

Trinity Today

Vol. 23, No. 1

January 1, 2021

Houston Bronze Ensemble Rings In the New Year at Trinity

Members of the Houston Bronze Ensemble (HBE) will provide music for worship at Trinity on Sunday, January 3, 2021 at our 9:00 a.m. worship service. This professional, auditioned, handbell ensemble is made up of musicians from the greater Houston area and they call Trinity Downtown their rehearsal home. Known as Houston's premier handbell choir, the ensemble normally performs regular concerts in the winter and spring and also plays for community, regional and national events. This group is under the direction of Bill Nave.

Each year, HBE has a tradition of playing for worship at Trinity on the first Sunday of January as one of the ways of saying thank you for providing them with rehearsal space. This year we look forward to hearing a socially distanced and masked ensemble playing Christmas favorites.

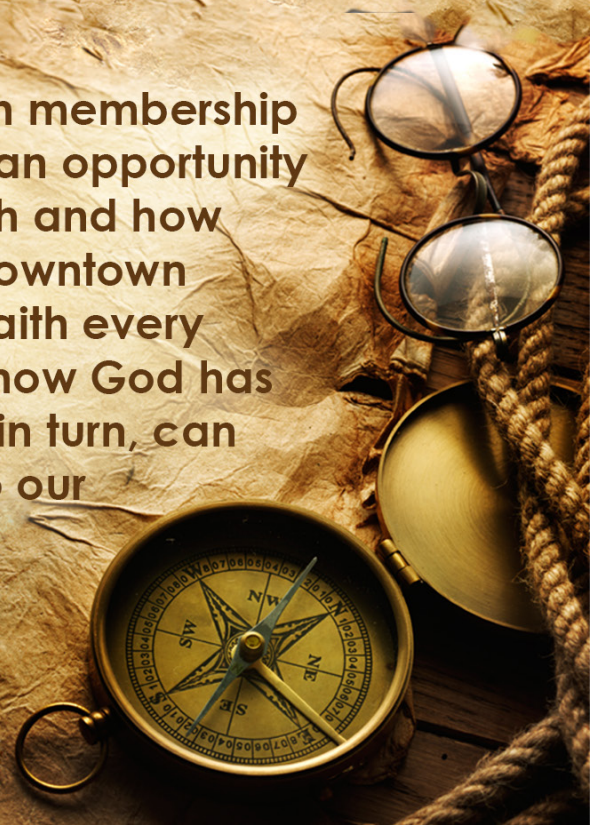


Faith Discovery Class

Sundays, January 10 - February 28
10:30 a.m. - Virtual on Zoom

8-Week class for persons interested in membership at Trinity Downtown. The class offers an opportunity to learn more about the Christian faith and how you can become part of the Trinity Downtown community as we each live out our faith every day. Class participants will discover how God has uniquely gifted them, and how they, in turn, can use their gifts in service to Him and to our neighbors.

Contact Pastor Dorn at mdorn@trinitydt.org for more information or to register for the class.



Blood Donor Sunday

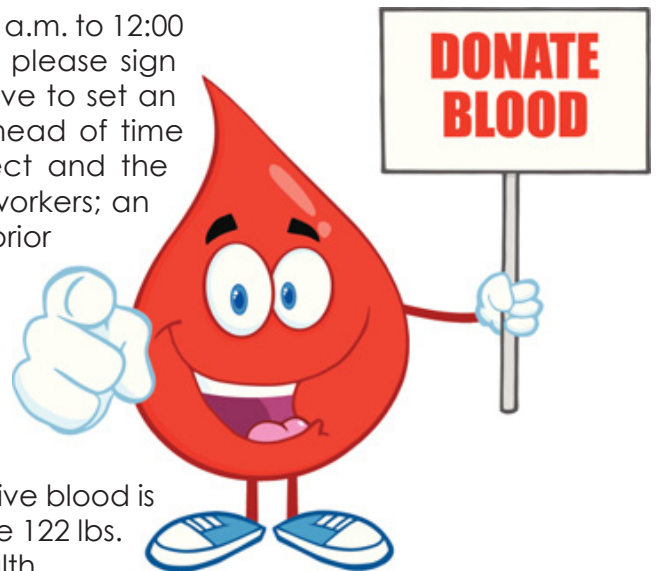
Our next Blood Donor Sunday will be held January 17, 8 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the gym. If you would prefer a special time please sign up online at www.giveblood.org and pick Trinity's drive to set an appointment. While scheduling an appointment ahead of time gives us an estimate of how many donors to expect and the Blood Center sends out the appropriate number of workers; an added bonus is we take scheduled appointments prior to walk-ups.

We look forward to a very successful drive this winter. Double red cell and combination whole blood and plasma machines will be available for those wishing to donate that way. Both count for two donations.

REMINDER!! The minimum donor age requirement to give blood is 16 years old with a parent's permission. Weight must be 122 lbs. (still 110 lbs. for 17 and older) and in general good health.

REMEMBER: one unit of blood can save as many as three lives as it is broken down into three components – red blood cells, platelets and plasma.

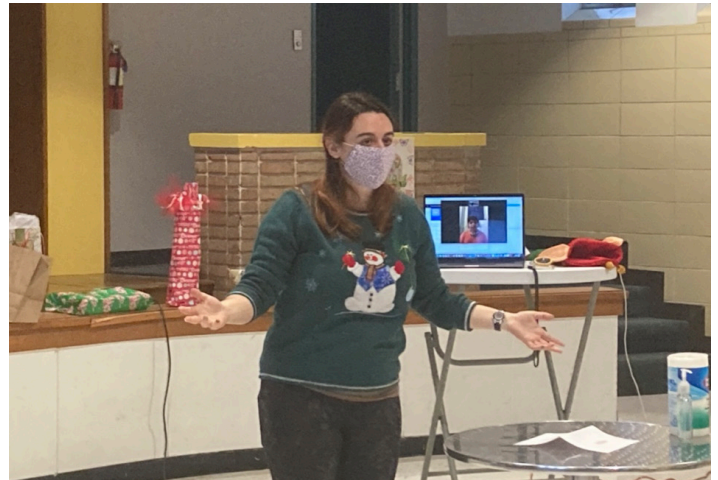
May our Lord keep you healthy so you can continue to contribute the gift of life!



Hey Folks!

I am so loving my time at Trinity so far! December was a lot of fun! Included are some pictures from our White Elephant Gift Exchange! We incorporated a hybrid method! It was a blast! January brings more events both for Children's ministry and youth! I am looking forward to these opportunities to continue to work with families, build relationships and grow in Jesus together!

Haley Davisson
Director of Youth and Children's Ministries



Playing a silly ice breaker called "Pterodactyl"



Playing Secret Follow the Leader

Youth and Adult Virtual Bible Studies

Please consider joining one of our weekly virtual Bible studies. It's a wonderful way to begin a new spiritual discipline as we enter a new year. Virtual login information is available on Trinity's website www.trinitydt.org.

SUNDAYS - YOUTH

Foundations 56 (5th-6th grades) - 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Led by Jane Suchma & Karen Maynard

Online Kids Interactive Experience. (Note: To join this class go to <https://www.trinitydt.org/youth-ministries/>.)

Confirmation Class (7th-9th grades)

Led by Mary Oliver and Haley Davisson - 10:30-11:30 a.m.

The Confirmation program seeks to help 7th, 8th, and 9th grade students own their faith. In the course, each student will learn the key truths of the Christian church as they prepare to confirm the faith into which they were baptized. The class will equip each student to apply their faith for life and provide a foundation for an ongoing relationship with God.

High School Class (9th-12th grades)

Led by Elizabeth Oliver - 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Study of the book of Ephesians.

SUNDAYS - ADULT

Faith Discovery (Begins January 10)

Led by Pastor Michael P. Dorn - 10:30-11:30 a.m.

The Faith Discovery class offers an opportunity to learn more about the Christian faith and how you can become part of the Trinity Downtown community as we each live out our faith every day. Class participants will discover how God has uniquely gifted them, and how they, in turn, can use their gifts in service to Him and to our neighbors.

Our Life's Seasons as Lived by David

Led by Thomas DeVries - 10:30-11:30 a.m.

A human life can be divided into unique "seasons". As a multi-generational class, we see the value in openly exploring among those who anticipate the season, those who are living it and those who have passed through with their medals and scars. We will use King David's life as a backdrop to our discussion and find nuggets of God's truth that can help us live in a way pleasing to Him and beneficial to the world.

The Gospel According to Mark

Led by Pastor Paul Dorn - 7:00-8:00 p.m.

The Gospel of Mark proclaims in bold and certain terms that the reign of God has come in Jesus Christ. It's good news for a world looking for hope.



The Messiah

Led by Jim Cleary - 10:30-11:30 a.m.

We hear parts of it sung every year during the Christmas season, but what many listeners fail to realize is that the entire text of Handel's *Messiah* is drawn from Scripture—and many of the Old Testament passages that shaped Israel's hope for their Redeemer are included in that text. This class will lead you through Scripture passages used in Handel's work that highlight who Jesus is and what He came to do. It might change the way you listen to the *Messiah*. Even more, it might change the way you live. Discussion-oriented but we will also be listening to Handel's *Messiah* each class as well.

Wise Up and Live - The Book of Proverbs

Led by Bill Fischer's Team - 10:30-11:30 a.m.

The Proverbs are a series of statements primarily written by King Solomon that give good advice on how a person should live. They don't tell a story as do so many other books of the Bible. Instead they provide instruction and guidance on a variety of topics, including wisdom. Learn with us on how to "Wise Up and Live!"

WEDNESDAYS

Sinners and Saints (Women's Study)

Led by Jan Case - 9:30-10:30 a.m.

There is a lot of confusion about what it means to be a sinner and a saint. "Sinners and Saints" will give you an insight into how you are both, and ultimately, how you can come to a deeper understanding of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Conversations with Jesus (Women's Study) (Resumes January 13)

Led by Mary Oliver - 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

The Wednesday Evening Women's Bible Study is reading and discussing some of the conversations Jesus had with individuals in the Gospels. We will look at the context of the meetings as well as studying the Old Testament teachings Jesus references in these interactions. We will cover a new conversation each week, so please join us when you are able.

Virtual Midweek Spiritual Check-in

Led by Jim Cleary - 7:00-8:00 p.m.

THURSDAYS

Sonrise Bible Study

Led by Pastor Donald Black - 7:30-8:30 a.m.

The class discusses the Scripture readings assigned for the following Sunday. The class is open to men and women. For more information, contact Bill Fischer at 713.827.8664 or bfisch@aol.com.

BOARD OF ELDERS - CONTACT INFORMATION

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Dan Krueger	dwkrueger5@yahoo.com	901.258.4029

Christmas Ministries Update

Adopt-an-Angel

For the past 3 years, Trinity Downtown has supported the work of the Houston Young Lawyers Association in their Adopt-an-Angel program through which dozens of law firms around the city collect Christmas gifts for distribution to under-resourced children in the city. This year, HYLA collected and distributed 2,850 gifts which were stored in Trinity's gym during December where they were sorted, tagged and then distributed.



Homeless Christmas Lunch

For many years during Christmas, Trinity has hosted a "sit down" dinner for those who are suffering from homelessness in our community. Due to the COVID social distancing restrictions, we re-imagined how we could accomplish this ministry in 2020.

Rather than having a sit-down affair, during a "normal" weekend in mid-December, the sack lunch ministry volunteers distributed:

- 80, \$15 Kroger gift cards which can be used to purchase one or two hot meals at Kroger's deli counter; and
- 80, \$35 Wal-Mart gift cards that may be used to purchase essentials such as socks, toiletries or food.

These gift cards were tucked inside an envelope containing a Christmas card with a message of hope inside that day's sack lunches.

(Continued on page 8, see "Christmas Ministries")

Finance Corner - January 2021

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to... proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; Isaiah 61:1b-2 ESV

Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. Isaiah 43:19 ESV

Well, 2020 is behind us. And it is very appropriate that we find encouraging words in the prophecy of Isaiah, which was written to the children of Israel during their Babylonian exile. We, too, found ourselves in the "wilderness of COVID" in 2020.



God, of course, has been faithful. And He will continue to be faithful to His children as we go through 2021. **Due to your faithful generosity** (and as of early December, when this article is being written) **Trinity Downtown's financial picture has weathered 2020's COVID storm well.** Through October of 2020, our offerings and other income were 6% lower than the original budget. Our expenses, however, were 8% lower and made up for the lower than budgeted revenue. Our scheduled operational debt payments continued as planned and we continued to build our Asset Replacement Fund that is designated to fund planned replacement(s) of operational assets such as HVAC systems, computers and audio/visual equipment. And we remain on track to pay off our operational debt at the end of 2021.

We look toward 2021 with faith in our God that He will show us how to share the Good News of Jesus' love in new and meaningful ways to our community. Please continue playing your part in His great plan through your prayers, engagement and generous giving of time, talent and treasure.

If you haven't had a chance to return your 2021 Commitment Card, [you can do so online by clicking this link](#), or by dropping your card in the donation basket in the Narthex. You can also mail it to the church office at:

Trinity Downtown
Attn: Angela Avant
800 Houston AVE
Houston, TX 77007

Your faithful generosity will strengthen your faith and expand the ability of Trinity Downtown to make a difference in our community.

Joining Jesus alongside you,
Ron Lacy, CFO

amazonsmile

You shop. Amazon gives.

How to increase your giving to Trinity without spending any additional money.

Please remember that you can expand your stewardship by using a program that Trinity has qualified for at Amazon. Amazon will give Trinity a 0.5% rebate for all purchases made by our supporters when making their normal purchases at Amazon. It's very easy—whenever you are shopping on Amazon, go to this web address (instead of www.amazon.com): <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/74-1238451>

Using this service from Amazon won't change the cost of the products you buy, and all of your account settings and preferences will be retained. The only thing that will change is that Trinity will receive a rebate!

What in the World is a Stephen Minister?

For where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I among them. Matthew 18:20 (ESV)

Have the events of 2020 worn you down? Do you have an issue that you need to bring to the feet of our Lord? There are

times when every one of us experiences difficulties, and God never intended for us to go through these challenges alone. If you (or a family member or friend) just need someone to talk to, trained Stephen Ministers are available to chat and pray with you via telephone or Zoom. There's no obligation; your discussion can be a "one time" event, or you may choose to have periodic conversations. It's all up to you. And you can be confident that whatever you share with them will be held in strictest confidence.



Stephen Ministers are laypeople in our congregation trained to provide one-to-one, Christ-centered care to individuals facing difficult times in life—grief, cancer, divorce, financial difficulties, hospitalization, chronic illness, job loss, disability, loneliness, a spiritual crisis, or other life struggles. They have a compassionate heart for those who are hurting, and they're equipped with caring ministry skills by their congregation's Stephen Leaders. **They listen, care, pray, encourage, and offer emotional and spiritual support.**

More than 13,000 congregations have a Stephen Ministry—representing over 180 denominations, all 50 states, all 10 Canadian provinces, and 30 other countries. Many of these congregations have had Stephen Ministry going for more than 30 years.

If you'd like to learn more about how our Stephen Ministry could provide a listening ear and caring heart for yourself, a loved one, friend, neighbor or co-worker (inside or outside our congregation) please speak with one of our pastors, or reach out to Ron Lacy at lacy@trinitydt.org or 713.229.2970.

Christmas Ministries

(Continued from page 6)

LINC/CASA's Toys for Joy

Trinity Downtown participated in LINC's "Toys for Joy" program which provides gifts to children in under-resourced households. Trinity provided 80 gift cards for distribution to needy high school kids who can use them to buy games, music, clothing, etc. Our Spanish-language ministry partner, [CASA de Oracion](#), identified needy children and distributed the gift cards.

These ministries made a real difference in the lives of many people, and were made possible by the generosity of the members and friends of Trinity Downtown!



2021 GOVERNING BOARD

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Delvin Dennis (Elder)
Thomas DeVries
Pastor Michael Dorn
Tim Grady (Elder)
Cassandra McGarvey
Dan Krueger (Elder)
Janet Mueller
Cynthia Roney

Minutes of the Governing Board are available to our members at the Welcome Center.

Greetings from Westfield House, Cambridge!

Having been on break and out of lockdown, the staff of Westfield House have arranged a concentration of outings for the Valpo students (undergrads) and us in Luther Hall (the DTM students). As such, I will endeavor to share more photos in this letter, but I do have some thoughts I'd like to share.

First, related to my previous rant on the excessive focus on philosophy here, my own experience as a new engineer came to my mind. When I first graduated and began working in industry, I managed to get it into my head – despite what others had told me – that I somehow had to prove what I knew and figure out any problem on my own. Essentially, I had to prove my worth by being as independent as possible and receiving as little help as possible – even when asking for help would grant me wisdom easier, faster, and be better for the client's bottom line. This led to much more stress and longer hours than was necessary – I probably caused more problems for myself and everyone involved in any project I worked on than I realized because I had developed this odd blend of thinking that I was on my own and that asking for help was a sign of weakness.



**Chuck Ridley,
Seminary Student**

I thought of this emphasis on philosophy over and even against the revelation of scripture which I found here in Cambridge (and apparently throughout the Anglican Church) to be very similar to my experience as a new engineer. That the church here in the UK has somehow deemed relying on scripture to be 'too easy' or that scripture is not sufficient for the tasks they see before them. It seemed to me that the church here decided that they had to prove themselves worthy somehow by using human reason through philosophy to find God when He had already shown Himself through revelation and called all people to Him through His prophets and His own Son, Jesus.

Keep in mind, this is my own speculation or interpretation on a limited amount of observation. Since having this reflection, Dr. Lumley (principal of Westfield House) informed us of "the great British compromise" that the Anglican Church has inherited over the course of time in which the pluralistic society of Britain has won out against the Gospel in many ways. That is to say, the stumbling block that is the cross of Christ – the exclusive way of salvation which is Christ Himself – has been put off in order that no one be offended. So, in this tangled mess of the monarch being the head of the church, linking church and state in a pluralistic society, it seems that the church must find roundabout ways to teach and confess the Gospel.

I'm not sure how much of what we are experiencing is due to this attitude of tossing aside the scriptures to find God through reason or to the Anglican Church making the best out of a bad situation. I'd like to give them the benefit of the doubt and assume the latter. However, there are strong indications that it is the former. Perhaps the former has even come out of the 'compromise' being in place for so long that the institution and its members have lost sight of their purpose as the Church. It's difficult to say, but Stephanie did reflect that the Anglican Church doesn't seem to know its purpose here. I suppose that if an institution that is meant to proclaim the forgiveness of sins decides that it doesn't want to talk about sin because that would offend people – or that it can't for some reason – then it seems to lose its purpose for being. When the Church replaces sin and grace with a general search for truth or vague notions of ethics uprooted from the revelation of the Creator, then I think it becomes little more than another interest group that tends to exist for the sake of nostalgia.

I don't want this to sound like a bash on the Anglican Church. I simply use that entity as an example since it is our context here. Most of our classmates are Anglican, as are most of our teachers. But this could just as easily apply to any other church body. This serves as a reflection for us, to make sure that we do not forsake the great gifts we have been given. Our Triune God has revealed Himself in various ways and we are to cherish and proclaim that truth to the world. As we celebrate

Christmas and head into Epiphany, we ought to recognize that the incarnation of the Son of God is a pivotal point in history that changes our reality. It's not a fairy tale that merely gives us insights into various parts of life, but it is an event that fulfills promises of God for us. It is good news that must be proclaimed, regardless of the views of any earthly government or any group within a pluralistic society – however diverse or homogenous. The Church exists to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom – the Gospel of the free forgiveness of sins for the sake of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We dare not shrink from this task, now or ever.

My last thought this month (I fear I've ranted again and used too much space!) is related to music and singing. In the UK, we are not permitted to sing in our services at church. The organist will play hymns and we simply meditate on the text silently. I don't mind this occasionally. Jim Marriott at the seminary has put this to good use in chapel before with one or two stanzas of a particular hymn. But I don't think this is ideal long term. Besides the hymns, we can't sing our canticles and must speak that which is meant to be sung. Speaking the Alleluia and Verse or the Agnus Dei without the music is awkward, to say the least!

I've found myself yearning to belt out beloved hymns but not being able to due to COVID restrictions. This seems to be yet one more way in which these restrictions fight against our created nature. Not only are we social creatures – not meant to be isolated as we have been – but we are embodied creatures that express ourselves vocally. Our thoughts, feelings, and faith are meant to be vocalized. A song of lament almost demands a groan, and a song of joy brings a smile to our face without even thinking about it. We are entreated to sing and make music throughout the Psalms and other parts of scripture. David and Solomon may have appointed those with 'technical' proficiency for the music at the Temple, but God doesn't require that.

This experiment in separating text and music from the voice seems to reveal a problem with our commonly held Cartesian dualism of body and mind. I'm not sure I have the space or the expertise to bear out this thought as well as I'd like. I'm always open to hearing your thoughts, though, so don't be afraid to email me if you'd like! And now, photos!



Ely Cathedral from the NW.



Ely Cathedral from the inside, giving a sense of the enormity of this beautiful building.



The Anglican Cathedral in Liverpool - apparently the fifth largest cathedral in the world. This is the visitor entrance and the photo doesn't give a good sense of how deep the church is.



The bombed-out church in Liverpool. A curious landmark that apparently has a restaurant set up within its walls now.

"Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into His presence with singing! Know that the Lord, He is God! It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise! Give thanks to Him; bless His name! For the Lord is good; His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations." (Psalm 100, ESV)

In Christ,
Chuck Ridley



Drive-Up Holy Communion

Wednesdays
11:00 am - 1 pm

Saturdays
9:30 am - 11:00 am

Call the Church Office
at 713-224-0684
8:30 am - 2:15 pm
Monday - Friday
to RSVP

A Life Quote for the Church Year - December 27 – St. John, Apostle and Evangelist

"St. John testifies of a Savior whose atoning sacrifice saves from all our sins and shortcomings (1 John 2:2). His shed blood (Revelation 1:5) has rendered that of abortion and physician-assisted suicide as unnecessary as it is ineffective and immoral. These measures have no power to deliver, and even their power to condemn fails – if we confess our sins, even sins against the sanctity of life, Jesus faithfully forgives and cleanses (1 John 1:9).

This "Life Quote" is from *LifeDate*, a quarterly journal of news and commentary from Lutherans For Life – www.lutheransforlife.org.



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*Joyfully Sharing Christ's Saving
Love With All People Now!*

www.trinitydt.org

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Article submission deadline **January 11** for articles to be published February 1, 2021.

Submit articles to pschroeder@trinitydt.org.

Contact Pam Schroeder at 713.229.2944 with any questions about this publication.