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TrinityHicksville.org

TRINITY LUTHERAN C H U R C H A N D S C H O O L

40 West Nicolai Street, Hicksville, NY 11801

Reverend John Hopkins – Senior Pastor
Mary-Elaine Leake - Principal | Carolyn Gallegos - ECC Director

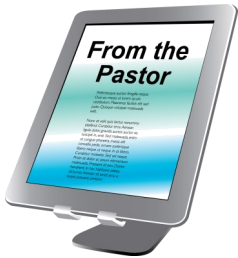


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The Good News

January 2020
Volume 4 No. 1
Page 1



What Is Your Focus this New Year?

A man works at a lumber mill. One day, the worker is going home and this particular day pushes a wheelbarrow out with a small box in it as he goes out to his truck. The security officer

stops him and asks, "What is in the wheelbarrow?" The worker says, "A box." The security officer says, "I can see the box, what is in the box?" The worker opens the box and replies, "Saw dust." "Saw dust," says the security officer. The worker replies to the implied question, "I have a project at home and I need some saw dust." Security guy, "Ok you can go."

Next day same thing, same questions, same response.

Five days in a row, the worker gets stopped, because five days in a row he has pushed a wheelbarrow with a small box in it. This fifth day, the security officer goes, "Oh it's you again. I know you are up to something. Just tell me the truth, off the record, you won't get in trouble. What are you doing, stealing something?"



The worker replies, "Wheelbarrows."

How often do we stay focused on the little things and miss the big thing!?!

You have a New Year before you. What are the little things in your life that you are so focused on that you miss the big picture?

Now, apply that question to your faith life.

What little thing are you so focused on that you miss out on the big thing with the Lord? Are the day to day events so consuming that you do not make time to pray? Are the day to day events so consuming that you do not make time to serve the Lord? Are the little things that you are so desiring causing you to forget to give thanks to the Lord for the blessings you have already received from Him?

received from Him?

Take some time to focus on what God is doing in your life. Look at all the possibilities He has before you. Consider what might happen if you spent more time on what God is doing and get yourself involved with His activities. You might just find that the little things you were spending so much time focused on... really are not such a big deal after all.

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Therefore, make it a point this New Year to approach everything with God's big picture in mind. God's big picture is getting you to heaven. He accomplished this through Jesus. And always remember, the faith He has given you takes hold of the big picture. Let that be your 2020 focus.

Serving the Lord with you,
Pastor Hopkins

Thank you!

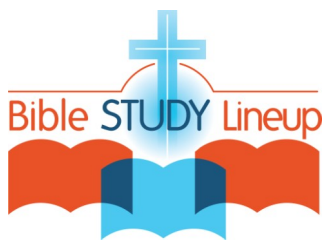
A big thank you for all who helped make a wonderful Advent and Christmas season. There are so many that make this happen. Henry DeVries leading our choirs... all of them. Altar Guild preparing for us to receive the Lord's Supper. The Kenney's with the wreaths and those who helped put them up. Lynn Waldeck and Scott Galdo for putting up the banners in the Sanctuary. Dave Specht, serving his 25th year selling Christmas trees and those who helped Dave out in the lot. The Board of Properties helping out in so many ways! Staff making sure the bulletins get out. Mary Leake and school staff having Christmas programs with the children. Church Council who supports it all. Our Sunday school children and their teachers for a wonderful Christmas program. Plus many others who provided help along the way.

Thank you all for making it happen and enhancing our worship.

We especially give thanks to our God who loves us so and gives us the reason to celebrate in the first place, Jesus!

Thank you all for your service to the Lord.

Pastor Hopkins



Wednesday Evening Bible Study Resumes!

Mark Bible Study begins again on Wednesday January 8 at 7:00pm. Be in attendance in Pastor's Office or on Facebook Live!

Do take note of all of our additional opportunities for Bible study throughout the week:

- Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study—Tuesdays at 3:30pm in the Stammel Center
- Wednesday Morning Ladies Bible Study—Wednesdays at 9:30am in the Youth Senior Room
- Wednesday Evening Ladies Bible Study—Wednesday at 7:00pm in the Stammel Center
- Sunday Morning Liturgical Bible Study—Sundays at 10:45am in the Youth Senior Room

O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright

We will be singing the hymn, "O Morning Star How Fair and Bright" (LSB 395) on January 5. It is known as the "Queen of Chorales" because of the majesty of its text and tune. Its message of hope in the face of death is incomparable. (By the way, there is a King of Chorales as well - "Wake, Awake, For Night is Flying," LSB 516, also by Nicolai, but that's another newsletter article to come.)

When Philipp Nicolai wrote the words and melody to this hymn in 1597, he was a German Lutheran pastor in the city of Unna in Westphalia, Germany. While there, the city was hit by a scourge of plague that took the lives of more than 1,300 of its citizens. This widespread death so close to home impacted Nicolai in a profound way. It has been noted that more than once, up to 30 graves were dug for those claimed by the rat-and-flea-borne menace, and these were laid to rest within the sight of his house, which overlooked the graveyard.



From this catastrophe, which must have struck terror in the lives of anyone near its march, Nicolai found inspiration in four different Scriptures. One of these came from Zechariah's prophecy in Luke 1. Here is John the Baptist's father, filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking exuberantly about Jesus, after being silenced by the angel Gabriel for his previous unbelief. In Luke 1, beginning at verse 76, Zechariah sings, "*And you, Child, will be called the Prophet of the Most High; for You will go before the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace*". How comforting the words of Zechariah must have been to the hymn-writer. All around him, encroaching nearer, death was spreading over the city. Left and right, Nicolai's parish members were being claimed by this horrific disease, dying terrible deaths as their organs failed and their bodies shut down. And in the middle of this devastation, God's Word speaks. The Promised One has come; His arrival brings the knowledge of salvation, the forgiveness of sins, and a light to those who sit in darkness. Each of the hymns six verses speak to Christ being with us, giving us life. As his parishioners lost their lives, Nicolai's hymn reminded all that, Christ gives life, He is with us today, tomorrow and everyday. Is there anything more comforting than to know that our Savior is always with us?

What joy to know, when life is past, the Lord we love is first and last, the end and the beginning! He will one day, oh, glorious grace, transport us to that happy place beyond all tears and sinning! Amen! Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

Henry DeVries,
Minister of Music

A Heartfelt Thank You

Thanks
Many Thanks
Thanks
Thanks
Thanks

Your generosity towards the Pastor's Discretionary Fund, Home Heating Fund, and food baskets is much appreciated. Also the donations for our Christmas Angel Program, Food Pantry, and Blessing Box are appreciated. Throughout the year sometimes emergencies come up that our families need financial help and by your donations we are able to lend a helping hand. Our Food Basket Program shows others we care by providing bags of food and a grocery gift card five times a year. We next pack food for Valentines Day. Thank you for sharing your blessings.

Well it's January, and Thanksgiving, Christmas and the New Year's celebrations are behind us. They were exciting yet exhausting. The tree, lights and other decorations have been put away, or will be shortly. The house looks a lot less cluttered, but also darker and unusually quiet. We are relieved to have the activity behind us, but where has everyone gone? It feels lonely. Where has all the joy and excitement gone?

I imagine that is how Christ's disciples felt on that first Easter evening. They had gone through three years of constant activities and crowds culminating in that glorious Palm Sunday procession, and then everything seemingly fell apart on that terrible Friday afternoon. Now things looked dark and lonely. Where had everyone gone? They had to have felt abandoned and uncertain. But then Jesus appeared among them: "peace be with you" and the clouds were gone.

The parties and excitement of the past weeks may have faded, but cheer up, we are awaiting the biggest party of all! What Christ accomplished on that Good Friday and Easter day has assured us that by faith in Him, our sins have been forgiven and we will spend eternity with God in endless light and celebration. So, in this dark and cold January, focus not on the snow outside your door but rather on the biggest never-ending celebration as we are assured of spending eternity with our Lord in heaven. That has to light up a dark January day and every day until we stand before our God for all eternity.

Deacon Doug Brosky

Your Deacons:

Doug Brosky

Betsy Lazarek

Debbie Vergara

Anthony Cavaliere

Peg Ruhs

Lynn Waldeck



NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

... for the February 2020 issue are due no later than noon on Friday, January 24!

Yoga is available at Trinity on Wednesdays at 6:00pm in the MPR. Cost is \$7.00 per class, pay as you go. Mats are available and all ages are welcome!



The Good News

A Word from the Principal

January 2020
Volume 4 No. 11
Page 5

Dear Trinity Friends and Families,

Arise, shine, for your light has come! Isaiah 60:1

What a comforting and hope-filled message this is from the prophet Isaiah who foretold of our Lord's coming. Throughout December our chapel messages and devotions have helped the students to focus on the power of Christ's coming which brings us hope and light in a dark world. It's all about the light of God's love in Jesus.

This December, Trinity's students did an outstanding job presenting the Good News to everyone who was privileged to hear and see their programs. On December 10, the band and orchestra presented their Christmas concert followed by the fourth and fifth grades' program "Jesus the Light of the World." On December 17, students in grades K-3rd presented "Christmas Around the World." All of the students' performances splendidly conveyed the true meaning of the season. Later in the month, the band and orchestra went on to spread the joy to residents of an assisted living facility and the shoppers in the Broadway Mall. Finally, the preschool delighted family friends with their Christmas programs which focused on baby Jesus' birthday.

The National Junior Honor Society distributed the food that they collected to area food pantries. Also, the preschool students presented gifts of baby clothes for the baby Jesus at the beginning of their Christmas programs. These clothes were donated to LSSNY New Life Center's program to assist new mothers in need.

All the presentations and collection efforts helped to share the light and love of Jesus. In the coming season of Epiphany, we will continue to follow the light of Jesus just the Wise Men followed the light of the star. In all the activities of the New Year, we will be intentional about testifying to the Light that gives us hope, life, and purpose.

In the Light of Jesus,
Mary Leake, *TLS Principal*



The Good News

Early Childhood Center News

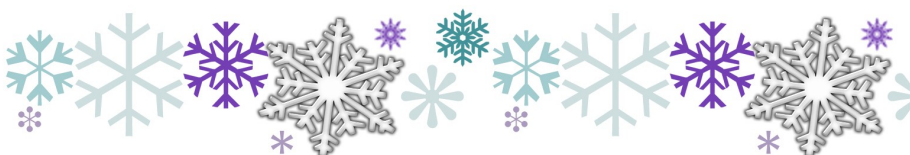
As we come to the end of the busy Christmas time in our Early Childhood Center it is hard not to smile as you peek in a classroom or see the artwork in the halls. The excitement that the children have for Christmas and Jesus' birth is contagious. The entire ECC staff has worked hard to teach the children about the birth of Jesus. We also hope we have shared the joy of giving with the children. As part of our Christmas programs we asked the families to bring in baby items to be donated to the New Life Center-New Mother Program (Division of Lutheran Social Services). The children were able to place these baby items in a manger as they processed in for their Christmas program and know that they were helping others.

All of our Early Childhood children participated in Christmas programs and sang for their families and friends! The theme of the program this year was "Happy Birthday Jesus!" Hearing the children sing about the birth of Jesus helped to remind all who attended the true reason for the season.

We are looking forward to a wonderful 2020 in our Early Childhood Center as we continue to celebrate 50 years!

Carolyn Gallegos
ECC Director

50 Years!



Happy New Year from the Capital Campaign Committee!



We are so excited to start off the new year with wonderful news. As of December 18 , between pledges and memorial donations of \$244,400, more than \$212,455 has been received! (The remaining \$31,900 in pledges is due in 2020). We have reached our goal in cash received! And we thank you most profusely for your support of Trinity Lutheran Church and School.

We began with a list of projects, which have almost all been completed. And, as you know, additional capital projects have cropped up. Like any building owner the list never ends. But we are happy to let you know that while over \$142,000 has been spent on our projects \$70,000 is available to complete those we began with and those that have arisen.

Our projects have included:

Installing new carpeting in the church, repair and replacement of glass windows on the church and school, a renovated science classroom with manipulatives, improved parking lot lighting, LED light conversion in classrooms and hallways, security camera improvements, replaced ceiling in one classroom and pastor's office, school boiler repairs, replaced water heater, roof fan repairs, church ductwork sealing, partial payment for church/school banners, additional security upgrades, parking lot asphalt repair, landscaping and playground mulch, and painting of school exterior and classrooms (by volunteers).

Our Capital Campaign Committee now consists of: Pastor Hopkins, Principal Mary Leake, Jane Kramer, Lynn Waldeck, Doris Gargan, John Haines, John Vergara and Lauren Straub.

We are indebted to the Board of Properties for their guidance, expertise and countless hours of work. Trinity owes this unpaid workforce more than we could ever repay. Thank you: Rich Evans, John Haines, Warren Breuer, Dan Pugliese, Carl Osmundsen, Scott Hare, Ed Kuck, Tom Perovich, Matt Musumeci and Fred von Barga, Sr.

Wishing you a very happy New Year with our profound thanks for your support of Trinity Lutheran Church and School.



ECC 50th Anniversary Continues

Christmas Wish list concludes on Epiphany, January 6, 2020.

If you have not had a chance to pick out and drop off an item from the Early Childhood Center's wish list you have until January 6 – although if you miss that date we will be happy to accept your gift anytime going forward.

Items on the wish list for use in the ECC are available on line at ECCWishList.TrinityLI.Org .

Thank you for helping us maintain our high quality program of loving, Christian education for 2-4-year-old students. God bless you and have a Happy New Year!



The Eager Conversationalist/Spiritual Conversation Curve Workshops

Spiritual Conversations in the Digital Age, a monograph based on Barna Group research, revealed something: people talk less about spiritual matters than they used to. Whatever the reasons for this reluctance, research shows there are ample benefits to including God in our conversations.

Lutheran Hour Ministries is offering two workshops that address the data and offer ways for us to be better spiritual conversationalists.

Dr. Jason Broge, director of design and development for LHM's Global Ministries, hosts *Eager Conversationalists: A Hopeful Look at What Prepares Christians for Spiritual Conversations*. This introduces the EAGER Profile Inventory, a self-evaluation tool participants can use to assess their level of willingness to engage in spiritual conversations. Barna data from 25 years ago shows that Christians took more responsibility to share their faith. Not so today as those numbers are in decline. Completing an EAGER Profile Inventory helps believers assess their character traits and spiritual habits which then factor into their willingness to have spiritual conversations. The good news is we can all become more intentional in our outreach and actually *enjoy* sharing Jesus with others when we do.

Don Everts, manager of content development for LHM, hosts *The Spiritual Conversation Curve: A Practical Tool for Reluctant Witnesses*. "What should I talk about?" "How will I respond to their questions?" "What if I don't know the answer?" These queries are natural. What's important, Everts says, is this: "It helps if we are in some way prepared to lean into those moments." The Spiritual Conversation Curve is crucial here as it lets us assess if the person we're speaking with is unreceptive, receptive, or seeking. We can then gauge our words to *graciously adapt* to their "spiritual posture," keeping our faith discussions open and comfortable.

The Board of Outreach is planning to conduct these workshops in two consecutive sessions, either on Saturday morning, Sunday afternoon, or Monday evening beginning in February. Email your questions and availability to: ACavaliere@trinityhicksville.org



Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University Is Coming to Trinity!



Dave Ramsey's *Financial Peace University* is coming to Trinity, sponsored and coordinated by the Board of Stewardship. Our goal is to help our members manage their finances wisely. Dave Ramsey created *Financial Peace University* nearly 25 years ago after learning how to pay off debt, save and spend wisely, and build wealth. Today, millions have used the same principles to transform their lives, pay off debt, save, and invest for the future.

FPU includes your member workbook as well as one year of free access to Financial Peace Membership, where you'll find tons of online resources to help you start winning with money. Join the Board of Stewardship in the multipurpose room starting Thursday, January 9 from 7:00pm-8:30pm. Sign up at fpu.com/1096836.

The following are the lessons which will help guide you on your path to financial security:

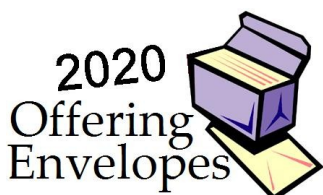
- Lesson 1** Starter Emergency Fund + Budgeting
- Lesson 2** Pay Off All Debt
- Lesson 3** Save a Fully Funded Emergency Fund
- Lesson 4** Invest for the Future and Build Wealth
- Lesson 5** Buyer Beware
- Lesson 6** The Role of Insurance
- Lesson 7** Retirement Planning
- Lesson 8** Real Estate and Mortgages
- Lesson 9** Outrageous Generosity



"We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give."

Winston S. Churchill

Please note that Board of Stewardship will be sponsoring a *Lenten Devotion 2020 Booklet* and will advise shortly as to available scriptures. If you would like to write one, please contact Deacon Anthony at ACavaliere@trinityhicksville.org. **Ash Wednesday is February 26.**



Please pick up your 2020 offering envelopes outside the Multi Purpose Room. If you give electronically you will not get envelopes. If yours are missing or you would like a set of envelopes please call Lynn in the church office at extension 230. Thank You.



Since we focused on the season of Advent last month, I can't help but relate the symbolism of the Advent candles to the Comfort Dog Ministry.

The Candle of Hope

On Wednesday, December 11 in Newark, Amos, Abraham, Leah, Lily, Lydia and Kezia Comfort Dogs brought love and joy to dozens of children fighting pediatric cancers and their families at United Airlines Newark, Terminal C, as they boarded a plane to the North Pole.



United Fantasy Flight is a volunteer effort by United Airlines employees and sponsors. United provides the plane, use of the terminal, a flight crew, and hundreds of other employee volunteers who bring the North Pole to life with Santa, elves, reindeer, wooden soldiers, sugar plum fairies, and other characters.

The Comfort Dogs were present to add smiles to the children's faces who are going through some very difficult health struggles. Each child received a Comfort Dog coin purse with a picture of a golden retriever on it for them to collect each dog's card.

There was a young woman who pulled one of the handlers aside and asked to talk to her. She was struggling and felt she has no one else to turn to. The handler, who has been trained to work through these types of situations, pulled her off to the side and talked to her and prayed with her. Like so many of the parents of the children, this young woman was looking for an ounce of hope in a tough time in her life. The Comfort Dog Ministry maybe provided just a little bit of hope to her that day.

The Candle of Faith

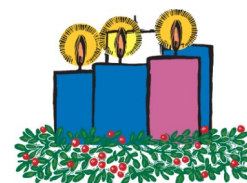
Abraham has had a woman from Pennsylvania donating to his ministry monthly. She heard about him and his work at a retreat and wanted to support him. With the help of two of his handlers, they traveled to Lancaster, PA to see her. She is now in hospice care and just lost her husband the week before. She is frail but so strong in her faith. Her eyes lit up when Abraham came walking in the door. When he did his "rise" command on her bed, she smiled from ear to ear as she scratched behind his ears. She shared about her love for Jesus and that she was ready to go spend Christmas

with Him. As the woman spoke, Abraham just settled in so she could continually pet him as she shared her faith in God with his handlers and that he too brings her comfort.



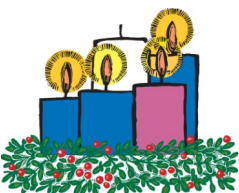
The Candle of Joy

We as ministry partners, have the privilege to see the reactions of people as we visit. Abraham recently went back to check in on Mr. Tom. Mr. Tom was the gentleman who lost his daughter to suicide just shortly after Abraham came to New York. Mr. Tom found Abraham's card in his daughter's belongings. He sobbed when he saw Abraham but then asked if his granddaughter could meet him. He also wanted to hear all about what Abraham has been doing since the last time he saw him. Mr. Tom went from crying to joy as he heard about all of Abraham's adventures.



The Candle of Peace

So many times as we leave a visit, we hope that we have provided some type of comfort and peace. Sometimes that level of peace is to calm an unsettle child and utilizing Abraham to refocus them. Or it may be a person with a heavy heart that just needs a calm distraction of petting a dog to give them a moment of tranquility.



As we conclude the season of Advent, remind yourself of the message of the angel "Peace on earth and good will toward men." An ounce of kindness can go a long way, even to a stranger. That is Jesus working in us to spread his love.

Wishing you a season of comfort and joy from the Comfort Dog Ministry Team and Abraham.

Donna Haines, *Team Abraham Top Dog*



The Paul August Jud Memorial ~ 1956 (located in our school's west corridor between the gym and cafeteria entrance doors) is a wood carving of Jesus Blessing a Young Boy. This memorial was designed by Albert Wood & Sons, Port Washington, NY in memory of Paul Jud, one of our school's former students who died so tragically young.

In 1962, Pastor Emeritus Edward Stammel commissioned Albert Wood & Sons to design the two tiled niches behind the wood carvings. Several color combinations of Cambridge Tile were used for the backgrounds and American Olean gold accent tiles were used to adorn the borders. It was around this same time ~ 1963, the wood carving of "Christ The Good Shepherd" (located in our school's west corridor, near the north staircase leading to the 2nd floor of the school) was designed by Albert Wood & Sons and installed in the constructed, second niche. This beautiful carving was given in memory of Eleanor Pflugfelder by her sister, Florence Eisemann and friends.

*See article that Stan Kramer kept in his art archives that appeared in a 1989 Newsday newspaper regarding Albert Wood & Sons, Inc. entitled "A Trade Built on Faith."

By Ellen Kerwin



DIVINE DESIGNS

A Trade Built on Faith

By Cara S. Trager

SOME COMPANIES only have hope that their business will thrive. Albert Wood & Five Sons Inc. has faith to sustain it.

The Port Washington firm is devoted to designing and furnishing houses of worship, and its genesis was in the Great Depression, when churches and synagogues served as places where the nation's masses petitioned providence in pursuit of prosperity.

Since then, the multid denominational Wood family has designed, renovated and constructed 225 synagogue sanctuaries and church chapels all over the United States and in Canada and Puerto Rico.

"After World War II, there was a big church boom on Long Island as potato fields gave way to suburbs," says Moyer Wood, the 76-year-old president of the company his father founded. "In the '50s and '60s, we did over 70 churches in the greater New York area."

Its entry into synagogues came in 1950, when Temple Beth El in Great Neck tapped the family to create an ark, a lectern and chairs for the High Holidays. Through word-of-mouth, that assignment led to synagogues in 30 states, and today temples account for the majority of its revenue.

The cost of designing and furnishing a new sanctuary can range from \$25,000 to \$150,000, which typically represents about 10 percent of the entire construction budget, says Wood.

"In the last four years, we've only done one church on Long Island but three to four synagogues," says Wood, whose company has done work for such local houses of worship as Huntington Methodist, St. Gertrude's Roman Catholic Church in Bayville and Temple Sinai in Roslyn Heights. It has current projects in Alabama, Pennsylvania and Texas.

The Wood family's religious affiliations are as di-

verse as the geographic locations of its projects. "I'm a Quaker and some of us are Catholics, Christian Scientists and Episcopalian — whatever our wives are." That diversity at home, as well as study and meetings with synagogue committees, Wood says, has helped the company understand the needs of its clients.

Today, Albert Wood is one of the few companies in the country that limits its design work to houses of worship.

"There are very few firms that just specialize in religious sites, because it's very difficult for a firm to maintain that as their only source of income," says Doris Justis, executive secretary of the 625-member Interfaith Forum on Religion and Architecture in Washington, D.C.

Founded in 1932, the company has its roots in hope chests. "My father made a hope chest for Amelia Earhart and carved three of her flights on it. Her around-the-world flight was to be carved later," Wood says.

The family later moved into repairing furniture, producing custom-made furniture and, during World War II, casting models for airplane parts.

When the war ended and Wood's four brothers returned home, the family patriarch entered the business of spiritual space design, tapping into the artistic talents of his five offspring. Eventually, Frank, who oversaw the finishing shop; left the family business for journalism, and Bertram, who ran the wood shop, became a production manager for Broadway shows.

Still active in the business are Paul, 68, a designer of stained glass, tapestries and mosaics, and Gardner, 74, a wood carver and sculptor. Moyer Wood assumes responsibility for overall design, and he and his brothers supervise the work of local studios who supplement the family's craftsmanship.

These days, the brothers generally limit their proj-



Newsday / Michael E. Ach

Moyer Wood and some of his handiwork.

ects to new and challenging sanctuaries. Where once the Woodses undertook 25 projects annually, today they work on five jobs a year.

"We are turning down a great deal of work," says Wood. "We are a big frog in a little pond." / III

NEWSDAY, MONDAY, AUGUST 14, 1989

BUSINESS/7

In 2008, a replica of the LIRR steam engine the "John Bull" was dedicated in Kennedy Park on Broadway in Hicksville. Over the years the weather has had an effect on the appearance of the engine.

On October 5, Trinity's Boy Scout Troup 231 coordinated by Hicksville Chamber Board Member, Curt Fogarty, spent a day cleaning, scraping, sanding, painting, carpentry and performing electrical work, putting the John Bull back in great shape.

For their outstanding efforts, the Hicksville Chamber of Commerce has awarded the troop the Community Service Award.

Congratulations Troop 291!



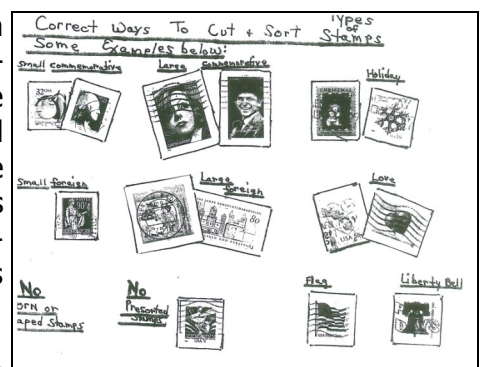
The Good News
 Miscellaneous Items of Interest



SAVE STAMPS! The Atlantic District Lutheran Women's Missionary League is collecting cancelled stamps that will be sold to a dealer. The money received from the sale of the stamps will go to the Interpreter's Fund for the Deaf of the AD LWML. Please help us by collecting stamps

for this cause and sharing this notice with friends, family or business associates. Help us make this effort a success! Here are the requirements for collecting cancelled stamps:

Commemorative Stamps—those honoring a person, place or thing, **foreign stamps**, **holiday stamps**, and **love stamps**. We are concentrating on these types of stamps. We aren't saving bell and flag stamps any longer as they are not earning much money for all the work involved. Stamps cannot be **damaged or torn**. The stamps should be cut from the envelope and have 1/8 inch of the envelope left around the entire stamp. These are the requirements from the dealer. This is an ongoing project and we are excited about it! Remember to save all the stamps from your Christmas or other holiday mail. We do get more money for commemorative stamps so please purchase them whenever you can. The dealer will also take any pages or books from a collection or first day covers. If you have any questions, please contact Jane Kramer.





UPDATE FOR JANUARY 2020
WITH COUNSELING SITES LOCATED IN:
NASSAU SUFFOLK MANHATTAN QUEENS
WESTCHESTER BROOKLYN

Practical Neuroscience and Contemplative Wisdom

By Rev. Kirk Bingaman, PhD, LCC Pastoral Counselor

In recent years, I have been focusing on neuroscientific findings, which reveal that far from being fixed and unchanging, the human brain has a remarkable capacity for growth and change across one's *entire* lifespan. Neuroscientists have only scratched the surface in terms of what is known about the human brain, which leads me back to the words of the psalmist: we humans are wonderfully and fearfully made (Psalm 139:14). The research holds great promise for helping us find ways to live abundantly and less anxiously, even in these challenging and uncertain times.

In a landmark study, the American neuroscientist, Andrew Newberg, focused on particular regions of the brain as he studied a group of Franciscan nuns doing the Christian Centering Prayer every day for fifteen years. What he found by way of periodic brain-imaging scans, which has been corroborated by subsequent research, was that having a regular spiritual practice (e.g., contemplative prayer) significantly lowers activity in the stress region of the brain while increasing activity in other regions that support health and well-being.

Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, encourages us not to be anxious or "stressed" about tomorrow, to remain centered in the present moment of today (Matthew 6:34). And while we would all agree that his teaching is foundational for the spiritual life, there is not always clarity about *how* to put it into practice. We "get it" intellectually; in other words, we know full well it would do us good to be less anxious, but beyond an intellectual grasp of Jesus' teaching there is less understanding of how to make it a practical reality.

Sometimes I will hear congregants say that they feel guilty for not having enough faith in God to "overcome" their anxiety. Unfortunately, this "self-talk" and mental chatter becomes something of a "double whammy:" along with feeling anxious, they now feel anxious and guilty about feeling anxious. I am coming to see that it is not a matter of ignoring Jesus' teaching, but rather a lack of clarity about *how* to put his words into practice.

The recent findings of contemplative neuroscience reveal that a regular spiritual practice of contemplative prayer/meditation, even for ten or fifteen minutes a day, can make a difference in how we manage our stress, regulate our anxious feelings about the future, and ultimately live more joyfully and abundantly in the gift of today. In the words of the psalmist, "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46).

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