

Trinity Christian UCC

October, 2011 Newsletter

Skippack, PA



A
Message
from Our
Pastor

What difference do the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus mean to you?

Stephen Watt had no need of God. He was young and active. He was a state trooper. He was passionate about his job. He did not need to go to church or to have a relationship with God. He was self-sufficient.

And then, one day while eating lunch at the Country Kitchen in Rock Springs, Wyoming his radio crackled: bank robber in a tan vehicle possibly headed up Highway 430. Stephen rushed out. Just past milepost 13 he saw a car matching the description and pulled it over.

BOOM! A bullet pierced the windshield and tore into his left eye. It felt like it was on fire. He opened the door for cover. He screamed into the radio. Looking up, a man was standing over him. The barrel of a pistol. One, two, three, four bullets shot into him. The man ran but Stephen was still able to empty his .357 Magnum into the back of his speeding car.

The next morning he woke in intensive care. Everyone said it was a miracle he was alive. He thought the same thing. Two months later he was back on the job. But something was wrong inside. Something he did not know how to fix. Patrolling filled him with dread. His hands trembled when he pulled a car over. The fear was overwhelming.

The physical pain was also overwhelming. He took pain pills to get through the day. At night, he drank beer until he fell asleep. Then there were the night tremors... and he would wake screaming and crying.

The man who had shot him had been caught and placed in jail. Stephen could not continue at work and he resigned with disability. He was desperately depressed. He met with the police chaplain. Stephen told him about the anger and the pain and how hopeless his life seemed. "Have you forgiven the shooter?" he asked.

Forgiven? The chaplain had to be crazy. Forgiveness was not even on the table. He hoped only that the shooter was suffering as much as he was.

He discussed his visit with his wife, Marian. She said she did not know what the answer was but that something had to change because time was not healing the wounds. Marian needed the help of other people to pull through this difficult time. She turned to the church. At first, she went on her own. Every Sunday she would come home and tell Stephen what the pastor would say about the God's love and the power of prayer.

Pastor's message continues.....

Finally, he accepted his wife's invitation to attend church. Why not? He thought. It's not like I have anything else to do?

One Sunday the sermon was about forgiveness. The preacher had suggested that forgiveness was not for the offender. Forgiveness was because God has first forgiven all of us. Marian asked, "Do you think you'll ever be able to forgive the shooter?"

Stephen snapped back. How could he forgive when he always felt such pain and depression?

"But deep inside a feeling took hold, as if God himself had just thrown me a lifeline in that sermon.... Physically surviving was just the beginning. Now it was spiritual survival that was in critical condition."

Stephen decided to write a letter a letter to the shooter in jail. In the letter he shared his new found love for Christ and invited the offender to experience the love of Christ.

A few days later a thick envelope from the prison arrived. In it the offender shared his story and said he would live with the guilt of what he had done that day until he died. "I don't deserve the gift you have given me, Stephen" he wrote.

Later that year Stephen went to a revival at the prison and met his attacker. The man was not the monster he had once imagined. Instead he saw a guy who'd struggled on his own, gotten scared and didn't know where to turn. They hugged and the hatred Stephen had felt left and was replaced with the love of a God who does not give up on us even when we have given up on ourselves.

This is a true story told in the October 2011 edition of Guideposts.

Do you want the gift Jesus offers? What difference does it make to what happens to you Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc.? Most Americans will answer it has very little to do with anything. The blessings of an abundant land, stable government, modern health care and time for recreation make life in America a relatively pleasant experience for most. Unless disaster strikes what need is there of a daily relationship with God? And, if disaster strikes, where is a merciful God, anyway?

We need to need God.

We keep coming back because we cannot do for ourselves what God can and does for us. Without a daily turning to God, things go haywire. Events of the day steal away our joy and our enthusiasm for living. *Thy will, not mine be done.* You cannot pray this simple prayer too many times in any given day. Setting aside all pop psychology this reminds me that I am not in charge of my life. The Bible teaches that the Lord knew me from my mother's womb and has gone into glory to prepare a special place for me when this mortal being will one day lay down only to be raised up on the other side of bodily death.

How much do you need to need God?

More from Pastor.....

We are an extremely busy small membership congregation. Do not let anyone tell you otherwise. The question is, how does this busyness lift up Christ? This has to be our focus. How does your service through Trinity Church make you want to need God more and more?

A mission church (a congregation in the early stages of making) has a highly focused vision. It sees a glaring need in the community – something or some group – where existing churches are not meeting that need. And the people attack. Our own church began with a two-fold vision: to bring education to teenagers and to save souls where there was, as yet in 1855, no church in Skippack. The people gathered in homes until a church could be built in 1863. Since that time other churches have grown up within driving distance of our home.

What is it that compels us into mission today at Trinity Christian? Why should an un-churched person look to Trinity Christian UCC for support with the challenges of life when there are so many other churches (and social activities) to which to turn? Why come here? What is life changing about what we do?

After 150 years lots of good things get piled on layer after layer. That's just the way it is. At some point we need to step back and to ask ourselves, what do we do that convicts me of my need to need God? Everything else is just window dressing, at best. At the worst church becomes a burden and is actually instrumental in stealing the joy of my salvation. We do not want this to happen to anyone called by the Holy Spirit to be part of the body of Christ known as Trinity Christian, United Church of Christ..

As you and I become convicted of our need for God and of God's gracious goodness toward us, we cannot help but share our gifts as a means of lifting up Christ.

Help me, as I seek the Lord's guidance into what is absolutely essential and pivotal in our life together. How does lifting up Christ effect the amount of money you give to the work of this church? How does lifting up Christ affect the number of committees and fundraisers we have each year? What does lifting up Christ have to do with our prayer and Bible study options? What do we do that helps you know your need of all God provides on a daily basis? Each Sunday it is my prayer that we do something that challenges and/or encourages you in your faith journey. Is there something other we can do to this goal? I want what we do to be life changing in the same way as Stephen was set free, filled with a whole new life. His testimony is an inspiration to all. How has God set you free from some crippling fear and anger? How has your relationship with Christ made your life any different than the people around you who do not claim a relationship with God through Jesus?

Work with me to make Trinity Christian UCC a place where lives are enhanced with the hope that God has made known in the life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Pastor Michael

Altar Flowers:

Flower envelopes are now available on the bulletin board in the stairwell of the church, for the months of November and December. If you take an envelope, kindly try to pay the \$23.00 the following week. This is to be placed in the offering plate.

Thank you,

The Worship Committee



WASHINGTON'S TROOP RETURN

THE SKIPPACK HISTORICAL SOCIETY WILL BEHOLD-
ING THEIR 6TH ANNUAL

Revolutionary Encampment and Living History Event to commemorate the Continental Army's Encampment in September 1777. Held at the Indenhofen Farm: Route 73 and Evansburg Road in Skippack Village.

Date: Saturday OCTOBER 8 10AM-5PM

Sunday October 9 11AM to 4PM

Visit with the Revolutionary soldiers, and their surgeon, blacksmith, and cook. Talk to Betsy Ross on Sunday from 1-3PM. See a dowser search for water underground; quilt making; wooden barrel making, tin punch; colonial toys and games.

Douglas Stupinski, author of "A Glimpse of Freedom," will speak on influences and effects of the Revolutionary War in our area.

Come participate in the one room schoolhouse. Bring the kids!

Food will be available. Donation for parking.

Come and support our Trinity members:

Skip Dickey, Jessica and Ben Webb and Cynthia Gannon.

(This is a rain date.....the original event was scheduled for 9/10)

Sunday, October 23 Community Services Day

We will have a booth across from Basta Pasta from Noon to 4 pm. We can use your help to hand out literature promoting Trinity Church and the Jerusalem Food Pantry. There will be State Patrol, Emergency Units, a traveling Canteen for Firemen, and a host of other community service groups set up in the parking lot.

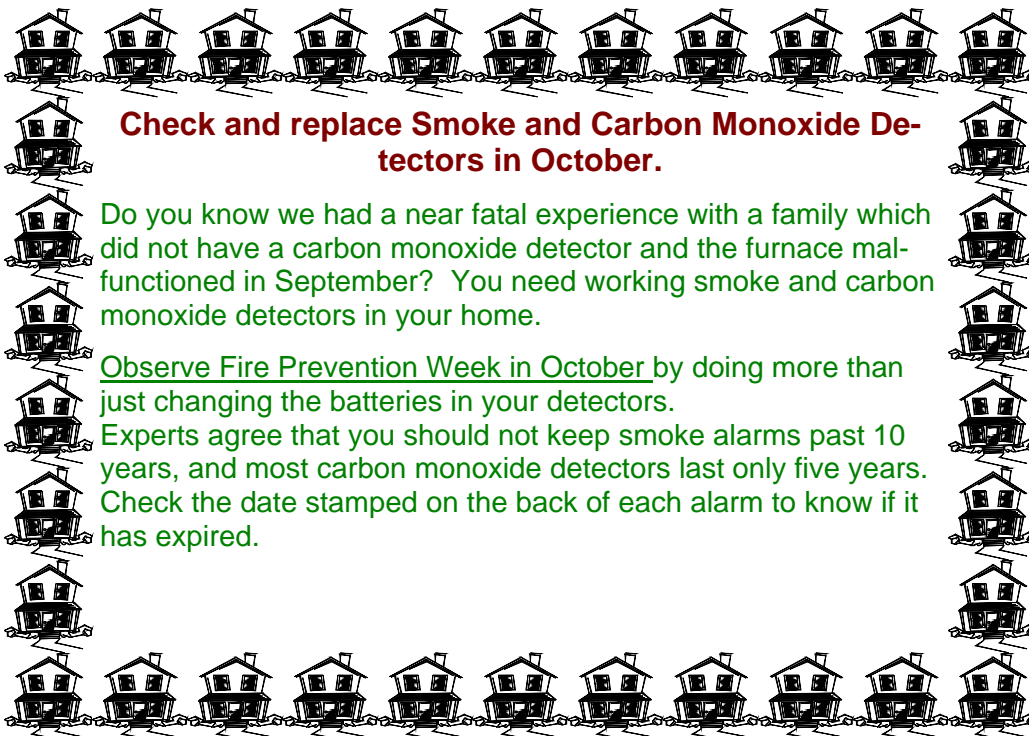
To highlight the Jerusalem Food Bank we will set up a display, including personal care items that are NOT covered by Food Stamps to raise community awareness of the food pantry and to stimulate donations to the food pantry. See Marge Brown or Pastor if you can donate time or pantry items.

For your prayers and preparation for Sunday worship:

- Oct 2** **World Communion Sunday**
Exodus 20:1-20
- Oct 9** **Baptisms**
Romans 6:3-11
- Oct 16** **Praise and Worship**
- Oct 23** **Deut 34:1-12 and I Thess 2:1-8**
- Oct 30** **Reformation Sunday**
Micah 3:5-12 and I Thess 2:9-13
- Nov 6** **All Saints**
Revelation 7:9-17



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Check and replace Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors in October.

Do you know we had a near fatal experience with a family which did not have a carbon monoxide detector and the furnace malfunctioned in September? You need working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in your home.

Observe Fire Prevention Week in October by doing more than just changing the batteries in your detectors.

Experts agree that you should not keep smoke alarms past 10 years, and most carbon monoxide detectors last only five years. Check the date stamped on the back of each alarm to know if it has expired.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Sunday School Program

Rally Day was held on September 11th at 9:00 a.m. kicking off the start of the new Sunday School year.

Vacation Bible School

The 2011 VBS Program was held Monday, August 15 through Friday, August 19. The theme is this year was the "Big Apple Adventure". Adventure awaited the children in the Big Apple as they connect *with Faith, Love, Trust, Others and Life*. Our offering was designated for the Jerusalem Food Pantry which included food items, schools supplies and \$100. We averaged around 15-20 children each evening. A special thanks to all who gave their time, effort, monetary donations and especially prayers for our VBS program this year.

Youth Group

The Youth Group kicked off the start of their new year on Rally Day, September 11th. Our youth are very enthusiast about what they want to accomplish this year. Highlights include: Skippack Days White Elephant Sale Fundraiser, participating in the Crop Walk, bringing back the Rock-a-thon – this year's will be a Halloween Rock-a-thon, cooking Thanksgiving meals for our shut-ins and special seniors, participating in the Advent Craft Workshop, the 30 Hour Famine and much, much more.

Respectfully submitted and "God Bless",

*Diana Polec, Chair
Christian Education*



All Saints Sunday

Pastor is asking everyone for family photos of those , who have died in the faith, so they may be remembered on All Saints Sunday.

These photos will be scanned into a computer to be made into a collage.

Please have your photos to the office no later than Sunday, October 16. Please make sure they are marked with your name and phone number, and placed in an envelope so they can easily be returned to you.

Dates to Remember:

Worship Committee Tues. Oct 4 at 7 pm

Social Committee Thurs. Oct 6 at 6:30 pm

Property Thurs. Oct 6 at 7 pm

Consistory Thurs. Oct 13 at 7 pm

Oktoberfest hosted by Social Committee
Saturday, Oct. 22 at 6 pm

Community Service Day
Sunday, Oct. 23

Youth Group

Service work at Skippack Days on Saturday, October 1 to support the congregation.

Halloween Rock-a-thon Sunday, Oct 30 to raise money for the Youth Group. Details to follow.

November 5th is the last day of Daylight Savings Time! Don't forget to turn your clocks **BACK** one hour or you'll be an hour early for church on November 6th!



For the month of October:

- 10/05 Nancy Venezia
- 10/06 Larry Nuss
- 10/11 Ronnie Burkle
- 10/15 Bernice Nuss
- 10/18 Garrett Burch
- 10/21 Tom Friel
- 10/22 Pat Dannerth
- 10/22 Barbara Nuss
- 10/23 Jeff Seip



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