

2008

Annual Report

February 8rd, 2009

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Assistant Rector's Annual Report – *Rev. Mariclaire Partee*

2008 was a busy and dynamic year for Trinity, Solebury and for me in my role as Assistant Rector. Besides experiencing my first Easter at Trinity, I got to see the beginning of my second full liturgical year and start to settle into the repetition of events and holy days. As part of my diocesan required continuing education, I participated in a three day conference on monasticism and the emerging church at Rutba House in Durham, NC, participated in a study group with colleagues from the Philadelphia area focusing on attracting and keeping young families in church that continues into 2009, and went on pilgrimage to Israel. The costs of my trip to Israel were paid for by The Holy Land Prize, an academic prize for graduating seniors of the M. Div. program at the General Theological Seminary. Prize winners are selected by faculty of the institution. I presented an evening forum on my experiences in Jerusalem here in the fall.

The Pastoral Care and Spiritual Life ministries, for which I am the staff liaison, continued to be successful in 2008. The Pastoral Care ministry sponsored two Trinity Cares cook-ins, and distributed many frozen meals to parish families and individuals. I introduced a didactic component to our general meetings this year, including sessions on Holy Listening and Self-care for the Pastoral Caretaker, the latter presented by Jeff and Nancy Harrison, who are psychologists in private practice. These educational components were well received and will be continued throughout the 2009 meetings. Pastoral Care as a ministry is working towards developing a more structured method of providing and tracking pastoral care, either modeled on or using the curriculum of the Stephen Ministry program.

Spiritual Life has blossomed under its own vestry representative, and this year was able to sponsor multiple forums as well as a summer bible study. The fall of 2008 saw the reintroduction by this ministry of the Disciples of Christ in Community programs. We had four lay facilitators who were trained at Christ Church, Philadelphia, and eleven participants from the congregation. We met weekly beginning in September, and finished a week before Christmas. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, and it is hoped that this program will become a part of the regular schedule of events offered at Trinity. As spiritual life programming operates on an academic calendar, many offerings of this ministry are yet to come, including two book studies, and inquirers class, and another bible study in the early months of 2009.

Priest Associate – *The Rev. Dr. Virginia M. Sheay*

Providing Sunday clergy assistance at the services is my main responsibility. Serving at the discretion of the Rector, you will find me officiating, preaching, or assisting with healing on any given service during the program year. As needed, I also assist on special feast days such as Christmas, Evensong, Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, and the Easter Vigil.

In 2008 I offered two quiet day retreats. During Lent, I led a reflection on *Mother Teresa: Her Spiritual Journey Through the Dark Night of the Soul*. During the Advent season I offered: *A Christian Pilgrimage Through George Herbert*. Known perhaps as the quintessence of all Anglican spirituality, Herbert, seventeenth-century priest and poet wrote a collection of poems called *The Temple*. We studied and meditated on a selection of poems from this great work of his.

Also in 2008 I consulted and gave mutual support to the Newcomers' Ministry which was the emphasis of my doctoral dissertation many years ago.

This Lent I plan to continue additional study on a selection of George Herbert's poems that reflect Lent and Holy Week themes. And, looking toward Advent, I was inspired by one of the Quiet Day participants to lead a study and meditation on John Milton's *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*", one of the most beautiful and exquisite Christmas poems in the English language.

While being licensed to officiate in the Diocese of Pennsylvania, I am canonically resident in the Diocese of New Jersey where I serve on two Diocesan Committees, one of which is Congregational Development. Being retired, my husband, Ron, and I reside in the summer on Southport Island, Maine. We attend All Saints by-the-Sea, the summer chapel on the island. From time to time I am scheduled to conduct some of the Sunday services, offer assistance in the various ministries, and continue to chair the Music Committee.

Rector's Wardens Annual Report – *Otho Kerr, Vestry Liaison*

This past year and this past month have been trying for the entire Trinity family. For many of you, the pain is recent, still current. For others, the discomfort has been longstanding and now you feel a sense of relief. All of these emotions are valid and real. We have the right to feel the full range of emotions associated with Marshall's departure. However, we can't let these emotions be debilitating, and I fear that we have. As a form of protest, some of you have withheld pledges. And in an attempt to punish Marshall or me or the Vestry, you have put Trinity in financial jeopardy. Purportedly proving a point, some of us have completely jettisoned everything that we profess to believe in as Christians by turning away from our Trinity family members, by making accusations and by allowing no room for empathy or understanding. Being a good Christian is easy during good times. It is the challenging times that truly test what we have learned as we walk in Christ. Are we really asking ourselves, "What would Jesus do?" If we are to be a true Christian family, it is time for us to recalibrate and to remember what it means to be a Christian.

Giving

The economic and emotional challenges of the past year have taken their toll on Trinity's financial condition. We are entering 2009 with pledge commitments well behind where they need to be for a healthy balanced budget. If you have not made a pledge for 2009, I hope you will take the time to consider your commitment to Trinity and to make a generous pledge immediately. Pledge envelopes will be mailed to families that have not yet pledged. (And if you have pledged, please consider an increase in your pledge if that is at all financially feasible.)

In order for us to balance our budget for 2009, we need another \$100,000 in pledges. In order to meet this challenge, Don Eavenson has graciously offered to lead Trinity in an emergency pledge drive during the months of February and March. During that time, he will lead a focused effort to reach out to non-pledging families and to families that might be willing to step up and support Trinity further during a difficult environment. We are a church comprised of about 200 families that pledge regularly. A healthy budget depends on about \$600,000 in pledges, or the equivalent of \$3,000 per pledging family. To date, we have 50 fewer families that have pledged and we are \$200,000 shy of where we should be. We have quite a bit of work to do.

A failure to meet our financial goals will lead to a drastic, harmful cut in expenses. We encourage you to help us from having to make difficult cost cutting decisions. As you can appreciate, personnel decisions might need to be part of the equation. Please consider how you might be able to help Trinity meet its financial obligations during a challenging economic environment. If you haven't pledged, please do so immediately.

Forgiving

This past year has also taken its toll on how we treat each other, our Trinity friends and family. As Trey and I were driving back to New York City after the Parish Meeting on January 4th, Trey asked me in his very caring and insightful way whether I would have difficulty forgiving certain folks who had spoken up at the meeting. He didn't ask the question with anybody in mind, but he had certainly witnessed what I had experienced. I faced aggressive questions, along with indictments and accusations. Perhaps I was in denial or perhaps I thought highly of my emotional constitution, but I suggested to him that I understood the hurt and the pain that were being expressed and that I didn't take it personally. Forgiveness, at that moment, didn't even seem necessary since I wasn't harboring any ill will – or so I thought.

Trey was prescient. At about 3:00 in the morning, I woke up and began replaying in my head the Parish Meeting -- over and over again. As I reacquainted myself with what had transpired, I began building a reservoir of resentment and anger. I felt so guilty about how I was feeling that I emailed Cliff Nesbit and Caroline Oakes McCarthy at 4:30 in the morning and essentially cried for help in forgiving specific parishioners who I believed had wronged me. I was having difficulty reconciling my role as a Christian leader with my angry emotions.

Forgiveness and grace are critical words in Christian tradition. We believe that as good Christians we must forgive and forget since we are a people focused on love and peacemaking. However, according to the Alban Institute, experience shows that forgiveness can be too quick and, ultimately, not redemptive. And indeed, it can be part of the problem

rather than part of the healing process. Cliff Nesbit cautioned me to be patient and to allow God to determine when forgiveness was appropriate or complete. Cliff counseled that I should begin each day asking God to give me the strength to forgive specific individuals and families, even writing the names of those people in a journal.

I followed Cliff's advice. This has been a powerful practice. I can't explain why I have been able to forgive and move on, but I have. Maybe it's because I have put myself in the shoes of the specific people who offended me and I can see the world through their eyes. Maybe it's because I don't perceive any benefits arising from my continuing to be angry. Maybe it's because I can truly see what I could have done differently to minimize their hurt. However God has decided to have a hand in how I forgive, prayer has helped me through this. If you are angry and yearning to forgive as Christ would expect of us, consider an intentional regimen of daily prayer asking God to give you the power to forgive. In order to move forward, we need to ultimately forgive and forget, and we need to do this in the context of learning how to love each other more.

But my ability to move forward has also been lovingly guided by Caroline's counsel. Caroline responded to my call for help by sending me a copy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Strength to Love*. In one chapter, Dr. King opines that no admonition of Jesus has been more challenging to follow than the directive to "love your enemies", which necessarily requires the capacity to forgive. In his book, Dr. King explored practical ways of learning to love one's enemy. But one insight truly resonated with me. Dr. King said, "[W]e must recognize that the evil deed of the enemy-neighbor, the thing that hurts, never quite expresses all that he is. An element of goodness may be found even in our worst enemy." He further said, "[T]here is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies." I certainly don't perceive Trinity to be a church full of enemies, but feelings are raw right now, and some of us are having difficulty loving certain members of our Trinity family. The trick is for us to take the time to truly appreciate and honor the goodness that you know exists in every member of Trinity. I know that taking that time – to think about the goodness in those folks who have been most challenging for me – has helped me to forgive and to move forward. As I seek to forgive, I also ask – where necessary – that you seek to forgive me for any pain or hurt that I may have caused you.

I'd be in denial to suggest that Trinity is a place of unity and harmony right now. But if we want to rise to the potential that we have as Christians and if we are interested in returning Trinity to the warm, loving place that it has been, we need to remember Jesus' directive, learning how to forgive and how to love each other more.

Moving Forward

Trinity is an extraordinary church. Its parishioners are passionate and engaged. We have a robust youth program, and outreach is a norm at Trinity. Parishioners yearn to support one another, giving strength to our pastoral care programs. The seeds are there. I have already witnessed in the past few weeks a revived enthusiasm and love that will give Trinity a chance for renewal. We are moving forward. We are currently working with the Diocese to identify an interim rector, and we have already received information on a potential interim. We hope to have an interim rector join us by the end of March at the latest. We look forward to supporting whoever is called to bring his/her powers of healing to Trinity. I trust we will find the strength to love each other more and to nourish the seeds that will give rise to a stronger Trinity.

People's Warden – *Sue Eavenson, Vestry Liaison*

Last year when I wrote my annual report, I said that 2007 was a challenging year. Little did I know the struggles that were to come for our Trinity family. It has been a year filled with many blessings and disappointments. Trinity has faced and will continue to face challenges on many levels emotionally, personally, and financially through 2009, but I have no doubt that this wonderful faith based community will rise above our differences and once again unite in our common love of Christ and one another. As People's Warden, I have been privy to the personal sadness surrounding the departure of our rector, but I am also sensing a renewed energy to get back that "Trinity Spirit" that so many have referenced over the years. To encourage this, we will be having multiple pot luck suppers throughout the year so that the Trinity family can just spend time together and enjoy one another's company. The suppers are scheduled for the first Sunday of each month at 5:00 until the end of the program year. The next supper will be on March 1st. I encourage you all to attend.

Despite the sadness and our divisions, there has been much to celebrate at Trinity. Here are just some of our many blessings in 2008: We sponsored the first missionary for the Diocese of Pennsylvania. Our own Kyle Evans took a year long position in Haiti. We welcomed a new youth director, Joel Esala. Our youth group continues to grow under Joel wonderful spirit-led leadership. Mission Philly was again a fabulous success even gaining the attention of Philadelphia mayor, Michael Nutter. We baptized many new babies, welcoming them into the life of Christ and into the Trinity family. We had thirteen young people receive the sacrament of Confirmation. Lobsterfest, House Tour, Cookie Bake, and Breakfast with Santa were again great successes. A DOCC program was established this fall with six trained facilitators and twenty participants. Tim Harrell continues to grow our outstanding music program not only on Sundays but also with the many concerts offered throughout the year. Trinity celebrated Doug McArthur's 90th birthday with Scottish foods and a bagpiper; and how could we forget the joyous celebration of Jen and Matt Summer's wedding in which the entire parish was invited!

As Trinity faces the challenges of 2009, it is my hope that we will meet our ongoing stewardship goals of time, talent, and treasure. Pledging is still not where it needs to be to operate Trinity Church with all of its staffing and programs. There will be an intentional effort to reach our financial pledge goal over the next few months. I encourage you all to look into your hearts and reach into your pockets and see if you can find some additional funds to support your church. Unfortunately, if these financial needs are not met some difficult decisions are going to have to be made in 2009. Sharing of your time and talents is also going to be required. Leadership is needed for many positions especially some of our key fund raisers like House Tour and Grandma's Attic. If you have any interest in chairing these events, please contact me.

Finally, in this time of transition, we need to be ever mindful of the needs of other especially those within this parish. Healing is going to required patience and love. I do believe God is challenging us to do just that!

"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

Ephesians 4:2-3

God's peace and blessing to you all!

Church School Ministry- *Joel Esala, Director of Youth and Family Ministries*

Like most everything else at Trinity, Church School has been in a year of transition. We have undergone a transition of leadership with the arrival of Joel Esala as the Church School director and the resignation of Ann Bamford as Vestry liaison. Ann Bamford is to be honored for her service on Vestry and in her support of Joel Esala's transition to Church School director.

With 30 dedicated teachers, the Church School continues to be a labor of love aimed at fostering the spiritual maturity of Trinity's children. In spring of 2008, the Church School conducted a survey of parents in order to better assess itself with its strengths and weaknesses. This survey made clear several areas that needed to be addressed, most notably a better curriculum for everyone and stability with the Jr. High class. Having surveyed several different possibilities, Ann Bamford and Joel Esala decided to purchase the *Living the Good News Curriculum*, which has received universal affirmation as a change for the better. The lessons are age appropriate and focus on applying the weekly lectionary readings to our lives. By being lectionary-based, parents are empowered to be the primary spiritual teachers of their children, since everyone hears the same readings from week to week. The Jr. High Church School class has received special attention in order to better help it flourish. Giving them the youth room to meet, along with three consistent teachers, the class has seen improvement in attendance from last year.

The greatest need with Church School is for more teachers to help prevent volunteer burn out. Our teachers generally work in teams and take shifts of 4-6 weeks for the year, which keeps any one teacher from getting overloaded. If you are interested in helping, please contact Joel Esala at jesala@trinitysolebury.org

Communications & Technology Ministry - *Fred Koberna, Vestry Liaison*

The Communication & Technology Ministry seeks to facilitate effective communication within the Trinity community and with the wider community in which we live.

Trinity Web Site

Jon Hayward chairs the Web team. The Trinity web site continues to be a valuable communications vehicle for our parish. Many enhancements to the Trinity website were made this year with the objectives of simplifying maintenance tasks and guaranteeing that the site is up-to-date with the weekly activities, service leaflets and bulletins and recordings of the sermon. All major events are highlighted on the site's home page to ensure they are broadly communicated to the Trinity family and to the broader community.

A major addition to the web site this year was the "whitebooks" website which provides an area to store important files. For example all of the Lobsterfest communication materials, meeting notes, operations manual, etc. are stored and available to anyone over the web. By allowing these files to be stored in one place, with easy access by everyone working on the project, the whitebooks website will greatly facilitate project planning and execution from year-to-year. It can also be used as a workspace for people to edit a document in a collaborative manner, without the need to email large files back and forth.

All ministries should consider using the new "whitebooks" website since it provides: easy retrieval and storage over the web; automatic backed-up for documents; continuity of information flow as leadership changes; and a consistent storage location for documents that are now scattered over many volunteer's computers. Please contact Jon or Fred for more information.

As an addendum to the "whitebooks" system, there is a "photo" website that can be used for uploading and sharing photos. Please contact Jon or Fred for more information on this.

Tidings Newsletter

Michelle Summerson is our Tidings editor. Michelle took over the responsibility of the Tidings in October 2007 and has worked with Debbie Stedman to plan the articles for each issue. Michelle is responsible for the layout of the newsletter, and has done an outstanding job in giving the Tidings a new look and feel, and in making the newsletter visually appealing and easy to read.

We published 10 issues of *Trinity Tidings* in 2008 (monthly except May-June and July-August combined) plus the special Millennium Development Goals (MDG) issue. The MDG issue was a project headed by Jean Evans, and featured articles from parishioners and clergy to help inspire thoughtful discernment and action towards reaching out to the wider world through these UN goals. It was designed as a "keepsake" issue, potentially as the first in a series of special issues.

The Tidings newsletter was printed in-house and mailed with the help of a "mailing team" of volunteers to 525 parishioners and others from the Trinity database. In an effort to be responsible stewards of our financial and environmental resources, as well as being mindful of the staff's time, the primary distribution of the Tidings newsletter will change from a mass mailing to an electronic system, effective with the March edition. Details regarding the new distribution method are included on the front page of the February issue of the Tidings.

Michelle will be stepping down after this issue. Please join me in thanking Michelle for her time commitment and exceptional work in this ministry.

Trinity News emails

Since email has become the principle source of communication for almost all of us, the Trinity email list is an invaluable tool for disseminating information in an efficient and timely manner. Trinity News newsletters, which are coordinated by Debbie Stedman, are emailed on a weekly basis and provide information regarding the week's events. The Trinity email list is also used to disseminate information about all major events and announcements.

If your email address is not included in the Trinity distribution list, please provide it to Debbie Stedman at dstedman@trinitysolebury.org.

Printed Materials

Jon partnered with members of other committees to develop a range of printed materials, including the Lobsterfest mailer, poster, sponsorship letter and ad book, the Lexus raffle poster, and the House Tour mailer, poster and tickets. Importantly, Jon created these documents in Microsoft Word, which allows anyone to revise them for use in future years.

Previously, these types of materials were created in software packages that were only available to production professionals.

Technology

Jon Hayward is also responsible for the “Technology” aspects of this ministry. In addition to managing the web site, Jon was responsible for keeping the office computers running, handling email maintenance, setting up the volunteer computer, maintaining the computers used for recording the sermons and the selection of the new parish census software program.

Church Directory

During 2007, Lifetouch was brought in to take photographs and also to produce the Trinity Directory, saving staff hours and production costs. Photos were taken during 2007 and the directory was printed in 2008. Debbie Stedman will contact Lifetouch to determine how we can cost effectively add new families to the directory in 2009.

Parish Census Survey

We will be mailing a brief Parish Census survey to all Trinity families in the near future. This survey will allow the church office to update contact information as well as obtain information regarding baptisms and confirmations that is required to complete our Parochial Report. Please take the time to complete and return this survey so we can have a complete and accurate member database.

2009 Objectives

As I mentioned during the January 4th Parish Meeting, one of the objectives of this ministry is to improve the overall level of communication with the congregation, both in terms of keeping you up-to-date on key information and decisions and in obtaining feedback from you. If you have any suggestions that will help us meet these objectives, please feel free to communicate them to Fred Koberna at communications@tinitysolebury.org.

Finance Ministry – Christopher White, Vestry Liaison

For the year 2008, we as a church faced some financial challenges, successes and hardships as not seen since the fire.

We started the year off with expenses and revenues in line with the budget approved by the Vestry and moved to mid-year in the hole by more than \$50,000. Finishing the year with a loss of only \$6,275.28 was a result of prudent cost cutting lead by all Vestry members and a very good December by the parish for giving.

2008 Review

	Budget 2008	2008 Final	Difference
Revenues	\$757,300.00	\$698,855.53	\$58,474.47
Expenses	\$769,307.24	\$704,557.49	\$64,749.75
Pledges	\$605,000.00	\$538,180.36	\$66,819.64

We will need to exercise what the Vestry approved last November, a transfer from “Rainy Day” funds of \$6,605.96 to balance out our cash flow.

	2008 Budget	2009 Budget
Revenues	\$757,330.00	\$596,132.04
Expenses	\$769,307.24	\$645,608.10
Pledges	\$605,000.00	\$465,632.04
Mortgage	\$40,620.00	\$40,620.00

Pledges have been extremely disappointing for 2009, as shown in the above chart; we have only received \$465,632.04 against a goal of last year’s number of \$605,000.00. The Vestry has approved some major cuts for the budget, including cutting the Diocesan Pledge in half for one year, limiting staff to fewer hours, and having the parish secretary come in only 15 hours a week.

With pledges close to where they were in 2002, we are faced with covering higher maintenance costs and higher insurance cost with less. The Vestry has approved a budget that assumes we will be able to increase the total pledge number by appx. \$40,000 by the end of March. If we cannot raise the additional funds needed to balance the numbers, additional cost cutting measures will be needed. In order for us to “re-load” the rainy day fund, accomplish what we would like to see in outreach possibilities, and strengthen the Youth program, we really need to increase revenues through pledges and fundraisers as well as increase attendance and volunteers. Please fill out a pledge card if you have not done so, volunteer as often as you can, and help us become a community that cares for one another.

Governance Ministry—*David Rees, Vestry Liaison*

The Governance Ministry is responsible for the following:

- Ensuring that Trinity has and abides by accurate by-laws
- Ensuring an orderly process for nominating parishioners to the Vestry
- Leading Trinity in an evaluation of its mission statement
- Strategic planning

Activities in 2008

Trinity's by-laws require that a committee consisting of parishioners prepare a slate of candidates for election to the Vestry. Within this broad guideline, the Governance Ministry formed a Nominating Committee, which included:

- The Reverend Marshall Shelly
- Jerry Harbaugh
- Carol Yandle
- Bill Yandle
- Michelle Summerson
- Jean Evans (outgoing Vestry Liaison for Outreach)
- Renee Leister (outgoing Vestry Liaison for Parish Life)
- Dick Henriques (outgoing Vestry Liaison at Large)
- Sue Eavanson (outgoing Peoples Warden)

The Nominating Committee developed identified parishioners with possible interest in, and the skills required for Vestry service. The Governance Vestry Liaison also sent a letter to the parish inviting anyone interested in Vestry service to contact him. Two individuals, whom the Nominating Committee had already recommended, responded to the letter. The Committee presented a prioritized list of individuals to Reverend Shelly and the Wardens for recruiting.

The Governance Vestry Liaison also conducted a preliminary evaluation of the need to revise Trinity's Mission Statement. Discussions with several long-standing and recent parishioners suggest that Trinity's Mission Statement still captures the Church's sense of its calling, but few parishioners are aware of it. The conclusion of this evaluation was that Trinity needs to raise awareness of its current Mission Statement before contemplating a revision, which would be a fundamental change to the Church's sense of its calling.

The Governance Liaison also formed a by-laws committee, which will begin the process of updating Trinity's by-laws in 2009.

Outreach/Service Ministry – Jean Evans, Vestry Liaison

As my term as Outreach Liaison on the Vestry draws to an end, I have been thinking about what we have and have not been able to accomplish during 2008. On the positive side, the Outreach Budget, having reached a low of \$5,000 in 2007, was increased this year to \$20,000. On the negative side, finances at Trinity this year were such that we only allocated and spent \$10,500, and most of that came from the restricted Outreach Fund and not out of the operating budget. The distribution of most of those funds went to the local charities that sent in proposals for the use of funds and the breakdown is as follows:

FISH - \$2,000

Del Valley Interfaith Council (Lambertville Food Pantry) - \$2,000

Vita - \$2,000

Bucks County Opportunity Council - \$1,000

Ann Silverman Clinic (Doylestown Free Clinic) - \$2,000

Philabundance - \$1,000

All in all, I think Outreach at Trinity has held its own. We continued to support the Seaman's Church Institute as one of our ongoing projects, donating 12 bags of men's clothing, 72 hand-knitted caps and 30 hand-knitted scarves. We reconnected with Episcopal Community Services (ECS) and held a very successful baby shower for them in April. Carol Ferguson met with an executive from Kohl's and we were given many, many stuffed animals, 500 of which were also delivered to ECS. We supported the Souper Bowl along with the Youth Group and parishioners donated over \$1,000 in 2008. That money, along with the food that parishioners bring to Church each week, was donated to the Lambertville Food Pantry. Under Cinda Ball's leadership, we have held several cook-ins for Aid For Friends, averaging 40 trays each cook-in. Individual parishioners are also continuing to freeze meals at home and bring them to the Church for distribution.

Under the leadership of Lori Opdyke and Sean Tucker, we continued our monthly Peacemeals, where we provide food and fellowship to our neighbors who are suffering from HIV/AIDS. Peacemeal grieved for Bob Hobbs, our beloved chef, who died in March; but then we welcomed Paul from St. Philip's who has taken over the chef duties. St. Philip's has also been supporting Peacemeal by providing volunteers each month; a truly collaborative effort. And Peacemeal received another \$2,500 grant from FACT. This grant enables us to pay for the main course each month, underwrite the cost of LobsterFest meals for our clients, and provide gift cards at Christmas time.

We held two successful new clothing drives for NGA, the organization that provides new clothing through local agencies to area men, women and children. Michelle Summerson coordinated these efforts and Outreach also contributed \$500 to these drives. We are no longer supporting Habitat for Humanity; the Bucks county location is pretty far away and the Lambertville group is not doing any building at this time. We have not participated in a Red Cross Blood Drive in the last few years.

In 2008 Outreach supported projects in Kenya through Chris Martini and in Guatemala by underwriting some of the costs of the Youth Trip in July. A new, and as yet not completely successful, effort is the marketing of reusable grocery bags printed with a *Trinity Goes Green* logo. The bags cost \$2.10 each, and we are selling them for \$3 or 4/\$10. We ordered 1,000

and have sold 200 so far. The modest profit that we will make will be used for additional Outreach projects.

Another new initiative in 2008 was the publication of our first Millennium Development Goals issue of *Tidings*. Michelle Summerson edited this special edition and several parishioners contributed articles and book reviews. While this and other efforts have raised awareness of the MDGs, the Trinity family has not yet embraced these goals. We need to make this a priority in 2009.

And, we established a Celebration Fund at Trinity whereby parishioners who are celebrating significant milestones in their lives can direct donations to the Fund in lieu of gifts to themselves. All donations to the Fund each year are to be distributed to charities that the celebrants designate. In 2008 three couples celebrated 50th Anniversaries and a total of \$3,339 was donated to the Fund in their honor. In December, the money was distributed to A Woman's Place, Seaman's Church Institute, Lambertville Food Pantry, FISH and Episcopal Relief and Development.

My term on the Vestry is ending, but my interest and involvement in Outreach is not. I would like to thank all of you who have also given of your time, your talent and your treasure to help Trinity distribute our good fortune to those who have so little. God bless you.

Pastoral Care – *Kim Sager, Vestry Liaison*

The pastoral care team of Trinity has been busy and active in 2008. Lead by the Assistant Rector Mariclaire Partee our committee and volunteers have worked hard to reach out and care for our parish family. In 2008 we had two “cook –ins”, making and freezing over 35 meals to be shared with our parish family during a time of need. Having meals available has been helpful for the clergy, giving them the opportunity to pass along this kindness at their discretion.

The pastoral care committee has had several meetings where we have been lead through listening exercises as well as had opportunities to discuss how we can best help Trinity during this time of transition. At our meetings we also make sure that the clergy, as well as volunteers, are aware of any needs that can be addressed. As always, we encourage the entire parish to become involved in helping to care for each other. Any one interested in how they can help with pastoral care should contact Mariclaire at mpartee@trinitysolebury.org

Property Ministry – *Richard Dodds, Vestry Liaison*

The Property Ministry is comprised of three elements, the Cemetery Committee, Artistic Appointments, and the Property Committee proper.

This year the property committee leadership was turned over to Richard Dodds who expressed his thanks to the outgoing vestry member Jerry Harbaugh. Under Jerry's command the property committee has moved to a forward thinking approach to facilities management and parishioner participation in every aspect of care of the Trinity campus. Jerry's gentle hand is always felt patting the backs of those who volunteer. Thank you Jerry, for your time, energy, and love of Trinity.

The traditional spring and fall clean-ups were held focusing on the needs of the Cemetery grounds as well as the main buildings. These activities were well attended by members of the parish – saving Trinity thousands of dollars in outside services. In addition to these activities: landscaping was completed along the north side of the cemetery; a large oak (donated by the Kale family) was planted behind the kitchen; the floors of the main sanctuary were refinished (requiring the removal and reinstallation of all of the pews by volunteers); the organ plaque was hung; a water heater was replaced; grave marker posts were plotted and installed; the sanctuary torches were fabricated and installed in a way that makes them removable; light bulbs were replaced in the main sanctuary and in the chapel.

The challenges that face Trinity with regard to the maintenance and upkeep of its grounds and facilities remain the same as we look at 2009. We need more church members to take an active role in the stewardship of the Trinity facility. Not with just financial contributions, but with actions such as volunteering for the Cemetery Committee, participating in clean-up events, finding a way to offer your talents as a way of celebrating the life of Jesus Christ. Additionally, we need to always be ahead of the maintenance curve on issues such as lighting (replacing lights with more economical alternatives) heating (a clean boiler burns more efficiently) and equipment nearing the end of their lifecycles.

The paragraphs above hardly do service to the hours of time individuals have given to complete these tasks. But it is important to point out that despite the turmoil within Trinity over the past months, when there is a need to complete a repair to the Trinity facility – individual church members, of very different opinions, have always come together to get the job done. It is this spirit that will carry us through an unsettling future.

Spiritual Life Ministry-*Laura Huestis, Vestry Liaison*

The ministry members (Caroline McCarthy, Barrie and Patrick Summers, Inez Bing, Lisa Leydon, Deborah Faust, Susan Wells, Sue Walsh, Sandy Ryon, Ardith Talbot, Sue Eavenson and Laura Huestis) under the spiritual and practical guidance of Staff Liaison Mariclaire Partee published its yearly Spiritual Life Program Brochure in the fall. Offerings include ten Sunday Forums focusing on the gifts of members of Trinity, two Book Studies, an Inquirer's Class, two Monastic Retreat opportunities and two Quiet Days (one for Advent and one for Lent). Jeff Harrison will again teach Mindfulness Meditation during Lent and Ardith Talbot will offer her Yoga class in May. The ministry also provides Book Tables in Advent (a great success this year!) and Lent.

The group has created the following prayer with the hope that it will be useful to everyone as they go about God's work in this parish and beyond.

Ever-creating God, we celebrate and give thanks for the abundance of your grace in our lives here at Trinity. Give us the courage to listen to one another in times of joy and in times of challenge. Guide our hearts and minds to carry out the healing vision of the Gospel, honoring the many and diverse gifts you have given us, that we might know and serve the needs of one another and the world, always finding strength to move forward in your loving Son our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen

Stewardship Ministry -*Angela Johnson, Vestry Liaison*

Here at Trinity we believe that Stewardship is a three-fold ministry. Although many think of financial giving or pledging as the major component of Stewardship, equally important is the giving of our time and our talents. The ministries at Trinity invite each of us to apply our time, talents and money to enable their continued growth.

The Stewardship committee is comprised of two primary ministries: 1. Stewardship, and 2. Newcomers'.

The Stewardship Committee has the primary responsibility for developing the annual campaign drive. This year we coordinated the Step-Up Suppers that were introduced in 2007 as part of the 2008 Stewardship Drive. These dinners provide parishioners an opportunity to: (1) meet one another fostering a tighter sense of community, (2) share information about the parish along with personal experiences and (3) discuss and consider making a pledge. Mary Miller and Stephanie Smith, two newcomers to the Stewardship Committee, coordinated the Suppers and Brunches this year. They did an outstanding job. Even with 7 Supper cancellations, we had 11 successful Suppers/Brunches with a total of 104 attendees. Through the use of a survey this year, we were able to gather valuable feedback from our Hosts. Of utmost importance to parishioners was the need to gather together in fellowship. These dinners provide us with intentional time to fellowship with other parishioners while also offering us the individual opportunity to discern our commitment of increasing our overall stewardship of time, talent and treasure.

Trinity will be entering our third year using the now identifiable slogan of "Step Up and Reach Out". Our Spiritual Formation Ministry, Group Bible Study, Forums and our own understanding of reading scripture provides us Spiritual Nourishment that feeds us and encourages us to live out the mission of that slogan. Being faithful Stewards of God's gifts strengthens our ministries, outreach and health of our congregation, molding us into true Christian communities of faith, grace and love.

The Stewardship Committee lost several members in 2008 for various reasons leaving us the challenge to rebuild. We were truly blessed when Kyle Conway, Mary Miller, Stephanie Smith and Patrick Summers who graciously Stepped Up when I Reached Out to them to join this vital Ministry. Nancy Cullen, Sandy Ryon and Prue Day returned to the Ministry offering wisdom and guidance. Marshall offered Pastoral guidance and support at our meetings. Stewardship Meetings are held on the first Sunday of each month following the 9:15 service in the Prue Day Library. Our meetings were started with prayer, an attitude of Gratitude or a Meditative devotion. We also adopted the practice of lighting a lantern symbolizing the "Light of Christ". This kept us focused on the work we were doing, reminding us that we were to be led by the Holy Spirit as we carried out our ministerial responsibilities.

Together with the Finance committee, we agreed on setting a Goal of \$605,000 for our 2009 Pledge Campaign. In light of the economic slowdown we knew this could be risky, but it was a goal that would help us to be realistic in meeting our expenses. It is important to remember that 85% of Trinity's costs are paid out of pledges received. The balances of the costs are covered by plate collections, fundraisers and other sources of income (notably rent and use of space). We felt kicking off Stewardship Sunday with a Sermon dedicated to Stepping Up and Reaching Out as we made our time, talent and pledge commitments to Christ, would be

appropriate. Marshall welcomed me to the pulpit to convey this message. One of our greatest gifts during the campaign was hearing various parishioners share their very personal perspectives on Stewardship. Each story, although very different, inspired us as we were discerning our own commitments of giving. Many thanks to all of you who shared your story with us. Updates on where we stood as pledges were coming in were undated constantly via the bulletin, Trinity News, the website and periodically during announcements. We were proactive in making sure the congregation knew exactly where we stood financially. We ended the 2008-2009 campaign with 194 pledges received with a 59% percentage participation rate and a pledge total of \$454,712. This is a decrease of 23%. This brings our average pledge amount down to \$3,062. Please pay close attention to the Finance Committee's report as they make adjustments to our budget based on these numbers. A collaborative effort between Stewardship and finance is in the works which will address and strive to 1) bring more awareness to where we currently stand financially underscoring what may be in jeopardy of being cut from our budget and 2) appeal to parishioners individually to pledge if they haven't already done so, or possibly consider increasing a pledge that has already been made.

Pledge History

	Families	Pledges	Particip%	Total	Average
2002-2003	330	216	65%	\$497,100	\$2,301
2003-2004	334	185	55%	\$465,519	\$2,516
2004-2005	314	185	59%	\$492,497	\$2,662
2005-2006	280	193	69%	\$584,212	\$3,027
2006-2007	319	196	61%	\$568,771	\$2,902
2007-2008	319	195	61%	\$597,122	\$3,062
2008-2009	328	194	59%	\$454,712	\$2,343

Looking ahead, the Stewardship Committee has developed a Stewardship Youth Initiative that will raise the awareness of the Millennium Development Goals. The entire congregation will benefit from this program. We will also be supporting Outreach as we teach our Children more about Stewardship and they teach us more about caring for the world. This will be a collaborative effort between Sunday school, Stewardship and the Outreach Committee. Providing more Stewardship Education in the coming year is another goal for our committee.

Newcomers' Committee

Trey Wilson and Megg King Chair the Newcomers' Committee. Their responsibilities include these components, 1. Greeting 2. Newcomer Mentoring and 3. Membership. They are committed to making our newcomers feel at home. They work together coordinating our Greeter's through the leadership of Betty Stagg. They recruit and manage the Newcomer Mentoring Program. They also place special emphasis on helping us to constantly remember, it is ALL of our responsibility to welcome the Newcomer. The Committee is also responsible for Newcomers' Dinners and Orientation. Linking the Newcomer to the church office and our Pastoral Staff leads them to the next step of being welcomed into our Trinity family during a welcome Liturgy Service. The eight-week Inquirers classes being led by Marclair that begins Wednesday, February 11th, offers the newcomer or any parishioner the opportunity to know more about the Episcopal Church, it's traditions, and what it means to be a member of the Episcopal Church. It rounds out the spiritual education necessary in making the decision as to whether one is going to make the full commitment in becoming a member of the Episcopal

Church. This education also helps to provide that vital link into the understanding that Stewardship is the practice of our faith.

Looking ahead, this Committee is in the final stages of finishing two new brochures: 1) Ministry Information and 2) Newcomers.

Thank you is in order for the hard work and dedication of the other committee members not mentioned above: Barrie and Patrick Summers, Joe and Betsy Thomas, Frank and Jean Evans, Helen Montgomery, Nancy Cullen and to Ginny Sheay for Pastoral Guidance.

Please consider joining the Stewardship or Newcomers' Ministry in 2009.

Trinity Day School – *Kimberly Moore, Vestry Liaison*

Trinity Day School celebrates another successful debt free year of providing Christian-based preschool to the community. Financially, the Day School remained strong while experiencing significant vacancies in its 3 year old program. The Day School can be proud of its many achievements over this past year.

Specifically, with much appreciation to Day School parent volunteers, the school's hallways were brightened with an inspiring artistic mural welcoming all who enter through the school, new paint, and a cubby shelving system in the school lobby graciously made and donated by a parent's relative. The Day School's first Kindergrow class graduated, Toddlergrow for 2 ½ year olds and the newly formed enrichment classes on Tuesdays (Arts and Humanities) and Thursdays (Science and Nature) were a success.

Earlier in 2008, many were entertained at the Day School's annual Monte Carlo fundraiser event held at Occasions in New Hope. Money earned from Monte Carlo was used to paint all school classrooms, bathrooms and office space as well as purchasing new rugs for each classroom. In addition, a portion of the proceeds was given to the Day School's newly established "Giving Tree Fund" which was formed to "give back" to the community.

Currently, the Day School is celebrating 50 years of educational service to the greater community with a birthday bash for all current students and alumni. To further celebrate this momentous occasion, each classroom is collecting 50 of "something" for donation, with emphasis on community, caring and giving. Moreover, the Day School is sponsoring 50 Acts of Kindness encouraging children to do good deeds.

While it is early in the recruitment process for the next school year, the Day School anticipates the continuation of vacancies from the 3-year old program this year to feed into the 4 year old program next year. Recognizing this, as well as the apparent lower number of children in the area, the current economy and to remain competitive in this local market, the Day School board voted for significant program changes. Next year for the first time, the Day School will offer a flexible five-day 3 year old program, extended day school morning hours till 12:30pm and afternoon hours till 2:45pm and a multi-sibling discount of 10%. In addition, the Day School will bring back the five-day 4 year old program to meet the demands of this changing community. The Day School expects these changes to minimize any potential reduction in income for the next school year and plans to monitor the budget closely to remain debt free.

Trinity Youth Group - *John Daukas, Vestry Liaison*

Once again the year has been both a blessing and a challenge. Jenn Blumenstock Summers did a magnificent job in leading the youth group for the first part of the year. Then we got our new permanent youth director, Joel Esala. Joel arrived a bit late for Lobsterfest but joined us for Mission Philly. The program year started off great with the Mench Mill retreat followed by the Breakfast with St. Nick events. The Annual Ski Trip was held last weekend (Thanks Kim) and was a wonderful success. In the near future are the Passion Reading, Stations of the Cross, Tenebrae, the Spring Retreat at Mench Mill (which includes Senior Sendoff and our ever popular theme dance), Lobster Fest and finally Mission Philadelphia.

The budget for the year has been finalized and preparations are in planning for Lobster Fest and Mission Philadelphia. Thanks to the effort of Patty Gill Webber and her dedicated team we have operating manuals for both events which will provide significant assistance in continuing this tradition long into the future. We will have challenges this year, but with the spirit of fellowship we will persevere. While I have your attention, I would also like to make sure you note the efforts of Dr. Trey Wilson with Tabasamu and the efforts of the Powel's with Guatemala. I would like to take this time to extend an invitation to anyone interested in working with the youth group to either talk to Joel, one of the adult sponsors (including me), or any of the youth group members. We would love your support and participation.

Worship & Music - *Irma Fralic, Vestry Liaison*

The Worship & Music Ministry was established in 2008 and the following mission statement was developed to define our contribution to Trinity:

It is the mission of the Worship and Music ministry to make sure that all worship and music glorifies, proclaims, and ministers the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to glorify God and all the teachings set for the by Bible in the spirit of the Book of Common Prayer. The committee acts as an advisory body to the Clergy at Trinity Episcopal Church.

We thank all those who contributed to the ministries that are represented by the following leaders:

Acolytes – Susan Piette – thank you for leading and scheduling this group of children grades 5-12th throughout the year who assists in the processions and preparation of services.

Altar Guild – Barbara Slack and Phyllis Mathieu – for their faithful leadership in making sure that the Altar is a sacred space and prepared for all services. They oversee all of the needs of the Altar Guild and bring unparalleled dedication to this ministry.

Chalice Bearers/Lectors – Tom Bruhl - for stepping up and leading this group we are grateful and pray for his continuous leadership in 2009. Carol Yandle for helping organize and set the process for making sure that we always have Chalice Bearers during Eucharist and Lectors who read the Lessons and Prayers of the People each week.

Flower Guild – Ann Bamford - leads us in devotion to the beauty of the Sanctuary in honor of our Lord Jesus Christ, by scheduling, following up on memorials, and donations to

maintain this wonderful ministry. We are thankful to all those who serve with their artistic talents.

Music Ministries – Tim Harrell, Organist and Choir Master, who oversees all music and has maintained Trinity in a spiritual direction with regards to the music direction. We also would like Joel Esala, Youth & Family Minister for his contributions to Youth Eucharist's service and music.

Usher Guild – We are very grateful to all the Ushers that help greet and organize the service by directing our Parishioners and visitors during all our services. Their work is much appreciated too when they are called upon in a moments notice to help with a Funeral or special event. We will seek a new Head Usher to help with training and scheduling of this important ministry.

Worship & Music Committee – To all those volunteers who consistently come to our meetings and offer their time to listen to the needs of the Parish, and to offer ideas and advise for the unity of Trinity under our Lord Jesus Christ. **Thank you...Earlene Austin, Ann Bamford, Tom Bruhl, Linda Kenyon, Megg King, Kim Laughlin, Barbara Slack, and Susan Wells.** In addition we so many of you that come from time to time to voice your concerns and opinions and for that we are grateful. It is what makes Trinity unique and special.

Accomplishments 2008:

This year has been challenging to say the least. The Reverend, Marshall Shelly and Assistant Rector, Maricclair Partee have worked hard to implement the suggestions of the committee and Parish. Some of the accomplishments of this committee have been the following:

- Reminded the Wardens, Vestry and Clergy of the needs of the people in Worship services and music. We reinstated Morning Prayer as appropriate for those few who enjoy participating in that service every third Sunday at 9:15 AM.
- Continually try to promote good stewardship of our resources through the promotion of less paper for Sunday Bulletins.
- Contribute to good Stewardship by maintaining our budgets under control, and evaluating the use of our funds so that we do not overspend.
- We created a comment box to assess the needs of the Parish when changes to services are made, (e.g. the reintroduced the Morning Prayer Service in September 2008).
- Assisted with the Re-organization of Youth Eucharist during the transition period between Kyle and Joel – Summer 2008.
- Our attempt is to continue to minimize excess announcements during Worship services and promote the use of our electronic communications.
- We cleaned out the Sacristy and spruced it up with new shelves to accommodate our Worship supplies.

We especially want to thank the staff, Debbie Stedman, Lynne Benson, and Anne Yarnall - who work behind the scenes carrying through all the documentation and implementation of our work.

Above all we thank God, our Lord Jesus Christ for leading us through prayer and the spirit of love and collaboration to work and serve his flock our Parish, Trinity Episcopal Church - Solebury, AMEN

Parish Administrator – *Debbie Stedman*

2008 ends the era of another Rector. Since my employment here (7yrs.) at Trinity I started with Rev. David Anderson, many supply priest until Rev. Christine Ritter could start her interim and then Rev. Marshall Shelly. As many can assume this has been a very emotional and weary year. The office staff was and continues to be supportive to all who came into the Rectory in turmoil over all the issues of the Church.

The office had another employee loss – Cindy Baker. Cindy ended her 6 year employment at Trinity the end of January and after many months and many interviews we found our present Parish Secretary, Lynne Benson in April. Lynne who is also a Real Estate agent agreed to work 20 hrs. a week in order to continue her career in real estate. Marshall instructed Lynne on how to use the Liturgical program that inserts the readings and the liturgical format for the bulletins. It was decided to no longer use the 11X17 format, but to go back to using the legal size booklets. Jon Hayward and I taught Lynne how to use the Create Notices program that allowed her to push the bulletins and notices onto the website.

The staff also welcomed the arrive of another staff member – Joel Esala, Youth and Children Ministries. Joel has been a wonderful addition to our staff.

Earlier this year the staff went on a Retreat to the Poconos. We went with no agenda except to enjoy the time away and to find out where our journey was going to take us. It was a time to reflect on ourselves and our relationships with one another. We were to seek on how to rebuild the team and let go of past issues. We are a loving and strong staff who has been through a lot these few years and from this we continue to bond closer and closer. It is our respect and love for one another that has helped us to stay strong and loyal to the Trinity Family.

The office staff continues to support all the ministries in:

1. mailings, sign ups, maintain and track contributions that come to the office and make copies so that the committees are able to track who contributed.
2. Lynne supervises our wonderful multi tasked volunteers. These volunteers have stepped up many times this year to help cover for one another when the need was there.
3. The volunteers now have their own computer and email addresses.
4. The staff is also very grateful for the great job that Betty Stagg, our volunteer coordinator has done to find new volunteers to work in the office. Thank you Betty!

5. Twice a year the staff and volunteers gather as a way to say thank you and it also gives us an opportunity to discuss any issues or concerns in the office and to brainstorm new ways to meet our challenges.

The Tidings newsletter continues to be a challenge each month with article and printing deadlines. We've had to move the mailing dates out to another day or week and that creates a problem with getting enough help with the next date. We have a new editor, Michelle Summerson who has done a wonderful job in giving the Tidings a new look and feel. We have also shortened the Tidings in trying to keep the articles short, and interesting and cost effective. Starting in 2009 we will be sending the Tidings electronically. Anyone who has not given the Church Office their email address should and anyone who does not have email will be able to pick up a copy in the Narthex and if they want to have their copy mailed to them we are asking for a donation of \$6.00 for the year.

Anne Yarnall our Parish Finance Secretary continues to work closely with Julie Loftus, Doug McArthur, Chris White (Vestry Liaison) and myself. Anne continues to do a wonderful job with the accounting program and in keeping up with all the requests from Finance. Anne has also been working on especial accounting projects with Tabasamu, Mission Philadelphia and Lobsterfest. Anne and I continue to meet many challenges with our purchase order and reimbursement systems. This continues to be a work in progress. Due to the struggling income pledges we will continue to be strict with our purchase order process. **No** invoices will be paid unless we have approval before hand from the vestry liaison.

One other challenge that the office staff endured was the passing of many of the beloved parishioners that died this past year. This was very stressful for we too suffered the loss. Having the church prepared and any receptions was not work, more of a service of our time in their honor.