

Trinity News

“To everything there is a season,
a time for every purpose
under heaven.” || May 2017
Ecclesiastes 3:1

MINISTER’S LETTER

Dear friends

2017 marks the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, one of the most significant events in the life of the church. Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin are the main protagonists associated with that seismic event. However, there were many other significant people, both political and religious who made the Reformation possible from a human point of view. One thinks of the forerunners, John Hus of Bohemia burnt at the stake and John Wycliffe of England, persecuted but dying a natural death. Not to mention the people on the ground who responded so positively to their lead. The invention of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg, just prior to the Reformation was decisive in spreading the Reformers’ teaching. Its impact on Europe and beyond was no less dramatic than that of the internet and social media today.

Martin Luther’s nailing of the 95 Theses on the church door of Wittenberg on 31 October 1517 was the spark that lit the fire of reform. He is one of history’s most colourful characters. Passionate and brilliant, his flaws were as bright as his gifts, a timely reminder that while we admire him, he is equally a sinner saved by grace. His contemporary Ulrich Zwingli in Switzerland was not averse to using the army to enforce compliance. He died in battle, having lived by the sword he perished by the sword. The second-generation Reformer, John Calvin, a French expatriate initially reluctant, preferring a life of academic obscurity, once persuaded of the necessity of an all-embracing reform of church and society was the most theologically consistent of the Reformers. His Institutes of the Christian Faith is one of the seminal theological works impacting the faith today.

The Reformers were children of their times. They were medieval men, a far cry from our so-called post-modern world impatient with truth claims dismissed as power-games. They were also Renaissance men, schooled in the classics and the original languages of Scripture. They saw through the limitation of the Vulgate the authorized Latin translation of the Bible. Their cry was ‘ad fontes’ back to the sources to counter the wrong-headed tradition of the church placed on a par with Scripture. The five-fold cry of the Reformation God’s Word Alone, Christ Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone, God’s Glory Alone is as fresh and relevant today as it was in the heart of battle 500 years ago. Today we shun theological conflict as unbefitting the church. However, truth is honed in the midst of struggle and we honour the sacrifice and commitment of our forebears who made possible the faith we so easily take for granted today.

Until next time,

Your minister and friend.

Alan



SESSION CLERK'S LETTER

This month we finish of on our series on 8 ways we can assist the next generation taken from an article by Frank Powel called, “Church: 8 Things The Next Generation Needs From You”.

This month I want to share the last four points in this article with you namely:

UNDERSTAND THEIR STRUGGLES

The Next Generation is often saddened to hear “other Christians say the struggles today are no different than previous generations. The next generation is facing a unique set of struggles. Relativism. Post-modernism. Individualism. Yes, these were present in other generations. But not to this degree. This is the cultural norm for the next generation. We need the church to understand this. The culture is different today than in generations past...It requires intentionality. It requires the work of the Spirit. It also requires community and prayer. Please do not quickly dismiss their struggles and issues.”

TAKE THE FIRST STEP

“The next generation needs to hear your stories of faith. Your experiences with Jesus. There is much they can learn from the work the Lord has done through you.” I have adapted the sentences slightly, that follow. Can you consider taking the first step? Can you try to reach out to them. Try to lay down any pride that may exist. Reach out your hand to them. The future of the church might just depend on it.

POINT THEM TO JESUS

“More than anything, this is what the next generation needs from the church. They need to see you pursuing Jesus with passion and zeal. They need to see a counter-cultural life. They need to see people not controlled by fear and human opinions. The next generation doesn’t need to see a new approach to imitating Jesus. They need to see a real one. One that is not hindered by human traditions. One that is founded and controlled by love.”

BE OK WITH DIFFERENT

“The next generation is different. No doubt about that. There are differences in personality. Differences in ideology. Different ways to look at the world. Different ways to look at ministry and drawing people to Jesus. But this is not bad. We must all be OK with different. Different is not wrong...it is different.”

In conclusion Frank Powell says:

“So, what is important? Jesus. Love. Trust the next generation as they go into the world. Trust that the love of Jesus Christ will prevail in their hearts. And in the hearts of the people they encounter.”

Pierre Fournie

Session Clerk



NEXT GENERATION LEADER'S LETTER

Dear Friends

As you all know, winter is upon us and while I am sure that many people dislike this season, for obvious reason, I cannot help being reminded of the beauty that this season brings. From the warm and rich colours of the changing leaves to the marvellous sun rises and sun sets, this season I must admit is one of my favourites.

And yet even within the beauty that surrounds us during this season, I am also reminded of those who find this season to be an immense struggle. There are those who live in and around our community who find no comfort in the cold weather. There are those who face seemingly endless challenges in something as simple as trying to keep warm. Let us not forget about the abundant blessings given to us by the Father and in remembering these blessings, I urge us all to act in accordance with the will of God, to serve all people.

There are many ways in which we can get involved in efforts to help our community members. As many may know, there is the food drive which is in desperate need of help as they supply many children with food parcels. Also, there are many people in desperate need of warm blankets as well as warm clothing. This winter, I pray that we as a fellowship of believers will be able to set an example to others and at the same time, glorify the Father as we seek to serve Him.

Lincon Hardouin

Next Generation Leader

MONTHLY CHARISMA FOOD PARCELS

Our food parcels contains 11 items, a month's worth of groceries altogether costing approximately R250.00 :

2.5kg Maize Meal,
500g White Kidney Beans,
500g Small White Beans,
2 x 1kg Samp or Sorghum Meal,
1 kg Sugar,
500g Iodised salt,
2 x 200g Savoury Soya Mince,
410g Peanut Butter,
410g Sheba/Tomato Onion Mix,
2 x 410g Pilchards,
100 Tea bags.



If you are able to donate any or all of these items, it will help to alleviate the suffering of the families under our care. Items can be dropped off at the church office on Sundays or during the week. Alternatively it would be greatly appreciated if you could deposit R250.00 into our Charisma bank account in order to help us provide the families with food. Our banking details are available in our Sunday pew leaflet and on our website at <http://www.trinity.org.za>

WINTER WARMTH

Gwen Barry knitted many multi-coloured, warm-as-toast jerseys and the St Columba's congregation sent us beanies for our Charisma children this winter.



The Trinity congregation is responding with faithful generosity to a request for blankets. We are privileged to be able to show our Lord's care and compassion for the children who attend our Drop-In Centre.

TRINITY'S PRAYER MINISTRIES

Following a number of discussions, Session requested that an initiative be considered to look afresh at Trinity's prayer ministries.

It was proposed that Malcolm Brown, Charlotte McBride and Heyn van Rooyen get together as an informal committee and share their thoughts on Trinity's prayer ministries.

The following were raised at the meeting:

TESTIMONIES

Sharing testimonies within the church is very important and serves to edify and to exhort. Testimonies could form part of our church service and the aim would be that testimonies serve to compliment the service. A proposal in the regard will be submitted to Session.

QUARTERLY CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER (QCP)

QCP meetings have been held for a while and are viewed as an important part of corporate prayer. It was suggested that Trinity continue with QCP that more structure should be lent to it. Session will be presented with some insights in this regard.

2017 A YEAR OF PRAYER

Trinity should seriously consider making 2017 a year of prayer. Prayer should be expanded at Trinity, both on an individual and corporate level. The committee was requested to share some ideas with Session in this regard as well.

WHY THE CALL TO WORSHIP IS SO IMPORTANT

First, we live in a society that teaches us to think highly of our own ability. Americans [South Africans?] are a fiercely independent, self-motivated people. The Call to Worship puts us in our place.



We come to worship because God has a summons on our lives. We come to worship because God initiates with us, not the other way around. So the call to worship reminds us of God's sovereign reign over us...

The committee sensed that a “grass roots” approach to prayer should be taken when we look at Trinity’s prayer ministries. Information regarding prayer should be published in the pew leaflet on a regular basis.

Trinity’s prayer ministries should include prayer during church services, with specific reference to call to worship prayers and intercessory prayers. Prayer at Trinity seems to be somewhat fragmented. In all instances, prayer should be lined up with the Word of God. We have to look carefully at our prayer ministries and actually compile proper “terms of reference” (objectives) for each prayer ministry, including contemplative prayer.

The relevant prayer ministries include the following:

1. QUARTERLY CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER (QCP)
2. PRAYER AT WORSHIP SERVICES (Call to worship)
3. INTERCESSORY PRAYER (Worship services and fellowship groups)
4. PRAYER IN BIBLE STUDY AND FELLOWSHIP GROUPS
5. PRAYER IN SESSION MEETINGS
6. PRAYER IN EXCO MEETINGS
7. CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER (Tuesday evenings and Saturday mornings)
8. PERSONAL PRAYER AND REFLECTION (Quiet time)

The relevant prayer events include the following:

1. REQUESTS FOR PRAYER - TRINITY PRAYER CHAIN (Periodic prayer letters - Anglican and Presbyterian)
2. PRAYER POINTERS (Prayer requests published weekly in the pew leaflet)

When it comes to frameworks, we should begin with the Lord's Prayer, which starts with worship and adoration, leading into intercession, followed by specific requests.

Very good examples of well-structured prayers at Trinity are coming from "call to worship" prayers offered at our regular church services. Teaching on prayer is also very important because we all have to develop a solid understanding of prayer - including what our prayer life and quiet times should entail. Prayer requires proper spiritual preparation if we are desiring a living relationship with Jesus.

In one's prayer life, it is extremely important to specifically carve out some prayer space for Jesus. This would be different for every person, but we need to give people hooks on how to create that space and to help them getting out of the guilt cycle which so often burdens people who have not properly carved out their prayer life. One way of approaching this, could be to have separate workshops for men and ladies on how to carve out one's prayer life.

When looking at Trinity's prayer ministries, we should be very careful that those who are involved (i.e. the committee) should not be viewed as a closed group.

The committee agreed that leadership and proper direction in respect of Trinity's prayer ministries, should come specifically from Session and it should be announced from the pulpit.

The committee suggested that the current prayer ministries continue, especially the Quarterly Congregational Prayer (QCP) Meeting, which should happen again on the 24th of May 2017. However, Session has an important role to play here in terms of structuring an agenda for it.

The committee also suggested that a special prayer weekend should be arranged by Session, which should be attended (if at all possible) by all members of Session. It is very important that such a prayer weekend should also allow ample time to listen to the Lord as well. If necessary, someone could be identified to lead such a prayer weekend. Ideally, the prayer weekend should be scheduled around June or early July.

A renewed focus on prayer is envisaged for our congregation. Please pray for Trinity's ministries and feel free to engage with any members of the committee in sharing any ideas you may have in the building of this ministry that is so crucial.

"And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people."

~ Eph 6:18 (NIV) ~

BIND US TOGETHER, LORD

We are taught that the three things we can never take back are:

**The spoken word,
The sped arrow,
The lost opportunity.**

'*B-women for God*', a ladies morning at Trinity, would have been a lost opportunity for me if something hadn't nudged me to attend. The notice wasn't a showstopper and the topic seemed a bit vague. However, it turned out to be an amazing witness and teaching by Dr Genevieve James. In short, she encouraged us to look at our city - to be at the **CROSSROAD**:

To **STAND** – cease movement and make a better choice (Jer 6: 16)

To **LOOK** – open your eyes. Do **NOT** be satisfied with reporters (they after all have their own opinions) and statistics. Be aware of false news (Jer 6: 14)

To **ASK** - for wisdom and the path of life and peace. The "**SHALOM**"

To **WALK** – in God's way (Romans 12: 2)

As I listened to her with increasing trepidation and anxiety, it occurred to me that I alone could not fix our city but perhaps I could fix our street? Even that seemed daunting.

I asked God to guide me to a manageable task. Too often I find myself wanting to eat the whole elephant in one sitting instead of a teaspoonful at a time.

Whilst I was hoping for a bolt of lightning, it actually came to me slowly, that the 'fixing' could and should begin at Trinity itself.

When I attended the talk, I was one of maybe three Anglican ladies present. The rest of the ladies were from the Presbyterian Trinity congregation. As I listened to the conversations around me, and the subsequent thanks to the wonderful community of Trinity, I had a momentary pang of jealousy... this after all is **MY** Trinity as well. I suddenly felt like an in-law, smiled at and greeted but not allowed into the inner sanctuary.

The more I thought about it, the more I realised that we as two-communities-in-one need more than a few interdenominational services during the year. We really need to become **ONE**. After all, we sing "*Bind us together, Lord*", "*Father, make us One*", "*Let there be Love*", "*We shall go as One*", and so many more. Are we leaving our words and intentions in church? And when we go outside, forget what we have asked for inside?

On a more personal level, we all have our 'seats' in church. Have you ever wondered who it is that sits in 'your' seat for the other service? Maybe we could be challenged to leave our name on that seat one day and simply begin by praying for that person?

We drink tea and coffee out of the same cups... Why aren't we sharing those cups of tea and coffee? Café Trinity has gone a long way to bridging the gap between the two communities and yet even then there are the Wednesday and Thursday bible study groups. Why do the two bible study groups not join up for a season? After all, we are all aspiring to the same end, aren't we?

Then there is Trinity Times, published once a month for the Anglican community. In this publication the people are introduced to members of the congregation, and happenings and news are shared. Why not share these profiles, happenings and news with the Presbyterians? In fact, why not have a combined publication? There are the most interesting and wonderful people in each of Trinity's two halves.

And what a blessing it would be if the two halves of Trinity could become **WHOLE**. This would be a small beginning to healing our community and then our city and ultimately our beloved nation.



Yvonne Shobbrook

(Social Responsibility)

Trinity Anglican

GET TO KNOW YOUR ELDER: LOUISE RUCH

I am involved with the TUKSs Theology students through Presbytery. At the last meeting where we were talking about spiritual gifts, one of the students asked, "Why must we sit at AGM's and listen to boring reports about activities and finances? Why can't we get a report on how the Elders are doing? They are accountable to the Congregation and should answer on how they are doing spiritually!" Thank goodness that is not what we have to do in this new series in the Newsletter – for Church is not about the Elders, but about Christ and His Church and the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Can you imagine a meeting where Elders report on: how many Bible Studies they are involved in; how many hours they pray; submit proof that they are living holy lives.... The only one rejoicing will be Satan!



Like the Pharisees, we will be trying to measure our spirituality by how well we conform to the letter (Law). No one knows that better than me. Church has been part of my life since early childhood, but it was only after completing Grade 12 that I came into a personal relationship with Christ. At that time Philippians 3:14 spoke very clearly to me: In my own eyes, I was this wonderful Christian - a leader in the youth group, a Sunday School teacher, every Sunday morning and evening in Church.... And here was the giant Paul saying, "*Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.*" (Philippians 3:3, 8-14). We will never become the new creation we are called to be by setting spiritual goals and attaining them. We can only attain true spirituality by abiding in Jesus, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End of all things. John the Baptist was a wonderful type of true spiritual ministry. His whole purpose and devotion was to prepare the way for Jesus, to point to Him, and then to decrease as He increased.

Most of you know me – even if it is only the ever changing hair colour from pink to blue, to green.... I am a social worker by profession and presently the Director for the Catholic Family Life and Community Centre – a welfare organisation rendering generic social work services. I am married with 3 sons. My husband is a retired diplo mat, but is still guiding German speaking tour groups in South Africa. We had the wonderful privilege of living for several years in Germany, New York, Israel and Egypt – and in each of these countries we worshipped in a different denomination – Baptist, Anglican, Community Church, Presbyterian! I love reading and am a passionate animal lover. My spiritual gifts are teaching, administration and leadership – but I am always open for where the Lord wants to use me – His toolbox of gifts will provide!



Louise Ruch
Elder

PRAYER DURING RAMADAN

The Islamic holy month of Ramadan begins around May 27th and ends around June 25th. Unfortunately this time of the Islamic calendar often includes a rise in terrorist attacks and persecution against Christians and other non-Muslim minorities in Muslim majority countries.

As the Muslims celebrate their holy month, let us pray for them and those whom their extremist brothers are and have been persecuting.

Let us pray for strength and greater love and dependence upon God for those who face persecution.

Let us pray that God may soften and bring His Light to hearts which have become hardened against Christ, or have never had the chance to know Him. And let us pray for those who were affected by the recent suicide bombing in Manchester.



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