



Worship

Grow

Serve

# Monthly Tidings

Trinity United Methodist Church

TALLAHASSEE FLORIDA

Volume 47, Number 6, June, 2020

*Because of God's love for us through Jesus Christ, we exist to worship, grow, and serve.*

## Planning for a Return

*Dr. Wayne D. Wiatt  
Senior Pastor*

For the last two months, Trinity has developed a COVID-19 Leadership Team that has been meeting regularly to help us navigate toward the eventual return to **in-person worship!** Utilizing 'The Florida Conference Guidelines' listed on pages 2-3, including "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQ), your leadership has set flexible dates for the opening of our Preschool on **July 6** and our return to in-person worship on **July 19**. We will follow specific protocols and guidelines listed in the FAQ starting on page 2.

Details regarding times and locations of worship will be forthcoming. Our primary

concern will always be the safety and protection of our Trinity family!

I am grateful to Trinity members, Orson Smith, MD, and Karalee Poschman, epidemiologist and CDC assignee to the Leon County Health Department, who have greatly aided us in our conversations and decision making. I am also grateful to Matt Foster and Paula Smith, chair and vice chair of our Church Council, for leading our teams!

**We enlist your prayers as we move forward in our planning to safely bring us back together in the near future.**



## Gifts to Trinity

### *In Loving Memory -of-*

Trinity received the following gifts from  
April 11 - May 10:

In memory of Bob Yates from Linda Hilaman

In memory of Bill Grow from Gregg  
Alexander.

In memory of Oberley Brown from Katherine  
and Ledley Brown, Frank Hinds

In honor of Linda Yates from Linda Hilaman.

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## Homeless Mats

Rose Glenn  
Homeless Mats Chair

Many thanks to those who have taken the time to carefully fold the plastic grocery bags before turning them in. You don't know what a big help that is. It saves time for those of us who cut the strips.

I have had to change to a new e-mail server. In transferring the names, I may have left out some. If you would like to be on my e-mail list, notify me at the address below. Sorry if I missed you. Come and help us in this worthy mission to the homeless neighbors in our community.

Contact me at [budsthorn@comcast.net](mailto:budsthorn@comcast.net)



## FAQs for Churches During COVID-19:

### Reopening Church Buildings

**Note:** These FAQs are in addition to the guidelines previously sent regarding in-person worship and ministry. We continue to ask for no in-person worship through June 15. These FAQs are for the present time and to help you prepare for the future.

#### What does the annual conference most want its clergy and laity to do and know?

- Practice frequent washing of hands.
- Wear a mask whenever you encounter others in public.
- Monitor your own symptoms related to health. If you don't feel well, please stay home.
- Keep a six-foot distance from others.
- Maintain civil and open conversation with others.

#### What is the recommendation regarding masks?

According to the CDC and state guidelines for similar venues, staff and volunteers are required to wear face masks or cloth face coverings. In an effort to protect everyone and love our neighbors, we ask everyone in attendance to wear face masks or cloth face coverings. Churches should have a plan in place to address those who are unwilling to wear masks. Clergy and others on the platform can remove masks during preaching and worship leadership if they have more than six feet distance with other persons on the platform and more than twelve feet distance from the first row of occupied chairs.

#### What is the recommendation regarding congregational singing and groups and individuals leading singing during worship?

Based on the science available to us, we recommend no congregational singing. Churches who choose to have limited congregational singing should make people aware of the risks involved while requiring increased social distancing (beyond six feet) and the wearing of masks. Choirs and other large ensembles singing in close proximity are prohibited. Soloists and small vocal ensembles can lead singing and music from the platform if they have more than six feet distance with other persons on the platform and more than twelve feet distance from the first row of occupied chairs.

#### What is the recommendation about day camps and preschool this summer?

We understand many preschools and day camps will choose not to have programs this summer since public schools remain closed. Day camps and preschools must follow all the CDC and state guidelines, which are extensive. Churches wanting to open a day camp or preschool must send their District Superintendent a clear plan on how they plan to abide by the guidelines.

#### Links:

[CDC Interim Guidance for Schools & Day Camps](#) | [CDC Interim Guidance for Child Care Programs](#) | [Child Care Reopening Operational Checklist](#) | [Parental Acknowledgement & Disclosure](#)

#### How do we create a healthy conversation among our leaders?

We encourage you to listen to the concerns of your leaders. Attempt to understand what may be behind their concerns or what may be their unstated concerns. Help leaders and attendees visualize what church will look like if they return with social distancing, masks, no singing, etc. Create a video to help people visualize. Reframe questions and frequently check for understanding.

#### What is the recommendation for HVAC and airflow within buildings?

It is recommended that you discuss with facility staff and trustees how to increase ventilation and the flow of outside air to ensure proper air circulation when persons occupy buildings.

#### What if your pastor is part of the vulnerable population?

Pastors in the vulnerable population should discuss how to cover worship leadership until they feel comfortable in returning to worship. Staff Parish committees should discuss with all clergy their comfort level in returning to worship. Confidentiality regarding a pastor's health should be maintained.



### What about small gatherings for funerals, weddings, baptisms, etc. before June 15?

Small gatherings of less than ten persons are permissible, but clergy must seek permission from their Superintendent and follow specific guidelines approved by the Cabinet.

### What screening questions should we use with employees/volunteers who return to campus?

Standard recommended screening questions have been created around symptoms and contact with persons who may have symptoms or have tested positive to COVID-19.

#### Links:

[Team Member Screening Questions](#)  
[Employee Acknowledgement & Disclosure](#)

### What do we do when an attendee doesn't follow the guidance/written guidelines?

Churches should have a plan in place on how to respond if someone does not follow the guidance. It would be best if the pastor reminded everyone gathered of the covenant they have entered into together by agreeing to

follow the protocols. Posting signage at the entrance of the church with a simple statement of the covenant around masks and distancing can help prepare people. Pastors can approach persons unwilling to follow the protocol or train a few key leaders to assist with this work. Approaching someone unwilling to follow the guidance should be done with care and love.

### What do we do when someone who has been on campus tests positive?

Church facilities will need to be regularly [cleaned according to the CDC guidelines](#). If someone tests positive, additional cleaning should take place. Churches should call their local health department for guidance on whether it is necessary to close facilities for a period of time. Additionally, churches should contact the Ministry Protection Office and their District Superintendent around best practices of letting congregants know of the possible exposure. At no time should someone's individual identity be disclosed.

### What will the guidelines look like after June 15?

We are still discerning what the guidelines will be after June 15. If we resume worship, it will be in a limited fashion with previously published strict guidelines. Currently, we are considering recommending six feet between family groups in all spaces with capacity limited to 25% of what a building or room can hold. We recognize there will be a need for flexibility and contextuality. Safety remains our primary concern.

### How will my congregation know when it is ready to return?

We would encourage a team-based approach. Consider virtual listening sessions or surveys. Read together ["Why Reopening a Church is Different."](#) It should not be simply based on what other churches are doing. Many in our state and church communities are part of the most vulnerable populations. Pay attention to your local COVID-19 rates and reach out to health experts. Be prepared to modify plans if cases in your community rise. Acknowledge the diversity of feelings and responses within your community. Continue to allow for online options and conference calls.

## Looking to Get Some Summer Exercise?

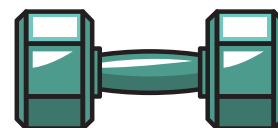
Beth Curry  
Exercise Leader

Looking to get some summer exercise? Come ZOOM with BFC Exercise! The BFC (Becoming Fit at Church) Series Exercise program continues going STRONG even during the pandemic. Come join us for a fun ZOOM exercise class, in the comfort of your own home. This ministry transitioned in late March to a virtual format via ZOOM, and once things were set up — nothing has been able to stop us from having our normal fellowship, fun and fitness time together! The BFC Exercise program will continue all summer long via ZOOM. While gyms may be reopening in our area, our exercise program will lean on the extreme side of caution and continue with our virtual format indefinitely. Come have some fellowship, fun and fitness with us this summer!

- Staying Strong – Tues 9:30 a.m.
- Variety Mix – Tues & Thurs – 11:00 a.m

The suggested donation continues to be \$3 per class. Donations may be made to TUMCT, and if by check — note BFC Exercise on the bottom of the check. As usual one hundred percent of all donations will go to community service. Please email [BFCSeries@yahoo.com](mailto:BFCSeries@yahoo.com) for more information and to get the ZOOM link for any class.

Hope to see you in class!!



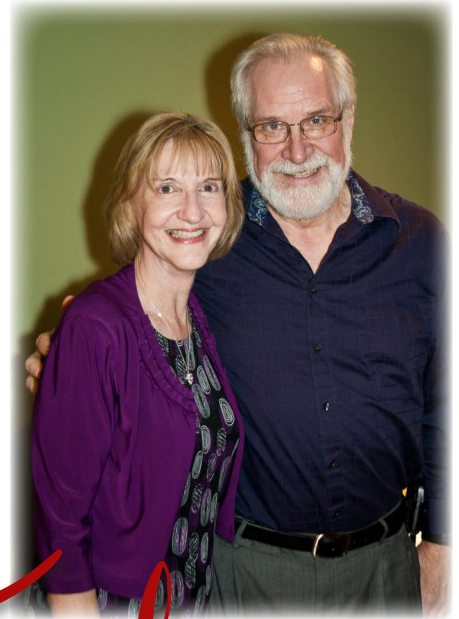
# Finale

Mark Repasky  
Music Director

One of the dominant music notation software programs in the United States is called Finale. This is the program installed into the computer in the Music Director's office at church. There are now over 100 files, spread among several folders. It has been an important part of the music ministry at Trinity during my 24 years here. For musicians, the word finale refers to the last piece of music, or the last performance, or the last public event. And so this is: My last Tidings article. *My finale.*

Retirement for me begins July 3. This is certainly not the way I envisioned my last few months at a job that was much more than a job for me. I loved this church and the people in it. I loved the musicians I had the privilege to work with, from age 2 to 93! I poured my heart into it. And this sanctuary. When people enter this beautiful building for worship, it becomes for me, our holy ground. And I loved sharing that with you! Now that we have been barred from worshipping together for over two months due to Covid-19, it seems all the more precious. And I will miss it. And I will miss you.

Since I have served Trinity for over 24 years, it is necessary that my dear wife Cindy and I stop being part of this congregation for a year. The new Music Director needs that time to get established. The same thing happens with senior pastors at United Methodist Churches: Making way for new leadership. I pray all will embrace the new Music Director and love on him/her as you have done so graciously with my family since our arrival in Tallahassee. This is a unique and blessed church with wonderful leadership, both pastoral and congregational. May your future shine brightly as you carry on the work of salvation in this community and in the world beyond.





# My Virgin Mary On Toast

Neal Avirett  
Associate Pastor

I knew the stay at home had finally gotten to me when the Rice Krispy Cereal box began to remind me of the religious icon in my office. Just in case the stay at home notice affected you too, the religious icon is the one on the left. They're meant to act like a quick link of a heavenly kind, telling us something true about God, and work as a form of prayer for the viewer.

It's called the Old Testament Trinity. It's from the perspective of Abraham in Genesis 18 when three heavenly visitors arrive. Abraham and Sarah prepare a feast in an effort to encourage the visitors to stay awhile longer.

Icons are painted two dimensional so not to break the third commandment, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" KJV. I guess the three figures and a common bowl is what reminded me of the other.

If you look carefully at the religious icon, you'll see under the bowl a little symbol. It's an ancient symbol of discipleship, a box within another box. So what's the use of religious works of art if they only leave us looking at heaven? That's where the cereal box began to save me from being a religious spectator.

If the Old Testament Trinity icon was meant to lead me deeper as a disciple, where would this Rice Krispy Trinity be pointing, Pentecost? The Book of Acts describes the arrival of the Holy Spirit like the sound of a rushing violent wind. Maybe with such a strong gale it drowned out the tongues of fire going, "Snap! Crackle! Pop!"

If there has been any good to come from the stay at home notice, it's been getting to know my neighbors. Up to this point, we've known each other's names, our children have played together, and we've borrowed each other's tool from the



garage. Now we've shared a picnic dinner, a front yard dance party, and walks to get ice cream together. The ice cream has led to new neighbors we've never seen before.

In the aftermath of hurricane Irma, a huge live oak tree from our yard blocked the entire street and a third of the neighbors' driveway across from us. We had spent the last two years getting to know our new Jacksonville neighbors, and removing the tree helped us even more. Removing the tree revealed an old spat between two neighbors that wouldn't come out to help. Would you believe it was over where they parked their cars? I had hoped that since I was being a friend who was also a pastor that something might have worked through, but it never happened. People say that moments like we're living through today can bring us closer together, but it still takes a willingness. Jesus said as he wept over Jerusalem, "Oh how I've wanted to gather you like a hen gathers her chicks, but you were unwilling." If we are willing, Jesus says it's possible. (Luke 13:42)

My new cereal box icon got me thinking, I don't know anyone who hasn't enjoyed a Rice Krispy Treat, and I am willing



to make them. I began thinking about neighbors a couple of doors down from us. I think we missed one another because of something about our daily routines is different. The more I considered them, the more I began to think about the neighbors next to them. They have a yard sign celebrating a graduation. I've seen Rice Krispy Treats at celebrations. Then driving home the other day I saw it. A blue tarp draped over a roof in our neighborhood. It's been there since the tornado warnings drove many of us into our bathrooms with mattresses five weeks ago.

My family still sings grace before meals about how "the Lord's been good to me." This Pentecost I've felt challenged to consider how my religious experiences of God and how they might be leading me out there to love a new neighbor I've never met. In these important days, how can we resist the temptation of keeping our religious experiences of God in a box, even a cereal box?

# Preschool Updates

Stacey Duggar  
Preschool Director

After much (prayerful) consideration, we are excited to announce that we plan to tentatively reopen the preschool on **July 6, 2020**.

We say tentatively because as you know, so much can change in the upcoming days and weeks. As we near our reopening date, we will host a parent meeting to introduce the many procedural changes that we have set in place so that we can reopen safely for both our students and staff members. We have missed you all and look forward to opening the school and seeing everyone again.

## TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH PRESCHOOL



## Local Missions – Good News Outreach

Sam Rogers, Sr.

### **SPOTLIGHT ON FAITHFULNESS: “GOOD NEWS OUTREACH”**

From Mathew 25: 35-40, “I was hungry and you fed me...I was in prison and you came to me... as you did it to the least of these...you did it to me.”

Since 1986 Good News Outreach (GNO), a local non-denominational faith-based charitable organization has been quietly and effectively going about the business of providing vital services to our neighbors, and their children, who are in need. Those services include:

- **Senior Grocery Program** – In 2019, GNO volunteers delivered nearly 2500 bags of groceries from more than \$5,000 in gifts

- **Housing for working poor families** – Maryland Oaks Crossing provides affordable and safe housing for the working poor in 47 well maintained mobile homes. In excess of 100 persons, including an average of 60 children currently are in residence. Services include tutoring, health screening and access to a food bank. These services were provided with about \$35,000 in donated goods and services.

- **MercyHouse** – GNO provides temporary housing for up to 16 men released from prison. Each applicant is carefully screened and must agree to attend 12 step meetings as part of their recovery from addiction and complete a career development program. Each resident is provided with one-on-one case management, job search and basic services including food and transportation.

- **GNO Food Pantry** – GNO volunteers have distributed an estimated 57 tons of food provided by Second Harvest of the Big Bend to almost 12,000 persons including children and seniors. Food donations were valued at approximately \$16,000.

### **GNO Leadership Team**

Executive Director Don Parks in a recent letter to GNO partners wrote in response to the coronavirus, “GNO will remain open to serve those in need as God gives us the resources and grace to do so. In fact...we have expanded our food pantry from one day to five days weekly.” Both Mercy House residents and families at Maryland Crossing will continue without interruption. The twelve volunteer members Board of Directors, led

by Chair Linda Barineau, remain committed to the mission of GNO. Recently elected Board member, Retired Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court, Major Harding stated, “I joined the board... because I saw that this was an opportunity not only to meet a tangible need... but in doing so to share the transforming power of faith in God and his mercies.”

Local partners consist of a broad cross section of organizations such as Emergency Care Help Organization of Tallahassee (ECHO), Rotary Club of Tallahassee, Culpepper Construction Co., First Love of First Baptist Church, St. Paul UMC, Good Samaritan UMC, FSU Chapman School of Community Health and others.

Trinity’s Local Missions Team Chair, Dennis Smith, has indicated he wants his Team members to discuss and prepare a report on how our church may be able to join Good News Outreach in partnership in the near future and once the COVID-19 Pandemic is under control.



**GOOD NEWS**

*Outreach*

Faith in Action Since 1986

# Youth Happenings in April

Lisa Prasse  
Youth Director

## A Note from Lisa ...

I. MISS. MY. YOUTH. Though we are still practicing social distancing, we are definitely not losing connection. We may not be spending the same amount of time together physically, but we're doing the very best we can in the meantime.

We continue to meet and stay as connected as possible through individual class "hangouts," where we visit, share and play games together and we continue our social media connectivity and Youth Bible Study on Thursday afternoons. We celebrated our high school graduates last month with a video and a special Graduate Sunday Youth ZOOM session.

It was not the same at all, but we pray our graduates leave this place knowing how very loved they are by their church family.

We are still being challenged to be creative. This summer will look very different for all of us and we look so forward to being together sooner than later. Your youth and I are here for you! If there's any way we can safely serve during this time that would be of help to you, please contact me via email at [lprasse@tumct.org](mailto:lprasse@tumct.org) or call/text (850)545-2852.



*Being silly during a recent Confirmation hangout.*

## God's Church Never Closes

Nick Quinton  
Director of Fellowship

The signs posted on the doors of our church building say it all —“God's Church never closes.” Through applications of technology we are worshipping, caring for one another, serving the community, and growing as disciples in small groups. Adaptation is nothing new in God's Church, and Spirit-led innovation has long yielded new ways to practice our shared faith. Indeed, the lives of the earliest Christians, documented in Acts, took them out of the Temple and into private homes for the practice of their faith with worship, care, and instruction in discipleship. Though the methods and means to practice our faith may change, what remains constant is the shared and ardent desire to understand, together, more of God's call on our lives as individuals and as a people. Trinity's new digital connections certainly

show we are living into God's call to discipleship in new ways. One way to join in church life together is with one of our small groups on Zoom. We have plenty to choose from for all ages and stages. A list of our offerings is below. If you are looking to join in with a small group, be sure to email Nick ([nickquinton@tumct.org](mailto:nickquinton@tumct.org)) for details.

### Trinity Kids

Elementary Gathering

Wednesday, 3:00pm

Toddler/Preschool Gathering

Saturday, 9:30am

### Trinity Youth

High School Hangout

Monday, 4pm

Mid-High Hangout

Tuesday, 3pm

Confirmand Hangout

Tuesday, 4pm

Youth Bible Study

Thursday, 4pm

## Adult Religious Education

### Sunday Morning Small Groups

Sunday, 9:45am

Agape

Betty Phifer

Bible Journeys

New Class

### Monday

Downtown Bible Study, noon

### Tuesday

BFC Staying Strong Exercise Group, 9:30am

BFC Variety Mix Exercise Group, 11am

Chrismon Sewing Group and Study, noon

Bible Study, 1pm

Women's Bible Study, 6:30pm \*\*beginning July 7\*\*

### Wednesday

Common Grounds, 7am

Young Adult Group, 6:30pm

Parenting Village, 9:00pm

### Thursday

BFC Variety Mix Exercise Group, 11am

Lively Café Group, noon

### Friday

Friday Study Group, 10:30am

**STAY ENGAGED!**



# Meet Laurie Batten!

Laurie recently joined the Trinity team as our new Business Administrator, after serving for 13 years with St. Paul's Tallahassee. She is originally from the Chicago area, and also lived in Miami for quite some time. She eventually moved to Tallahassee shortly after the birth of her daughter, and she's been here ever since.

Laurie worked for awhile licensing aircraft parts for exportation from the U.S. She has also helped manage medical and dental offices at one time.

She has fond memories of running a home daycare center in Tallahassee during her daughter's youth. Her daughter now attends FSU and is pursuing a degree in Editing, Writing, & Media.

Laurie has now been working in the financial world for some time. We are so grateful to have her abilities and experience in this field.

She is a holiday fanatic and enthusiast. She is most happy around the time of Christmas or Halloween. Every year she sets up an extensive haunted house at her residence and hundreds of people attend.

We are so thrilled to have her onboard. Her positive energy and exceptional work ethic will benefit us greatly!



Rev. Dr. Wayne D. Watt, Senior Pastor  
Neal Avirett, Associate Pastor  
Dr. Nick Quinton, Director of Adult Discipleship and Education  
Spencer Schowang, Director of Communications

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## COVID-19 Prayer: God of all, we turn to You

*Bishop Ernest S. Lyght  
Retired Bishop*

God of faith and science, we turn to you in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, because we trust you. We trust you because you listen to our prayers. We trust you because you act in our lives and our history for our welfare. We trust you because we know you as a God of revelation in faith and science.

God of knowledge and wisdom, we ask that you would dwell with all the scientists who are working daily to develop an effective and safe vaccine to combat this virus. Help them to collate current knowledge and be conduits of new knowledge regarding the secrets of the COVID-19 virus. Grant them the wisdom to unlock the keys that will provide helpful COVID-19 therapies and vaccines.

God of curiosity and wonder, grant the scientists the inquisitiveness of George Washington Carver who combined his love of God and his love of science in his quest to unlock hidden agricultural secrets. As the God of the sweet potato, the peanut and the soybean, you enabled Carver to discover their secrets as he united faith and science, wisdom and knowledge, curiosity and wonder.

God of all creation, in this Eastertide we pray for all coronavirus patients, their doctors and their nurses. We ask that you be a fence around all healthcare workers, first responders, and their families. Expand our faith and buoy our hope as we shelter in place. Lord, teach us how to wait, for you are an on-time God!

**Amen.**

