

# Trinity Times

My Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

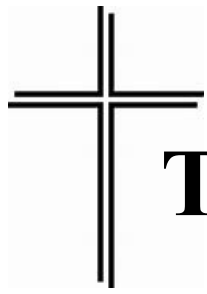
Many of us have over the years seen at least one of the movie series Back-To-The-Future. Marty and Doc speed through time from the 80's to the 50's to 2019 and even back to the 1850's. We see reminders of the golden age of rock-n-roll, flying cars in the future, and the frontiers of the Wild West. Over the course of the three movies, the characters make better choices in the past which have a way of making the future better. Marty's Dad stands up to Biff resulting in a better childhood for Marty and his siblings. Marty learns to not freak out when called a chicken. Doc Brown finds love and a family in the Old West. Who would not want to go back in time and change decisions to make our lives better?

But, wanting to go back is not always the healthiest choice. In the story of Lot, fleeing the destruction of his home, Lot's wife looks back at the city as it is being destroyed presumably lamenting the loss of everything they had. No longer having the prosperity and luxuries of living in the ancient world's Sin City and being stuck in the wilderness with nothing; the feelings of loss and grief overcome her, and she looks back with a longing to go back in time. But in the act of looking back, she turns into a pillar of salt. Turns out that wanting to go back to a town being destroyed for its sinfulness, ends up bringing destruction upon herself. Wanting to go back to a more prosperous and "better" time forfeits the "best" time God is creating. Going back results in never moving forward.

No doubt many in our congregation have reflected upon and desired that we could go back to the way things were before the quarantine. We have ample time on our hands to reflect and consider how things differ now compared to before. No doubt we are overwhelmed with many feelings and thoughts, perhaps even to the point of being unable to discern what day it is, what time it, how many days in quarantine we have been, but one thing we almost all have done is to desire our present to become more like things were before the self-isolation. We could do so much more than we can now: trips, visits, shopping, eating out, and much more. Like Lot's wife we spend our time now looking back toward before and desiring that things now were more like then.

But regrettably that turning back and looking and desiring that things were the way they were are likely to turn us to salt. While we were able to get our hair cut, or shop for leisure instead of need, or have a dinner anywhere but the kitchen or dining room, were things better "then" than "now?" Think and reflect of how things were in our church. We were capable of being an anonymous member. We could come to church, we didn't really need to interact with anyone, we could be entertained for a brief moment, we could skip coffee hour, we could ignore the pleas of the committee for volunteers, we could fulfill our duty for the week. We always had an attitude of scarcity instead of abundance. I heard endlessly about "how we are asking for more money again." We had injustices, poverties, broken relationships, no kids in Sunday School, someone else cleaning the church, and everyone going to Florida. Was it better than now? To turn back and look at how it was, I feel like I am turning to salt.

But what if now is a possibility given from the Grace of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit to move forward; because I am not sure we really want to go back to the ways we were before. Imagine, for a moment, if instead of anonymous members hiding in the Sanctuary and hoping no one asks me to get involved, we were willing to invest in each other. Imagine if we were bound to each other in commitment, just as God has bound us to God.



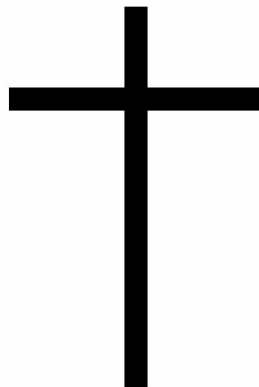
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Imagine if we were to emotionally and financially and physically invest in each other. Not hoping to leave before someone spots us or hoping that we never get asked to serve as a Church officer, even never joining the Church so we can never be asked to do anything. What if we sacrificed for each other, building relationships of mutuality instead of selfishly considering only our wants? What if we participated in each other's lives like the Father and Son participate in each other by the Love of the Holy Spirit?

Well my friends, we would not be an institution, we would be a group of people. We would not be a non-profit organization in the eyes of the State, we would be the body of Christ. But we cannot go back to the way we before the quarantine because we were not yet the body of Christ. We cannot go back to the way we before the quarantine because the Kingdom of God lies ahead of us. We cannot go back to the way we before the quarantine because we are not the same people than before. We cannot go back to the way we before the quarantine because, maybe just maybe, it really was not all that great. But most importantly, we cannot go back to the way we were before the quarantine, because God is making now better than we were before. We cannot go back to the way we before the quarantine because we need to disciple God forward.

So when we can meet together, and at some point we will be able to, will we have the commitment, the self-sacrifice, the love to become the Church as a group of people called and created to assemble for God or will we have yet another excuse to remain an Anonymous Christian, which is really no Christian at all?

In Christ,  
Rev. Mark





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## Online Resources

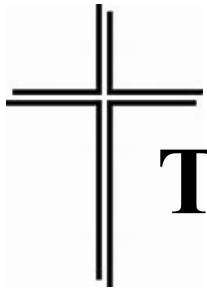
Even though we are unable to worship and serve God face-to-face, we can still do so *in Spirit and truth*, through our online resources. Most weekdays and every Sunday, blogs or worship services are posted on our website. Both articles to read and videos to watch are written and created to help us remain connected to God and each other. To view the articles or to reach the links, in your internet browser go to [www.trinityashtabula.org](http://www.trinityashtabula.org) and click on the Trinity Blog button. You can search through all the articles and links to worship services on YouTube and you just need to click on the links there. If you are having trouble, please contact the Church Office for assistance.



Also, we have a Facebook group for Trinity where daily links, posts, prayer concerns, updates and needs are posted. To be added to the Facebook group also please contact the Church office.

## Cancellations

Due to the social distancing measures several activities in the Spring and Early Summer have been cancelled. We will not be having Vacation Bible School or the Bike-n-Build group in our building this June. As is our custom we will be taking the entire month of July off, and the next Churchwide activity scheduled is the Church Picnic at Lakeshore Park. Keep following for more information to come.



# Trinity Times

## A Note From Session

Dear Trinity Friends,

We have been away from our church building for 7-almost 8 weeks.

But our church is still active!

Session has taken care of needed business through email and telephone. We look forward to meeting, working, laughing together and prayerfully leading Trinity.

Many folks have been organized through Community Outreach to sew and distribute masks. That committee has also been assisting the Youth Opportunities group with a monetary donation.

The Ministerial Relations Committee is staying in touch with Rev. Mark and Amber, to give them support through this difficult time.

Property and Finance Committee is taking care of business as needed.

Many of you have been reaching out to each other by electronic means, phone calls and cards and letters. How good of you to share and care!

We look forward to the time when we can all worship together and join in fellowship.

Blessings and good health,  
*Mary Belding, Clerk*





# Trinity Times

## Property And Finance

Grateful....Thankful....Blessed....

As I sit at home in my make-shift office, I began to think about the last 6 weeks. I know how much my life has changed and can only imagine the changes you are all experiencing. But I am grateful, thankful, and blessed. Even though I miss everyone in my life and cannot wait to give out hugs and kisses to my family I am still working and all my friends and family are healthy. God is watching over us and protecting us because we trust in him and have faith.  
God is Good!

Here are some updates on financial assistance the church has been blessed with to assist with operational related expenses during this unfortunate time.

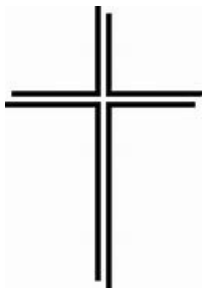
1. Trinity has been approved for a \$10,520.83 forgiveness loan through the Paycheck Protection Program to assist with operating funds. The *Paycheck Protection* Program, a part of the CARES act, is a stimulus package designed to help companies. This loan is 100% forgivable if the money is used to cover costs of payroll and/or utilities and is depleted within eight weeks of receipt of loan funds.
2. We recently received a \$390.00 check from the Bureau of Workers Compensation. This is also a stimulus check and does not need to be paid back.
3. The Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church USA has approved dues waivers and deferments during this time. Up to three months of Marks pension dues will be waived, with no change to benefit coverage. The Church pays \$ 1,722.46 monthly for Mark's dental, vision, and retirement.
4. We are so fortunate to have a loving church family that continues to financially support Trinity. For that I wish I could hug you all. **Thank you so much.**

Struggling to stay busy? The grass is growing! The weeds are growing faster than the grass! We are looking for volunteers for yard maintenance. **We need your help!** If interested in mowing, weeding, and general yard maintenance, please contact Beth Dougherty at 440-661-1416.

We will begin the planning stages of the landscaping around the building. Please let me know if you have ideas you would like to share. We will definitely keep you informed as to the where we are in the process.

**The Property and Finance committee  
would like to thank all who have continued supporting the church during  
these difficult times.**

God be with you,  
*Beth Dougherty*



# Trinity Times

## Community Outreach

During one of Rev. Mark's sermons about Trinity being a church outside the four walls of our building, and seeing nurses and the community needing personal protective masks the outreach committee saw the need and decided to make masks.

Fast forward six weeks and we have been busy making about five hundred masks with three people cutting material, and eight people sewing masks. We have given to Ashtabula Cancer Center, The Sanctuary in Geneva, Ashtabula County Nursing Home, Burn's Kids Collage, Mya, Carrington Park Rehab, Hospice, along with quite a few individuals requesting masks.



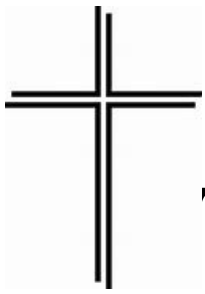
We are now starting **SOUP FOR SWEETS** which is a project needing the whole congregation to help us with. In helping YO, (Youth Opportunities) the leadership said during the quarantine their program has been limited to passing out food to children and their families involved in YO twice a week. Leadership mentioned it would be helpful to add some "home made" bread and sweets to show them people do care about them. So we are asking the congregation to bake sweets and breads in return for a container of home made soup. On Saturday May 16<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 to 12:00 our committee will be at Trinity Church and due to the quarantine, you will drive by, hand us your sweets and we will hand you a container of soup and drive off, for minimum contact.



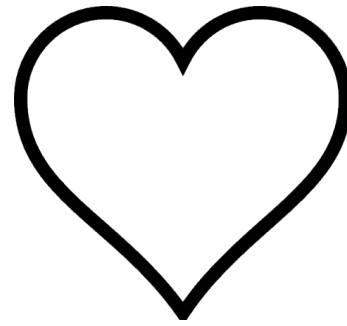
We will let you know at a later date the final total of breads and sweets we were able to give out.

The Outreach Committee wants to thank the Trinity congregation for all their support in helping us do God's work in the Ashtabula community.

*Kathy Fassett*



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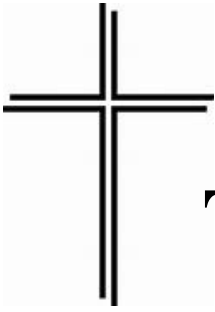
## Deacons

Well, Church family,... have you had a day when you were down, down, down ?? I know ! Me too! This has been a time of challenge of who we are, and how able we are to cope, and most importantly...how strong does our faith exist within us. I've seen so much caring and concern and heartaches on the television. But mostly LOVE for one another. As Deacons of Trinity Presbyterian Church, we continue to reach out to others because we care. We ALL know of someone who needs a phone call or a few cookies or a few flower left on their doorstep, so I urge you to extend yourself in LOVE to others. Let me close with a poem that was sent to me recently. Enjoy!

In Christian Love,  
*Jane*

Twas late in '19 when the virus began bringing chaos & fear to all people, each land.  
People were sick, hospitals full, doctors overwhelmed, no one in school.  
As winter gave way to the promise of Spring,  
The virus raged on touching peasant and king.  
People hid in their homes from the enemy unseen,  
They U-tubed and Zoomed, social distanced and cleaned.  
April approached and churches were closed,  
There won't be an Easter, the world supposed.  
But somehow or other it came just the same. IT CAME !!  
The churches are empty, but so is the tomb.  
And Jesus the victor over death, doom and gloom!  
Well, the story's not done! What will you do?  
Will you share with that one, two or more people....Needing hope in the night?  
Will you share the source of life in this fight?  
So, this year let this be our prayer...,  
As the virus still rages around everywhere,  
May the world see HOPE as it looks at its people,  
May the world find FAITH in the death and resurrection.  
May the world find JOY in the time of dejection.  
May 2020 be known as the year of survival,  
BUT...not only that, let it start a revival !!

(Exerpts from "How the Virus Stole Easter" by Kristi Bother  
With nod to Dr. Seuss )



# Trinity Times



## Christian Ed

Graduation season is upon us once again; but, instead of ceremonies, open houses, hugs, and handshakes, we are left searching for ways to celebrate our loved ones accomplishments from a distance. I'm delighted and amazed at how quickly people have adapted and found ways to celebrate and show their love from a safe distance. This year, although we cannot yet gather as a congregation to show our graduates that we love them, we will still be finding ways to recognize them. If you have a High School or College graduate that you would like recognized this year, please contact us prior to May 20th with the graduate's name and a mailing address. You can call the church office at 440-993-7111 or send an email to: [trinitypres04@gmail.com](mailto:trinitypres04@gmail.com).

*Sarah Williams*

## Pentecost Sunday is May 31st

The Pentecost offering helps our youth begin life with a strong start-  
A solid foundation of Faith formed in the ears from childhood through young adulthood.

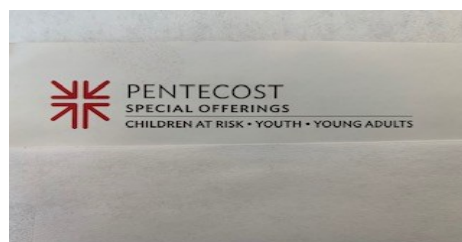
- 40% Stays with this congregation to develop and support programs for young people in our own church and community.
- 25% Supports Young Adult Volunteers, serving in communities around the world, and growing as leaders through transformative Christian service.
- 25% Supports Ministries with Youth to help guide our youth by uniting them in Christ and lifting them up as leaders and messengers of God's word
- 10% is devoted to children at-risk to improve education and provide safe havens.

Our congregation is joining the whole church in building for our future, in building individual lives of faith.

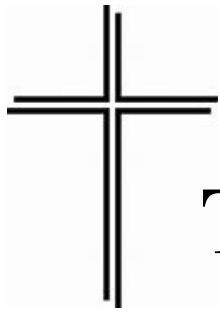
Won't you join us?

**IF WE ALL DO A LITTLE, IT ADDS UP TO A LOT.**

**Please either mail or use the drop box for your offering to the church**







# Trinity Times

## A Message from Our Intern

Time is interesting because it feels like in March, we were waiting for it to be May, and now that two months have passed not a whole lot has changed and at the same time everything has. One challenge that I have faced with each new congregation I have done field education with, is my wanting to do a whole lot in a very short time. I often have taken on more than I could accomplish, then had to step back and reconsider what is essential to this time, this place. I have had to ask and to consider what is it that God wants me to learn now? It is impossible to learn everything at once and so it is an important thing to discern what we will spend our time and energy on in any given season.

The last few months has caused us to ask this question corporately as a local congregation, as part of the church in the world and even nationally and internationally as we navigate the need for new behaviors. We have all had to step back and consider what is essential? I'm not sure we have come to an answer.

When I started here at Trinity, I knew it was important to try to connect with you as quickly as possible. Because in past church internships it has taken 2 of the 3 months for me to get comfortable in the new surrounds enough to connect with others. While, I still think that was the correct focus and I am glad to have been able to connect in some ways before the stay-at-home order. The problem is I wanted to connect quickly without warming up to it, in order to DO more. More outreach, more parts of worship, more visiting. Staying home puts on the breaks to this way of thinking for me. Not because there is less to be done, or more time on my hands, but because I have had to step back and reconsider the essential.

I'm reminded of how essential it is not to do more, but to be with others more fully. What is essential? Being together well. As I think about the last few months at Trinity, I can see that is what God has been teaching me through this congregation all along. Being together well looks like sharing a meal, celebrating a baptism, sharing stories of life, even on Facebook-worshipping together, even from afar. It looks like asking for help and looking for needs. All of us are connected by God to his purpose. As you step back, asking what is essential- I hope you can see, like me, that it begins with caring for one another. Thank you for teaching this to me. *"We love because he first loved us"* 1 John 4:19.

*Amber*