and then to have spread the Good News of God's unconditional love to the furthest corners of the known world. The apostles' announcement of a new era unsettled their friends and scandalized their oppressors; that same message continues today to challenge even the most faithful believer as well as the tentative seeker among us.



Easter is fundamentally about being surprised by hope, transformed in our hearts, and living as though God is among us, making everything new.

Joy and peace,

APRIL WORSHIP

April 4 EASTER	Service at 9:00	Rev. Dr. John Lombard preaching
	Service at 11:00	at both services
April 11	Service at 8:30	Prayer and Holy Communion
COMMUNION	Service at 10:00	Rev. Elizabeth Walker preaching
April 18	Service at 8:30	Prayer and Holy Communion
	Service at 10:00	Robert Brown preaching
April 25	Service at 8:30	Prayer and Holy Communion
	Service at 10:00	U Ba Win preaching

Rev. Elizabeth Walker will be our guest preacher on Communion Sunday, April 11. A former television anchor, Rev. Walker is a graduate of Harvard Divinity School and now focuses on international education and women's issues, as well as advocating for the homeless and survivors of domestic violence. She is on the ministerial staff of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Jamaica Plain, where she works with young people and is the founder and principal of The Walker Group LLC, Communications Specialists.

SPECIAL EASTER MUSIC EVENT

Renowned improvisational pianist, **Jacqueline Schwab**, will be our guest musician on Easter. Between the services she will present an informal concert, beginning at 10:30 a.m. Known for her colorful and expressive style, Jacqueline was chosen by Ken Burns to be the pianist in his numerous PBS documentaries. She has played at the White House for President Clinton and at the Smithsonian for its exhibition on the Presidency. She lives on Cape Cod with her husband, minister of the UU Meeting House of Chatham.



Holy Week Worship

Maundy Thursday, April 1, 8:00 p.m. Tenebrae Service

Choral music will include "When Jesus Wept" by William Billings, the German chorale "Ah, Holy Jesus", and the spiritual "Were You There".

Good Friday Service, April 2 at noon in the Sanctuary

Laura Gouillart and Mary Lou Esposito will sing excerpts from Pergolesi's "Stabat Mater" followed by a showing of the film, "The Face: Jesus in Art," in the church parlor

EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 4

Sunrise Service 6:30 a.m. at the North Bridge

Hymns will be led by trumpeter Chuck Stevenson
A continental breakfast will be served at the church following this service.

Traditional Easter Services

9:00 and 11:00 a.m.

Rev. Dr. John Lombard and Robert Brown officiating
The Senior Choir will sing anthems by Boston composers, William Billings (1746-1800) and Alice Parker (b. 1925). A tanner by trade, Billings was a self-taught musician who can be considered America's first "home-grown" composer. "On Easter Morn" is a Greek Orthodox Hymn set to a sprightly Scottish folk melody by Alice Parker and Robert Shaw. Ms. Parker resides on her family farm in Hawley, MA.

EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES



Spiritual Enrichment

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

Monday, April 5 Easter Monday
"Resurrection Joy"
Margaret Crockett, facilitator

Monday, April 12
"Building a Relationship with
Your Doctor"
Dr. Alan Woodward, facilitator

Monday, April 19 NO Meeting

Monday, April 26
"Embracing Love"
Deana Kohl, facilitator

SAVE THE DATE

Monday, May 3
Bob Brown will be with us.



KIDS SPRING & SUMMER CLOTHES for Merrimack House April 11 through May 9

Clothes may be left in the marked boxes in the parish hall. Shirts, shorts, pants, shoes and light jackets for children and youth, girls' summer dresses and baby things, too, are needed for this family shelter in Lowell (**no** winter clothes). Items will be gratefully received by families living there now, and those moving in later this spring and summer.

QUESTIONS ABOUT MEMBERSHIP?

Did you know? Associate Membership is open to those who apply and fulfill the Covenant of Membership, i.e.:

1. Affirm faith in God as known in Jesus Christ,
2. Share regularly in the worship of God,
3. Enlist in the work of the congregation as it serves the community and the world,
4. Contribute to the church's work and benevolences.

Applications for associate membership are approved by vote of the Diaconate. We offer "associate member" status for those who for various reasons may not want to sever their relationship with a home or family church.

If you have any membership questions, call Mary Lou Esposito at the church office or Meg Howes, Chair of the Membership Committee, at 978 369-3158.

There will be "Welcoming Coffees" for prospective members on April 11 and May 2 with a joining to be held in June.

RETIRED MEN'S GROUP

The Retired Men's Group will meet for lunch on Wednesday April 14, at noon. The speaker will be Hugh Fortmiller who will talk about the history of Middlesex School. 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 April 14, please call Robert Nelson (978 369-3105) or Charles Davis (978 369-6250) by April 10. The cost of the lunch is \$8.00.



This month, we will again focus on our relationship with the people of Myanmar (Burma) and specifically on the Kanpetlet Orphanage where we have pledged to offer support and assistance to the very needy children served there. Church members Jeannette and Art Taylor visited the orphanage this winter and share some of their observations below.

Kanpetlet Orphanage is nestled on the edge of a steep slope in the high rugged mountain range of the Chin Hills in the Northwestern part of Burma. The dusty dirt road up to Kanpetlet twists and turns as it rises 5,000 feet, passing isolated huts, precariously perched, and small clusters of shop-houses, where villagers sell their scarce locally grown vegetables, such as carrots, onions, and mustard greens.

The orphanage is a short distance from the small village of Kanpetlet. The children walk to the elementary school located in the village and a small health clinic provides some rudimentary first aid. They have few basic school supplies or funds to deal with more complicated medical needs.

Fifty-four children reside at the orphanage - 35 boys and 19 girls, ages 1-18. They are clean, well cared for and full of energy. The older children are very caring of the younger ones, whether it is mealtime, bed time, or playing simple games in the courtyard. On 20 acres of land, Kanpetlet now has girls' and boys' dormitories and a kitchen/dining hut. They raise crops for food to supplement their rice diet.

As Mother's Day approaches, we invite you to share your love with these children by making a donation, perhaps in honor or in memory of your mother or another special woman in your life. Funds will be sent to the orphanage where they will be used to purchase school kits, seeds, chickens, blankets and other basic supplies and provide for care in medical emergencies. Contributions may be made out to the church and marked "Burma". We will dedicate the gifts on Mother's Day. Gift cards are available in the parish hall or church office if you would like to notify someone that you have made a gift in their honor.

Note these opportunities to hear more about Burma and about the Kanpetlet Home:

Sunday, April 25th, U Ba Win, a Burmese native, now living in Massachusetts, who makes frequent trips to Burma and to Kanpetlet will preach during the service and also share his experiences and knowledge of the conditions there at an after-church forum.

Sunday, May 2, at a forum following the 10am service, **Jeannette and Art Taylor** will show slides of their trip to Kanpetlet and talk about their recent visit there.

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:

- 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.

ANNUAL FOOD DRIVE FOR OPEN TABLE through the month of April

Our annual food drive is collecting non-perishable food items for hungry families. In these difficult economic times the need is great. Please consider donating food items for a family of four, supplying their nutritional needs for one day. Some items that there are never enough of are: cereal, canned spaghetti sauce, jelly, canned fruit, salad dressing, coffee, tea, and canned protein such as tuna, stew, chicken or hash. (Please check the expiration date on containers.)

KNITTING GROUP

"The Knitwits" will meet on Wednesday, April 28 at noon. Bring your lunch and your knitting. Everyone is welcome, from beginner to expert.



SAVE THE DATE

Annual Birthday Party for Those over 80
Thursday, May 6th at noon

If you will be 80 or over this year, watch the mail for your invitation. If you don't receive an invitation and you would like to come to the party, please call the church office.

FROM THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Join the Library Committee following the service on Sunday, May 16 for a discussion of the all-church book read, "Our Fractured Wholeness." Author Diana Ventura, a Ph.D. student in theology at the BU School of Theology who was born with cerebral palsy, shares what it means to live with and overcome brokenness of all kinds. As the author states: *Brokenness teaches us the truth by keeping our feet planted firmly on the ground. It releases us from the lie that our culture would have us believe: that we can – and should – be invincible, unstoppable, completely and unquestionably perfect and sound in every respect.*

Books are available for purchase from the church office; there is also a copy available in the church library.

Have You Read *THE SHACK*?

The Shack is a modern day publishing phenomenon. Former janitor and first time author, William P. Young, self published a fictional account of his real life journey to confront evil and find redemption. He first printed the story for a few family members. Word got out and *The Shack* caught fire. To date the book has been on the New York Times bestseller list for nearly a year and sold millions of copies. Maybe someone even gave you a copy.

In the book, after the horrible abduction and murder of his young daughter, the protagonist, Mack, is invited to spend the weekend with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. It sounds hokey but it's not. During this mystical face-to-face

experience, Mack's ideas of the Trinity, religion, Christianity, forgiveness, justice and interpersonal relationships are not only challenged but shattered and then beautifully reconstructed and redefined. It is a whirlwind of a ride.

Very few people read this story and are unaffected. Some are transformed themselves with a new understanding of God, while others find it offensive, simplistic and even heretical.

We felt like we might want to discuss this book together in order to explore our concept of God, forgiveness, the Trinity and ideas of Jesus. Join Bob Brown, Carrie O'Brien and other TriCon folks on **Wednesday May 19th from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**, in the parlor. We are very interested in what you have to say.

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, June 5, 2010 – 7:30 p.m.



The Boston Gay Men's Chorus

will perform at TriCon in a benefit performance for the Sharing Foundation

The Gay Men's Chorus has won critical acclaim as one of the premiere musical groups in New England. Don't miss this opportunity to enjoy an evening of fine music while supporting a good cause.

Tickets, which are \$20 for adults and \$15 for seniors and students, are available in the church office, the Concord Bookshop, and Debra's Natural Gourmet. You may also purchase tickets by sending a check made out to The Sharing Foundation, with a self-addressed, stamped envelope, to P.O. Box 600, Concord, MA 01742.

The Sharing Foundation (TSF) founded by Dr. Nancy Hendrie is dedicated to helping to meet the physical, emotional and medical needs of orphaned and seriously disadvantaged children in Cambodia. TSF runs an orphanage, Montessori-based preschool and Khmer literacy and English language programs, provides high school and college sponsorships, and runs a farming cooperative, computer school and sewing school.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

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



Sunday, April 4 No Youth Group
Happy Easter!

Sunday, April 11
Youth Group 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 18 No Youth Group
Have a great vacation!

Sunday, April 25 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
Youth Group

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DISCUSSION GROUP

Remember, Discussion Group meets every Wednesday from 7:30 – 8:30 p.m. in the Youth Room. Come and have your say. All are welcome.

2009-2010

CONFIRMATION CLASS

Maundy Thursday
Thursday, April 1 8:00 p.m.
Confirmands and Mentors
attend the service of worship together at the church

Saturday, May 1 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Final Retreat at Grotonwood
Read: *Words for the Journey*
Chapter 21, Vocation
Chapter 24, God's Call to You
Chapters 38 & 39,
Why I am a Christian

Monday, May 10 7:00 p.m.
Faith Statement Sharing with Mentors
Meet in the Sanctuary for a special evening of sharing.

CONFIRMATION SUNDAY

Sunday, May 23 9:00 a.m.
Brunch for Confirmands, Mentors and parents hosted by the Deacons
Sunday, May 23 10:00 a.m.
Service of Worship and Rite of Confirmation

LIFE CHANGES

New Babies

We welcome Matthew Andrew Zou Kohl, born on March 1 to Steven and Windy Kohl. Beaming grandparents are John and Deana Kohl.



Sincere sympathy to Betty Whipple and her family. Betty's husband, Bob died in FL on February 20. Betty and Bob were long time TriCon members before moving to Cape Cod and then to FL.

Emily Brown has died on Cape Cod. Many years ago, Emily was a secretary at TriCon and she and her husband, Calvin, were very involved with the church, particularly the youth group. Our condolences to her family.

Our thoughts are with the family of our member, Lois Mercer, who died on March 15 at age 97. Services will be held in the spring.

Our prayers are with Linda Knight and her family. Linda's mother, Muriel Knight, died on March 17 at age 96. Services will be private.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Thank You to
Marsha Martin
 & the
Cast

Sincere thanks to Marsha Martin and all of the cast members, of the "Weaving Service" on February 28. The service was a spiritually uplifting experience for everyone who attended it.



MISSION TRIP REFLECTION

Editor's Note: The reflection below was presented at the Mission Trip worship service on March 14 by participant, Kevin Delehey.

"My trip to Puerto Rico was absolutely amazing. On our trip, we went to beautiful beaches, slept in a rain forest, and contributed to the construction of numerous homes that will help the residents escape from poverty. Although I enjoyed many great experiences while in Puerto Rico, the most precious aspect of the trip was the realization of life that I brought back to Concord with me. I came to realize that shelter, one of the three essential elements of survival, may be taken for granted here in Concord....

When I got to my work site, there was already significant work done to contribute to the concrete house. The molds were already all set up, all of the support beams were filled with concrete and rebar, and half of the floor was already filled in with concrete. Due to the hard work and

generosity of this congregation, myself and seven others from TriCon were able to be at the work site. Without the effort made by this church to fund raise such a trip, none of our work would have even been possible.

Along with the eight of us building the house, we were joined by a few locals, and a paid staff member, all of whom worked on this house for four days. All of us mixed cement, tied rebar, moved cinderblock, and constructed walls. The work was exhausting. After four days of backbreaking labor we had completed the concrete floor, constructed all of the walls and filled in the upper support beams. But the house was still not complete – there were no rafters, no windows, no doors and no roof. So many people had contributed to the construction of the house and yet it still wasn't complete. Our entire congregation had worked so hard to plan and fund raise our trip, other groups had worked on the house before we did, and the eight and a few locals worked extremely hard for four straight days. As we departed on the last day from the partially completed house, the smiles that lay upon the faces of those we helped reminded me that the construction that our group did was outstandingly important, as the house we worked on would have been impossible for a small family to construct, and yet absolutely necessary for the well being of that family....

One day a long time from now I may forget the rain forest of Puerto Rico, I may forget the beautiful beaches we played on or I may forget the pristine watering holes we swam in every afternoon. But I will never forget the lesson that I learned about the necessity, yet the difficulty, of constructing a shelter.

**The deadline for the
 May Newsletter
 is April 15.**

POETRY MOMENT



Jim Leahy, husband of our member Diane Leahy, and himself a TriCon worshiper, is hosting a weekly poetry show on CCTV's Channel 8.

Viewers may tune in on Wednesday evenings at 5:30 or they may catch repeats of the show at random times each week. *Poetry Moment* features an eclectic blend of classic, modern, romantic, comic, and philosophical poems.



STEPHEN MINISTRY CORNER

This month, I have decided to let Charles Ringma and Henry Nouwen, both Christian writers and professors, make the case for Stephen Ministry. The essay below is from Reflection 45 of Charles Ringma's *Dare to Journey with Henri Nouwen*.

The Challenge of a Friend

"The rhythm of our inner life is the movement from where we are, with our fears, needs and busyness, to the place of quietness, unburdening, and renewal. And from this place of transformation, we can begin to move to reengage our world with newfound hope and courage.

...While we need to take responsibility for our own spiritual development and for our own lives, this does not mean that we need to be without companions on the road." Nouwen admits: 'I now realize that I need regular contact with a friend who keeps me close to Jesus and continues to call me to faithfulness.'

Such a friend cannot do the journeying for us. Such a friend cannot provide ready-made answers. Such a friend cannot take away the struggle and cannot take away the pain or difficulty.

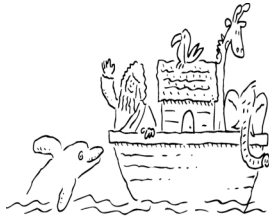
There is a road that we alone must walk. Decisions that we must make. Actions that we must perform. Pain that we must bear. Transformation that we must experience. Peace that we must imbibe. But a friend who journeys with us can challenge us to faithfulness and authenticity. Such a friend can assist to keep us honest. Such a friend can encourage us to continue to make the hard decisions. The challenge such a friend offers is the challenge to continue to choose life.

"Such a friend" is the essence of Stephen Ministry.

Carol Gupta

CAMBODIAN BAGS

If you are looking for gifts for graduation, Mother's Day, teachers, etc., keep in mind that the church office has a selection of bags made by the women of Cambodia. The bags are reasonably priced and all proceeds go to the Sharing Foundation which helps meet the physical, emotional, educational and medical needs of orphaned and seriously disadvantaged children in Cambodia.



BASEMENT

If you were by the church in mid-March, you saw the hose snaking out the basement window and water streaming down the drive, when, like so many others, the church had problems with water in the basement during the unusually heavy rains. Fortunately all of the systems put in place since the flooding problems occurred two years ago were operational, but the volume and level of ground water were more than the sumps could handle and resulted in some water settling on the floors in the classrooms and multi-purpose space.

Thanks to the heroic efforts of Hank Haff, Bob Clarke and Bill Stumpf, clean up and mitigation efforts were initiated promptly and we expect damage to be minimal. The Property Committee continues to study the problem and investigate more ways to safeguard for the future.

NEWS FROM MATT DIBATTISTA



We will miss having tenor Matt DiBattista with us for the choir's spring season, but the footlights call! He will sing the role of *Spoletta* in the Opera Colorado production of Puccini's "Tosca" (April 24 - May 2), and *Basilio* in Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro"

for Opera Theatre of St. Louis (May 22 - June 26). Congratulations, Matt!

COMMUNITY EVENTS

PROJECT BREAD'S WALK FOR HUNGER

Sunday, May 2

Starts on the Boston Common, 7 – 9 A.M.

Your hungry neighbors have never needed you more. This is the year to participate in The Walk for Hunger, the country's oldest continual pledge walk and the largest one-day fundraiser to alleviate local hunger. Your support will help provide nutritious meals for those who would otherwise go without, right here in Massachusetts.

Celebrate the spirit of giving by participating in this family tradition. For more information, call 617-723-5000 or visit www.projectbread.org/walk.



GARDENING BOOKS NEEDED

Do you have gardening books you no longer use? The two Concord prisons are starting gardening/landscaping courses to help inmates gain skills they can use once they are released from prison. Books which show garden plans, color schemes, pruning, planting, etc. are much needed for the prison libraries. Please leave these books in the marked box in the parish hall.

How Faith Communities Can Help End Homelessness

Summary of February 28 Forum

Rev. Liz Walker gave a powerful faith based challenge to 200 forum attendees at the 6th annual area forum on the homeless. She urged faith communities to become involved in ending homelessness.

"Moments are where things change. Seize the moment. Take control. The time is ripe for a movement of housing solutions to homelessness."

Elizabeth Curtis, executive director of Mass. Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness (ICHH), told the audience that the new pilot regional network ICHH programs involve housing based solutions to homelessness vs. shelter based solutions to homelessness. The goal of the programs is to help families and individuals find affordable housing and avoid the trauma of a stay in a shelter.

The new regional programs are carried out by an integrated network of regional service providers. One goal is a single phone call from a family or individual in need will lead to a comprehensive package of needed services.

New programs are testing a range of innovative Housing First solutions to ending homelessness. The main program innovations are *prevention, diversion, and early intervention*:

(1) **Prevention** involves use of flexible funds to avoid eviction when a renter is in fiscal crisis. Flexible funds are used for payment of rent, utilities, and health bills. Flexible funds range from a few hundred dollars up to \$2000 whereas shelter costs are much more expensive, \$3000/month for a family.

(2) **Diversion** involves diverting a family to temporary housing as they are about to enter a shelter. Then the family receives all needed services for a year while putting together a financial plan, including employment or training, so they can go to subsidized housing after a year.

(3) **Early intervention** involves screening all welfare or nutritional assistance families at welfare offices or health clinics to identify and counsel at risk families.

These new regional programs have had significant successes in a year. 383 families have been diverted from entering shelters and 4028 families or individuals have been prevented from losing their housing. In addition, 1300 homeless families have received flexible funds, for down payment and first month's rent, so they could move into housing from a shelter.

Finally, forum speakers offered attendees several recommendations on *How Faith Communities Can Help End Homelessness*.

(1) Holding public educational events on homelessness prevention that identify the root causes of homelessness. (2) Suggesting to congregation members or community landlords that they set aside housing units for low income families. (3) Hosting events to raise flexible funds to re-house families.

For more information on homelessness advocacy or how faith communities can help end homelessness, call Carl Miller, Judy Hill, or Deana Kohl. (See workshop flyer in parish hall).



FROM YOUR STEWARDSHIP TEAM

In last month's Newsletter, John's Pastoral Perspective challenged us, as a community of faith, to undertake a six-month long conversation based on twenty questions that he posed for us. The questions are designed to provoke thought as to who we are as a people of God, what we are called to be and how to live out that calling.

In addition to individual conversations and reflections, John asked each committee of the church to set aside some time in their meetings to focus on the questions that relate most directly to their committee's role in the life of our church. With that in mind, the Stewardship Committee identified 5 questions and began a conversation around them at our March meeting.

The questions are:

- What does our congregation accomplish through the financial support that members and friends provide?
- What would motivate you to give to the work of the church?
- What must the church manage to afford, no matter what?
- How can we, individually and collectively, be better stewards with what God has given us?
- What new resources, methods of funding, and approaches to stewardship (time, talent and treasure) should be considered, explored, or developed to support our collective work and witness?

Over the next few Newsletters, we would like to share with you some thoughts on these questions and invite you to consider them and offer feedback to us.

- **What does our congregation accomplish through the financial support that members and friends provide?**

Eighty percent of the church's budget comes directly from gifts, pledges and offerings made by individuals and families who worship in our church. That financial support is basic to all our programs, services and outreach.

Each week we offer services of worship that inspire and feed the soul. Beautiful music, thoughtful sermons and comforting prayers bring us closer to God. Our children are taught the basic tenets of our faith. Our youth are nurtured and challenged to reflect on the needs of others and finding purpose in their lives (who can attend a Mission Trip Sunday service and not leave knowing that we are making a difference in the lives of these young people?)

We maintain a beautiful facility that is not a museum but rather a vehicle to accommodate not only our own activities but to serve as a welcoming resource for community groups and programs. Over 26% of our income is directed to mission efforts, funding agencies that offer on-going support and assistance to address a variety of needs in our community, the country and the world and providing disaster relief and recovery funding where needed.

Through the Caring Connection and Stephen Ministry, we support and care for each other. Coming together in fellowship, we share joys and offer comfort in times of sorrow. It is through the financial support of our members and friends that all this is made possible.



