

TRINITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
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ASHTABULA OH 44004
www.trinityashtabula.org

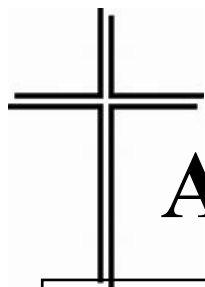
MARCH 2024
NEWSLETTER



“But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us
whole, and by his bruises we are healed. “

Isaiah 53:5





Ashtabula Times

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

My Brothers and Sisters In Christ.

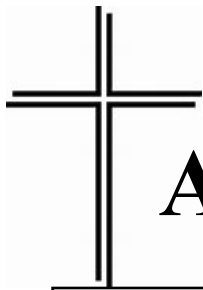
The wind and waves of Lake Erie's storms can drive a boat of any size far off course or even sink them. When a Gale warning sounds by the Weather Service or Coast Guard, boats rush for the safety of a harbor and either dock the boat, tying off on cleats or dropping anchor. By tying off on an immovable dock, the boat ensures that neither the wind nor waves blow them away. By anchoring in a shallow harbor, the boat ensures that neither the wind nor waves will cause them to drift off. By being attached to something greater than the storm, the boat will not be harmed and lost during the "gales of November."

In our story of the Rich Man and Jesus, we are told of a Jewish man who has kept the commandments his entire life but was extremely attached to his possessions. I believe the entire point of this story is to reveal to us the challenges of attempting to be attached to God and something else, in this story, money. Not only would a boat being anchored to two fixed points tear the boat apart, but so would a person being attached to God and Money be pulled apart. How can you serve both? The difficult reality of this story is that the Rich Man was never really attached to God, he was only attached to his stuff and when called by Jesus to give up one to gain the other, he couldn't do so. He was crushed.

Are we not the same? We profess to be attached to God, but we are also attached to our Churches. Our Churches have a legacy, and property, and building, and endowments; and we are quite attached to them. But are they the same thing as being attached to God? Perhaps the real test of who we are really being attached to, lies in the challenge of Christ *to sell everything, and follow me*. If we can't let go of our buildings and follow Christ, who are we really attached to? If we can't let go of our property and our programs and follow Christ, who are we really attached to? If we can't let go of our Church's legacies and the endowments left to them and follow Christ, then who are we really attached to? Like the Rich Man when commanded by Christ to do this, we go away crushed, because we have much, and we are quite attached to them and are not really interested in being attached to God.

The great problem beginning to be revealed is that over the past century, we as churches have invested heavily in the wrong things. We invested in property, but the resources needed to care for that property are scarce. We invested in buildings, but the boiler needs to be replaced, and the wiring needs updated, but we cannot afford them. We have legacies of our parents and grandparents and endowments left to the Church from estates of previous members, but the interest in them alone cannot sustain mission work, they must be used to maintain the *Status Quo*. We have attached ourselves to the Institutional Church instead of God, and the Institutional Church cannot sustain and provide. We have attached ourselves to a worldly, temporary thing that cannot provide Divine, Eternal Things. We have docked or anchored in the wrong thing and have been blown away by the wind and waves of Pandemic and Recession. We have attached ourselves to what we can see and control instead of attaching ourselves to God which we can only see by faith and have no control over but must follow.

Jesus said to him, 'If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' Perhaps these words of Jesus still stand for us today. Perhaps Church was never just about the tangible things of life, perhaps they were just symbols of the Greater, Divine things of God's life given to creation. Sanctuaries were meant to be houses of prayer and connection to God and neighbor; they have become about entertainment and splendor. Communities were meant to be about nurturing people with love and forgiveness; they have



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FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK (CONTINUED)

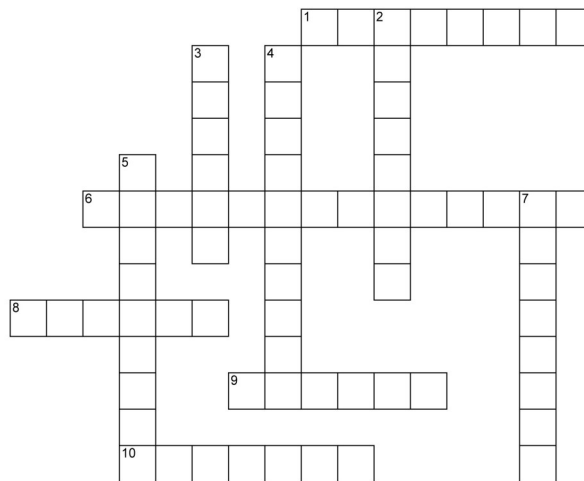
become about suspicion of those different and judgment of the next generations. Churches were meant to be missionaries into the neighborhood with compassion and justice; they have become about escaping from our neighbors and hiding with like-minded people. We have become more attached to our blessings than God's mission in giving those blessings. We want to have Church, not be Church.

Now we can see again why Jesus was crucified and resurrected; to forgive these sins of ours and to re-create a community of disciples attached to God instead of our stuff. This Lent what do we need to let go of; to take hold of Christ and therefore God? The Sunday Morning Show? The Sanctuary to hide in? The Endowment or Golden Calf? The building, the property? Through Christ, we are forgiven and being made new. Will we have any faith to follow him and to obey him or will we just go away grieving, because we are attached to our Church instead of being attached to Him? Will we anchor ourselves in Him and withstand the storms of life or will we attach ourselves to the Institutional Church and be washed away? Choose faith and follow Christ! Choose faith and start truly living! Amen.

In Christ,
Rev. Mark

People in the Bible

Daniel



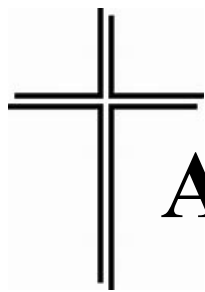
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ACROSS

- 1 1st of three Hebrew boys thrown into the fiery furnace
- 6 Made a golden image to worship that was over ninety feet tall
- 8 Was thrown into the lion's den
- 9 Took Daniel to interpret the king of Babylon's dream
- 10 2nd of three Hebrew boys thrown into the fiery furnace

DOWN

- 2 Master of the king's eunuchs
- 3 Put Daniel in charge of all of his princes and presidents.
- 4 A hand appeared and wrote on his wall
- 5 The people of his kingdom were attacked and taken captive to Babylon
- 7 3rd of three Hebrew boys thrown into the fiery furnace



Ashtabula Times



2024 per capita is \$38.00

REPORT FROM TRINITY'S SESSION

On Wednesday February 21st the Deacons and Elders held their annual joint meeting, dwelling on the letter of Paul to the Romans in chapter 12:1-8- to attempt to discern where we are and where we are headed as leaders of Trinity.

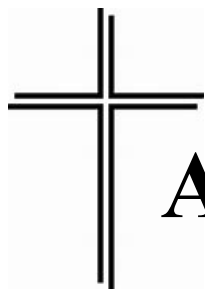
Following that meeting, Session then met. The normal business was carried out, including:

- Approval of minutes of February Session meeting and February Congregational Meeting.
- Approval of the financial reports.
- The clerk's report included:
 - ◊ Thank You notes from Faith Lutheran Church and Homesafe for our assistance. The notes are posted in Fellowship Hall.
 - ◊ We will need to begin work on policies concerning Harassment and Anti-Racism.
- Approval of minister's report which included:
 - ◊ Rev. Mark listed his calls and visits.
 - ◊ Rev. Mong has been serving as Vice-Moderator of the Presbytery. He serves on the Moderators Committee, the Vision Task Fund and the Coordinating Cabinet. Coordinating Cabinet of the Presbytery.
 - ◊ We are trying to re-start the Cluster and talk/discern the future of Presbyterianism in Ashtabula County. There will be a meeting at Trinity on a to-be-determined Saturday.
 - ◊ There will be a Town Hall meeting on February 28th at 6:30 at Trinity. We will share our stories from the last 6 months and discern the next 6 months. Folks from East Side and First will be invited.



Committee reports were approved and included:

- Worship & Music:
 - ◊ March worship will be at Eastside.
 - ◊ The committee (Hobart Shiflet) is working jointly with Eastside's Worship Committee.
- Fellowship
 - ◊ The cookbook is progressing
 - ◊ Help with Lenten suppers will be appreciated.
- Community Outreach:
 - ◊ The committee made a motion that was approved to donate \$1000 to RAM.
 - ◊ We continue to gather goods for Faith Lutheran Food Pantry.
 - ◊ We continue to fill our Blessing Box for Thursdays.
 - ◊ A joint meeting was held November 19th, setting the calendar for 2024
 - ◊ There will be a gathering of women at The Old Mill Winery April 24th at 5pm.
 - ◊ Empty bowls- a fundraiser for Feed Our Vets is scheduled for April 19th at the Ashtabula Arts Center. Contact Becfa Stowell for further information.
 - ◊ A motion to donate \$250 to the Lakeside High School Dragon Theaters toward productions in 2024 was approved.



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REPORT FROM TRINITY'S SESSION (cont.)

- Property and Finance:
 - ◊ The committee presented a motion, which was approved, to contract with Scott Randolph to remove the fallen tree in the lot east of the sanctuary at a cost of \$1100.
- Deacons: Karen Reiter was thanked for attending.
 - ◊ She reported that 32 folks attended the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper. There was a net income of \$135. Rev. Mong pointed out that the main purpose of the dinner is to promote meeting with those who attend.
- Cluster: we need two reps to attend the upcoming meeting.
- Presbytery will hold a hybrid meeting on Monday Marh 18th at 6:30pm.

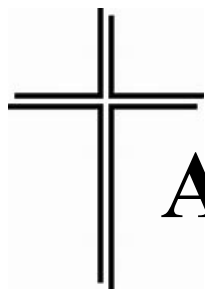
Mary Belding, Clerk of Session

REPORT FROM EASTSIDE'S SESSION

- Deacon's Report:
 - ◊ Sara Wetzel is Moderator of Deacons. Deacon's lists have been updated. Severed the luncheon after the funeral for John Pildner on January 25, 2024 and the luncheon after the funeral for Arnold Brown on February 20, 2024. Their next meeting will be February 8, 2024, at 11:30 AM.
- Session minutes and the Treasurer's Report were approved.
- Safe Sanctuary Policy was approved.
- Plans are currently being made for the Installation of Mark Mong as Installed Pastor at East Side.
- Commissioner to the Cluster is Cathy Burnham, one more is needed.
- Buildings and Grounds:
 - ◊ Our new sign has been ordered. Keith is currently working on separate zones for the heating system.
- Outreach:
 - ◊ Collecting for Presbytery Giving, Ladies Night Out is planned for Aril 24, 2024 at Old Mill Winery.
- Worship and Music:
 - ◊ Communion will be observed on March 4 and Maundy Thursday, March 28, 2024. Approved having the Hand Bells reconditioned.



Cathy Burnham, Clerk of Session



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EASTSIDE'S MEETING SCHEDULE

Combined Choir—Every Sunday, 9am at Eastside in March

Session—Monday, March 11th, 6:30pm

Knitting Group—2nd and 4th Tuesday of Each Month from 10am—12pm

Outreach—March 17th following Worship

Yes You Can Crafting Group—Every Monday 9:30am-Noon



EASTSIDE'S BIRTHDAYS

Kevin Johnson 2nd

Phyllis Willis 4th

Georgi Gerhing-Anders 5th

Don Gill 10th

Joanne Schubert 13th

Tom Pocza 18th

Keith Brown 21st

Tom Headman 23rd

EASTSIDE'S ANNIVERSARIES

Keith & Cheri Brown 24th



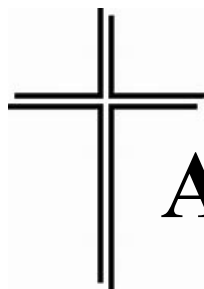
MAUNDY THURSDAY

Our Maundy Thursday Celebration will be at Eastside on Thursday, March 28th. Supper will be served at 6pm in the Dining Room followed by worship in the Sanctuary at 7pm. We will be serving communion. Please join us as we begin "The Three Days" of Holy Week.



John Lockhart, Family of Arnold Brown, Jerry Jeffries, Dale Fassett, Jim and Carolyn Johnston, Marty Perry, Peg LaDu, Family of Carlton Greathouse, Pete and Fran Wilson, Keven and Christina Horrigan, and Barb De Barber

PRAYER LIST



Ashtabula Times

JOINT COMMUNITY OUTREACH

SUNDAY, February 18, 2024

Opening Prayer: Pam Bloom

Discussion and conversation with Rev. Mong had regarding Presbytery Giving donations between East Side and Trinity. It was decided that we will promote together but that the funds collected should stay separate at this time.

Ladies Night will be held Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. at Old Mill Winery, Geneva.

One Great of Hour of Sharing and Minutes for Mission discussed. Edie Makynen will present on March 10th and Sara Wetzel will cover March 24th.



ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
HUNGER • DISASTER • DEVELOPMENT

At the March meeting the HIP Baby Shower will be discussed along with Spice drive.



It was reported that GO Ministries is looking for help 1 day a month on a Monday-Thursday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. to assist at their facility.

Volunteers also needed at the Baptist Church by the Ashtabula Library to serve breakfast Monday-Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. There is a calendar in their kitchen for sign up but will take food items on any day.



Lakeside High School Arts will be hosting "Empty Bowls" Fund Raiser on April 19th. The proceeds will go to "Feed our Vets". More information to follow.

Soups are still being collected in the back of the Sanctuary.

Joint meeting closed with prayer by Edie Makynen.

TRINITY MEETING HELD FOLLOWING:

Ruth Allen asked for assistance in proof reading the cook books and those were distributed.

Discussion was had regarding items for collection not being held in the fellowship area or the parlor. If permitted we would like to move to the rear of the sanctuary for the baby shower items.



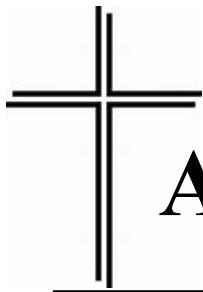
EASTSIDE MEETING HELD FOLLOWING:

Once we know the total amount collected for the Presbyterian Giving Special Offering, we will meet to determine how to disperse the money.



We will approach Session about taking \$500 from the former scholarship funds to donate to Stacy's House operated by Stacy Gancos, a teacher at Lakeside Jr. High. She serves kids who may find themselves homeless for some reason. She provides a safe place, educational guidance, fosters a work ethic by having them perform volunteer work and guides them to find pathways to productive lives beyond graduation. Stacy's House is a non-profit and currently operates as an affiliate of G.O. Ministries.

We will approach Session about taking \$500 from the former scholarship fund to donate to the Warming Center where the homeless are being provided with food, a place to sleep, shower and do laundry and are connected with services to help them better their situations. (continued next page)



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EASTSIDE MEETING HELD FOLLOWING (Cont)

It was decided that we will approach Ricky Turner to see if there is a need for some larger item needed that we could purchase, as opposed to just giving money. If we were to give money, we could give it through the GoFundMe account that has been established to assist with utilities, purchase of cots, and possible funding for some staff. Currently, Jeff and Trish Spring are donating the use of the facility and covering the expenses and Ricky is running the operation with all volunteer help.

SPRING WORSHIP SCHEDULE

March 2024

March 3rd		Eastside
March 10th		Eastside
March 17th		Eastside
March 24th		Eastside
March 28th	Maundy Thursday	Eastside
March 31st	Easter Sunday	Eastside



April 2024

April 7th	Trinity
April 14th	Trinity
April 21st	Trinity
April 28th	Trinity

LENTEN SUPPER/SERVICE



Below is the schedule containing the dates and locations for our Lenten Mid-Week Services.

Thursday, February 22nd at 6pm — Trinity Fellowship Hall

Thursday, February 29th at 6pm — Eastside Dining Room

Thursday, March 7th at 6pm — Trinity Fellowship Hall

Thursday, March 14th at 6pm — Eastside Dining Room

Thursday, March 21st at 6pm — Trinity Fellowship Hall

Dinner consisting of soup, bread, drinks and desserts will begin at 6pm. A brief prayer/worship service will begin following supper. Please join us for a time of food and worship during this Lenten Season.