

Trinity Times

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I used to work in a drug research lab as a Laboratory Animal Technician. My responsibility was the health and wellbeing of our animals. This means that one of the many tasks I had to do was the changing of the animals' bedding. Whether this meant the changing of papers or a corncob bedding, I had to change them regularly for the animals in my care to remain healthy. But I absolutely hated this part of my job because as you can imagine, it was smelly and dirty. I never enjoyed doing it, but I had to do it, even times against my will, because of the pressure laid upon me to take care of the animals. They needed it, but I did not want to do it.

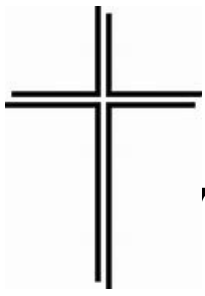
Just as I was compelled to change the animals' bedding every few days, so too is it with the Church. In the Gospel of Matthew, Simon of Cyrene was compelled by the Roman guards in Jerusalem to carry the cross of Jesus from the guard barracks to Golgotha. After having been scourged, Jesus lacked the strength to carry the cross, and one certainly was not going to expect the Roman guards to carry it, so the guards forced another to carry the cross, and they compelled or conscripted Simon to do the task. Simon did not want to, but he was forced and pressured into doing so.

In today's world, we see on the news, or on our phones, force being used by many groups in our world. In the political sphere, politicians use political force on each other and on American citizens to force or compel a desired result. In the sphere of life, armies and police use physical force on each other and on citizens to keep the peace and to enforce laws and policies. In the education sphere, teachers and educators use force upon students to study ideas and courses, taking tests, reading books, and learning concepts. In the sphere of families, parents use force to have children eat their vegetables, clean their rooms, and brush their teeth. Even in the sphere of Church, ministers and congregations use force upon their members and upon the world around them to maintain control and produce results.

But as we see in the story of Simon of Cyrene, force is used by the guards upon Simon. Simon does not use force upon the guards. Simon did not want to carry the cross but was made to and I am sure he did not enjoy it, nor was motivated to do it again. He probably was even relieved after it was over. What ultimately is the result when forced to do something? Force does not create commitment or responsibility. Force creates bitterness and resistance. Being forced to do something does not encourage someone to repeat something, but instead creates a resentment at having to do it and a stubbornness to having to do it again.

What Christ was calling his disciples to do was not being forced to do something or forcing themselves upon others, that was the behavior of the Roman guards. What Jesus was nurturing was the freedom to make the right choice. Jesus was not forcing faith from the people, that was the role of the power people. Jesus was empowering the people to make the right and responsible choice for themselves. Jesus did not come to compel people; Jesus came to give freedom to people. This means that Jesus was going to have to exercise patience. He was going to have to give time and space for people to make the right choice in their lives. Time for people to make the responsible choice and space for them to choose for themselves. But for him to be patient means having to suffer every poor choice and its consequences. To be patient and give people the freedom to make the right choice, means Jesus must carry his cross until, they get it right.

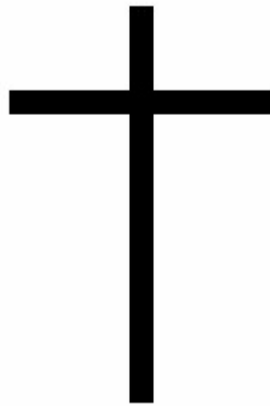
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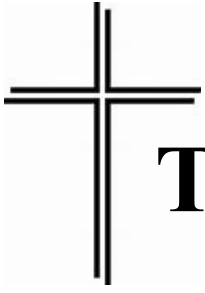


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The Church needs to remember this especially important lesson of Christ. We are called to be a people that gives and empowers freedom instead of forcing our ideas upon others and getting results for Christ. Freedom creates time and space for responsibility and choice. Force removes time and space, taking away choice and responsibility and replaces them with bitterness and resentment. We cannot force someone to make the right choice, do the right thing, or choose Christ, we only create a stubborn or stiff-necked people, when we act like the Roman guards. Rather we need to give all people the freedom to make their own choices, even the wrong ones, and that means becoming a patient people. We cannot force anyone to do anything even in the name of Justice and Love, and if we do, we have become the guards of America instead of disciples of Christ. Which I wonder will you be? Force or freedom? Are you prepared to suffer the poor choices of others to nurture faith or will you force the choice of others to nurture your control? I pray you choose wisely!

In Christ,
Rev. Mark





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A Note From Session



Sisters and Brothers,

Your session met in June and, as is our practice, did not meet in July. It is good to be together again to take care of the business of being church!

As you know, Session approved the opening of Trinity for worship on June 7th. Worship has been faithfully attended by those who feel able to meet.

It was a joy to have Amber Balista and Hobart Shiflet in our pulpit while Rev. Mark was on vacation.

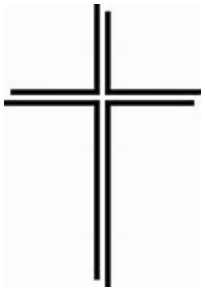
Session would like to thank the Deacons for all they have done to keep in touch with our members.

Session wants to extend a well-deserved Thank You to Rev. Mark for all the work he has done through this trying time. He has shared the word and the love of God through his blogs and his Sunday services. His Bible Study classes are thought provoking and well attended.

Beth Dougherty will be the Elder-on-Call for August.

Blessings,

Mary Belding, Clerk



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A Note From Scrip

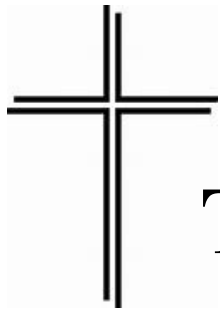
Dear friends,

Scrip cards are available!

If you want Scrip cards, please call 964-6073, text 862-6786, or e-mail mbelding237@gmail.com to place an order. If we have the cards you want, we should be able to get them to you quickly. If we have to order cards, it will take at least a week to receive them.

Blessings and be well,
Mary Belding and Dee Fassett





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Property and Finance

How about that landscaping!

Richardson's Landscaping did a wonderful job!



Recently, a group of Ashtabula Lakeside High School football players representing YO, worked in the church yard removing weeds and beginning to remove the chain link fence. A big thanks to YO and church members Mary Belding, Dee Fassett, Kathy and Dale Fassett, Greg and Pam Bloom, and Beth Dougherty for all their hard work. It sure was a hot day but the time spent with these young men was worth every bit of poison ivy!

Property and Finance is moving forward with certain projects that will benefit the church when we are able to fully open back up. In July, American Electric completed the wiring project in the kitchen. Rags, Brooms, and Mops will be stripping and waxing the floors in the near future.

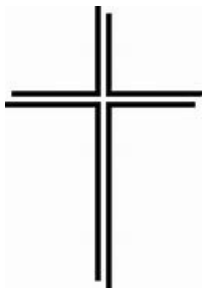
The City of Ashtabula has been charging the church a sewer fee for the property on the corner of Summer Avenue. We have been working with the city to get these charges stopped and Reimburse the church for previous monthly billed amounts. I am happy to say that the church received \$149.45 refund and the sewer charges have been removed from our monthly billing.

We appreciate your giving. Here's what the Apostle Paul had to say about giving:

Each must give as he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever."

2 Corinthians 9:7-9

Blessing to all,
Beth Dougherty



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Community Outreach

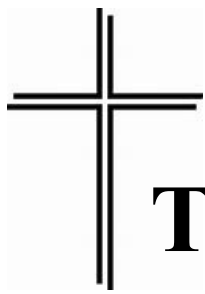
Community Council, Property & Finance and Youth Opportunities football players, Jon Heath #7, Jshon Sanders #6, Randy Valeriano #55, Thomas Allen #20 and Yunion Valeriano #51 teamed up to work on the vacant lot. Other than poison sumac it went very well and much was accomplished considering the extra hot day! Thanks to everyone for a job well done!

Thanks to many Trinity helpers we have received numerous thank you cards for monetary donations and the donations of face masks.

At our June meeting we reviewed our annual calendar to see what we are still able to participate in and stay within the Covid-19 guidelines. Bike and Build had canceled their trip earlier this year. Bethlehem Experience has been canceled indefinitely. The Halloween Party will be considered as the time approaches.

The food and personal items drive for Faith Lutheran is continuing. Thank you to all who have donated and if you haven't yet, you still have time!





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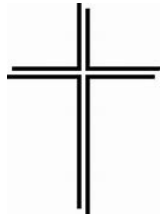
Thank you everyone for the your generous donations for the Food Pantry! The barrel is now located near the front door of the church.

We are still collecting donations!



Thank You





August 2020



Elder on Call: Beth Dougherty 661-1416
Deacon on Call: Shirley Howland 998-6935
Website www.trinityashtabula.org
Email trinitypres04@gmail.com

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Parish Mtg. 10am
2 Communion Worship 10:30am	3	4	5 Adult Study 10am Clean & Free 7pm	6 Adult Study 7pm	7	8 Transformation Mtg. 10am
9 2¢ A Meal Collection Worship 10:30am	10	11	12 Adult Study 10am Property & Finance Mtg. 6:30pm Clean & Free 7pm	13 Adult Study 7pm	14	15
16 Worship 10:30am	17 MRC Mtg. 6:30pm	18	19 Adult Study 10am Community Outreach 6pm Session 7pm Clean & Free 7pm	20 Adult Study 7pm	21	22
23 Worship 10:30am	24	25	26 Adult Study 10am Clean & Free 7pm	27 Adult Study 7pm	28	29
30 Worship 10:30am	31					