



In February we begin the observance of one of the most prominent celebrations of the Christian year: Lent. This season is clearly meant for us to reflect and meditate in the life, words, and actions of our Lord Jesus the Messiah. Therefore, why not start telling the story of one who lived out what he learned from this Jewish construction worker regarding the meaning of living one's faith in the world.

So during the month of February we celebrate the day of the "love birds" (honestly, love birds?!); we celebrate St. Valentine's day. In many countries in Latin America we call it Friendship Day (el día de la amistad). In Puerto Rico it is called "Lovers' Day" (el día de los enamorados). This is a day where men and women express their love for those people in their lives who are very special. This is a day when most people celebrate "romantic" love. Yet, as with many celebrations in the west there is always a powerful story behind any celebration.

The story behind St. Valentine's Day is that of an actual saint, the story of a Christian priest (pastor) and martyr. Probably many of you know the story already but let me tell it again for the benefit of those that have not heard it before.

The Saint celebrated on Valentine's Day is that of a priest and martyr called Valentio (or Valentinus). Valentio was martyred during the reign of Emperor Claudius II (also known as Claudius Gothicus). The first representation of Saint Valentine (by the way, in Spanish it is Valentin) appeared in the Nuremberg Chronicle (1493); alongside the woodcut portrait of Valentine, the text states that he was arrested and imprisoned upon being caught marrying Christian soldiers and otherwise aiding Christians who were at the time being persecuted by the Roman Emperor. Helping Christians at this time was considered a crime. Therefore, Claudius condemned Valentine to be beaten and stoned to death, when that failed he had him beheaded and his body buried outside the Flaminian Gate.

The feast of St. Valentine was first established in 496 by Pope Gelasius I, who included Valentine among those "... whose names are justly revered among men, but whose acts are known only to God." However, this feast is no longer part of the Church's celebrations.

Certainly, we could have said much more about the life of this Saint, but what I would like to highlight for us today is his uttered commitment to Jesus and Jesus' people. His life and dedication to God is marked by his action to marry Roman soldiers who have become Christians, an act that was illegal and punishable by Roman law. So, for all intents and purposes he was violating the "laws of the land," "acting criminally," and inciting others to do likewise. Doesn't this ring a bell today?

When we cite Romans 13, as the authority to obey every immoral and oppressive law given by a leader or a government, we do well in remembering that we respond to a higher authority just as Saint Valentine showed us. But he is not alone, we have people who disobeyed the established authority (laws and governments), and thanks to their disobedience today we enjoy many of our freedoms. People like John Wycliffe, Jan Hus (or John Huss), John Bunyan, Juan Valdes, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Medgar Evers, Martin Luther King, Jr., Oscar A. Romero, Jean Donovan, Ignacio Ellacuria, and many others.

If these Christians have not acted in faithfulness to God we would not be able to worship the way we do, to have the freedom to express our beliefs the way we do. If these Christians had not been willing to disobey the laws and authorities of their day we would not have been able to have a United States of America, or the current formation of the countries in Western Civilization. If these Christians had not been faithful to God rather than to the power of the state or its leaders, we would not have the modern day civil and human rights we enjoy. Our Black and Brown brothers and sisters would still be relegated to second class citizenship.

We hear people questioning Christians for responding to the challenges of their time for greater justice, equality, equity, and peace. The argument suggest that Christians are not supposed to act against the laws of the land because God so ordained it. But like Valentine and many other martyrs of the Church who loved those whom God loves, we are reminded that Christians

must respond to a higher authority. Indeed, our total allegiance has to be to the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles. Allegiance to any government, nation state, ideology, religious institution, or political party, that is antithetical to the teachings of Jesus is demonic and anti-human. This in any way should suggest that we should not engaged in partisan politics, respect our government, honor our public officials, love our Church and our country. I believe that these are not competing interest, unless one places equal value on both. Our ultimate allegiance, for a follower of Jesus, is to live according to his teachings. As the scripture reminds us again and again:

“No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.” (Luke 16:13).

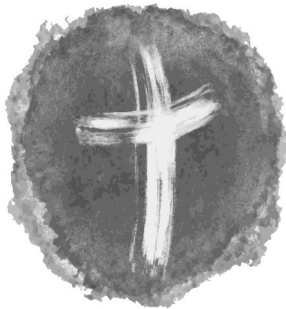
Indeed, we cannot serve competing loyalties, either we give our full allegiance to God or we give it to something else, in which case then our loyalties will be clearly established.

Let us never forget what Jesus said to the disciples: “if the world hates you, be aware that **it hated me before it hated you**. If you belonged to the world, - the world would love you as its own” (John 15:12-18). And James adds: “Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.” (James 4:4).

So, as we celebrate Saint Valentine’s Day, as we enter the season of Lent, let us remember that to love one another is Jesus’ commandment (John 15:12, 17), and that this commandment trumps any other demand from any government, church institution, ideology, nation, or political affiliation. As followers of Jesus, we have been called to love as God has loved us. As we celebrate St. Valentine, let us remember our first love: Jesus the Christ. If we seek to live in the will of God everything else in our lives will fall right-in-place: health, abundance, peace, joy, hope, and purpose.

In Christ’s Service,

*Walter L. Carpenter Jr.*



February 17

*Ash*  
**WEDNESDAY**

Service online at 11:30am

Ashes available at TUMC 12-12:30pm



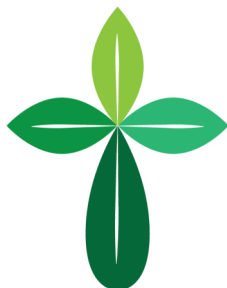
Your church staff is deeply grateful for you, the congregation of Trinity Church, for your gracious and generous Christmas gift to us, and for your ongoing prayers, support, and encouragement for the work of ministry.

We are blessed by your giving and your kindnesses to us. Many thanks!!!

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TRINITY PASTORAL  
COUNSELING CENTER



Black History Month's theme this year is the Black Family: Representation, Identity and Diversity. With that in mind, I am sharing a quote followed by the beginning of a modern poem. You can access the link to read the rest of the poem.

*"Greatness occurs when your children love you, when your critics respect you and when you have peace of mind."* – Quincy Jones

***You Are Who I Love***

by Aracelis Girmay

You, selling roses out of a silver grocery cart  
You, in the park, feeding the pigeons  
You cheering for the bees

You with cats in your voice in the morning, feeding cats  
You protecting the river

You are who I love delivering babies, nursing the sick  
You with henna on your feet and a gold star in your nose

You taking your medicine, reading the magazines  
You looking into the faces of young people as they pass,  
smiling and saying, *Alright!* which, they know it, means  
*I see you, Family. I love you. Keep on.*

You dancing in the kitchen, on the sidewalk, in the subway  
waiting for the train because Stevie Wonder,

Héctor Lavoe, La Lupe

You stirring the pot of beans, you, washing your father's  
feet

You are who I love, you

May God's Peace Be with You,  
Diane Younkins, LCPC, NCC  
Director and Pastoral Counselor

## 2020 Recap: Look what God has done!

### Ministry of Worship and Christian Growth

- We have hundreds of people attending our online services every week:
  1. We have held outdoor services for several months with a consistent attendance of 40 cars or more.
  2. We have a dedicated team of tech folks who give of their time, energy, and skills to make possible that every Sunday we have a worship service that is live streamed through YouTube (and then is uploaded to Facebook).
  3. The Altar Guild has been actively helping with our services indoor and outdoor through these challenging times. They have brought beauty to every service we have had.
  4. We worked with the Boy Scout leadership to celebrate Scout Sunday, and then met with the families after the service for a special recognition of the Boy Scouts.
- Various studies and Bible Studies (both men and women) have continued to happen consistently through the year:
  1. Grow Time Studies have continued
  2. Women's Bible Studies are ongoing
  3. Men's Bible Study is ongoing
  4. Studies on Race
  5. Studies on Sanctification/Holiness
  6. Pastor Mark has led two Bible Studies
  7. Financial Peace University continued face to face (even during COVID)
  8. The Church and Society team offered a workshop on Dr. King's Letter from Birmingham Jail and its relevance for us today.
  9. Together with our partner organization AARCH, we sponsored an event on Black History in Frederick with Ms. Patricia Washington.

### Ministries of Mercy

- Through the Pastor's Discretionary Fund, we were able to help several families in need:
  1. We provided assistance to several families with children to help them with child care expenses.
  2. We helped several families with rental assistance (which we ran through our partnership with the Religious Coalition).
  3. We helped families with medical expenses (helping to acquire needed medical equipment).
  4. We covered hotel expenses for families (and some individuals) in need of a place to stay.
  5. We helped some of our elderly members with needed furniture.

- 6. We helped families with funeral expenses.
- At the beginning of the shut-down, we provided support to cover for 2 nights of expenses at the Allen P. Linton Shelter.
- In collaboration with Sweet Adeline Choir, we distributed over 100 gifts cards (between \$25 to \$100 in value).
- We partnered with Frederick United to provide them with a space to store food, toys, and clothing to help needy families in Frederick.
- We helped Pastor Mark, and other churches in the area, distribute a few thousand pounds of potatoes as part of our collaboration with the Society of St. Andrews' Ministry.

## **Specific Ministries**

### Audio/Visual Ministry

- We responded the best we could throughout the year by learning and exploring ways to reach our congregation. Starting with working to record services with Vince Osborne, we moved on to explore the means to stream services while also trying to provide a way for the congregation to participate in our outdoor services.
- Created a technical infrastructure that has allowed us to record and live stream our worship services, and our pod-cast – Journeys in Faith – to countless of people in our community and around the world.
- Since March, we staffed every service with a great team of volunteers.
- We have created multi-camera videos of music presentations, virtual choirs and photo essays to music.
- We succeeded in creating an on-campus frequency that provides a “radio broadcast” of our services.
- Strengthened and enhanced our Wi-Fi services to enable better connectivity for streaming services.
- Acquired new technology that provides us the ability to make all these connections so that people can see us and connect with us through different venues.
- We returned to running graphics and videos from within Easy Worship as we did prior to the pandemic.
- We are about to move all audio back to the sanctuary systems, with several people already trained to operate the system.
- We worked with members of the Music Ministry to record individual pieces, and produced Virtual Choirs through our Music Ministry.
- We have provided assistance to other churches on how to develop streaming resources, how to test their internet speed, what type of equipment and software they needed, including interface assistance.

*It has been a challenging year but it also been a very rewarding year*

### Stewardship and Finance

- God has been working through the Stewardship & Finance team to bless people around our community. Through the generosity of our people, our church has provided the fiscal dollars to support the ministries working within the community. Individual team ministry budgets have been revised and new projects supported.
- One such organization that received ministry team support donations is City Youth Matrix. The financial donations enabled the organization to provide more Buckets of Hope for children in our community.
- The missions budget also included funding for Operation Christmas Child in 2020; financially the church continues to support this mission work, including money for shipping costs of the shoeboxes.
- Pastor Eliezer, with the Trustees, and our bookkeeper, David Bausum, secured a Payroll Protection Program grant that allowed us to continue our payroll, with no reduction. We continued to provide financially for our staff so that they can continue ministry and support our community. The media team was able to get additional support (Vince Osborne) to help with the live stream and video recording worship services.
- We have paid 75% of our apportionment, a slight increase over last year. These conference funds go to local and worldwide mission support.

### Children's Ministry

- Children's Grow Time has continued on-line through resources offered on our webpage and on a Google-site page.
- We were able to provide COVID related resources to parents on Facebook, on the TUMC website and through a Google site, which was intended to assist families in handling this new normal. These resources sought to provide help with educational, medical, and psychological challenges, as well as providing fascinating children's discipleship

training through the "Douglas Talks" puppet video series.

### Community Engagement

- We were awarded a COVID-19 Rapid Response community grant through the UMC General Board of Global Ministries to help area agencies affected by the coronavirus. This allowed us to buy tablets for families to access the internet and also grocery store cards for needy families in collaboration with City Youth Matrix:
  1. The grant also allowed us to provide financial assistance to 10 area families who needed utility and rent assistance,
  2. Provided financial relief to college students through the Frederick Community College Scholarship Fund,
  3. Aided a single mother to purchase a new vehicle through Second Chance Garage,
  4. Provided financial assistance for two talented young boys whose parents lost their jobs due to COVID-19 to continue their music lessons at the Frederick Rock School.

### Stephen Ministers

- Have continued to meet with Care Receivers throughout the year through "telecare" and other digital means of connecting. Our care receivers are from both the Trinity and Frederick communities. Given the restrictions that 2020 brought in terms of in person visits, I feel like our Stephen Ministers have done an exceptional job of caring for both official and unofficial care receivers, and the groups many spheres of influence.

### Intentional Faith Development

- Thanks to willing facilitators, we have successfully transitioned to digital delivery platforms... TUMC is greatly blessed by our new Zoom and existing RightNow Media and Bible Project subscriptions. Existing classes have continued and some new learning efforts have started with our Zoom capabilities.
- The digital delivery/participation modality allows for more participants, as those involved can invite others to join in the class regardless of location or the ability to get to a particular meeting site. Classes have had new participants from as far away as Texas.
- We continued to advertise classes and open them up to the community on the church website and will grow these options as federal, state and local restrictions necessitate.

### Women's Ministry

- Continued to receive, bless and send out several prayers shawls (that were graciously made and donated), some of which are going to neighbors or others in the community we thought might be comforted by them.
- Advertised within the church for any friends, family or acquaintances that might benefit from the book, *Guide to the Empty Nest* and then provided the resource.
- Maintained our partnership with International justice Mission, working to end modern day slavery.

### Missions Team

- The team was able to make over 600 shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child.
- Provided diapers and baby formula to Frederick's Housing Authority for low-income families in need.
- Provided Community Living Christmas presents for 70 residents. Not being able to hold our annual Christmas party was a huge disappointment, but with the strong support from our generous congregation, we purchased, wrapped and delivered 70 gifts!
- Provided lawn services (mowing and weeding) for an elderly woman who recently left her home and is now in a long term care facility.
- Made a monetary donation to Heartly House to support them in their efforts to assist victims of domestic abuse.
- Made a monetary donation to Frederick Food Bank.
- Made a monetary donation to City Youth Matrix (CYM). Several members of the church gave of their time to fill "buckets of hope" (school supply buckets). Through our partnership with CYM, we were able to reach out over 400 families with materials for their on-going academic development. (Several Trinity members continue to serve in leadership roles in the organization).
- Made a monetary donation to Frederick Rescue Mission.
- Made a monetary donation to Frederick Religious Coalition.

In Addition:

- Through connections with a friend that owns a shirt printing business, Dave Romer was able to acquire a large amount of clothing for the residents of Community Living.
- Although Operation Christmas Child is an international outreach program, who's goal it is to share the love of Christ, during a national collection week, we had almost half of our volunteers from other churches/ denominations from around the community helping to make sure that 10,674 shoebox gifts were collected from Frederick and Carroll Counties. It was a blessing to work with people throughout the faith community with a common goal of spreading the Gospel to children all over the world.
- Since COVID prevented sending a mission team to South Carolina to help rebuild houses from hurricane damage, a donation was made to those communities to help them secure construction materials.

#### Fellowship & Hospitality

- The Fellowship and Hospitality MT supported three memorial services in early 2020. One for the family of Charles Henline Sr., one for Pat Long's family, and the last for the family of Clyde Andrews. By hosting these services, provided for little or no cost, Trinity provided an ideal place for the families to acknowledge the stories, memories, and special moments about a loved one thus allowing families to comfort and support each other during an extremely difficult time.
- Installed a new kitchen floor in January to ensure all Health Department sanitary requirements were met. This allowed Trinity to continue to make the kitchen facilities open to many religious and non-profit organizations that support our community.
- Trinity hosted the Emergency Family shelter in January and then again in late February. The congregation and our Boy Scout Troop prepared meals for the families. We provided a safe shelter and food for a total of nine families including 13 children.

#### Church and Society

- Martin Luther King Community Dinner.
- Helped with the Celebration of Black History Month and Hispanic Heritage Month
- Provided opportunities for amicable interactions with people from diverse backgrounds, for example, hosting of the annual
- Broadened our understanding of who is our neighbor and the commitment we have to such persons as Christians.
- Provided opportunities for teenagers and young adults to develop positive actions to address their social concerns.
- Church and Society also served as a forum for learning about current social dilemmas and possible actions to prod government officials to take actions regarding these concerns.
- The team worked with organizations in Frederick to celebrate the 4th of July with a focus on building peace, everyone was welcomed to participate via zoom.
- The team encouraged people to participate in the presentation by Pastor Carl Craig from the UUA in a presentation titled: "For Such a Time as This: Anti-racism Resources for Building the Beloved Community in Frederick".
- The team encouraged participation via Zoom in the Poor People's Campaign: A National Call to Moral Revival's "March" on Washington. A four hour presentation of speakers and witnesses to the challenges experienced by poor people all over the USA. This was a multi-faith, multi-racial, and multi-cultural effort of communities all around the country.
- The team encouraged participation Frederick's Black Lives Matter march and demonstration in downtown.
- The team encouraged participation in the Community Prayer Service @ Harry Grove Stadium.

#### Member Care and Nurture

- Before we closed, Member Care and Nurture were sending welcome cards or emails to visitors. They continue to send birthday, get well, and sympathy cards when notified
- We have 2 blood drives a year, and were able to do one this past spring. Had one team member helped the Red Cross, by taking the temperatures and registering donors. We were also going to try to do a photo directory this past fall, but being closed, we weren't able to.
- At the beginning of the year we started to take the Joys and Concerns from Sunday, and I would send them to the

team and some other leaders at Trinity to pray for them during the week. We actually started this last year. We do a small version of that now, and the Men's Bible study does this each week.

#### Staff Life

- Held weekly staff meetings via Zoom (despite Covid-19), and our staff still meets with assigned team ministries throughout the year.
- Worked hard to creatively find ways to solve new problems the pandemic presented: how to maintain a worship connection with our family, how to observe Easter, Pentecost, All Saints, Christmas, and more.
- Maintained connection with our shut-ins and those in long term care facilities through cards, calls and talks with families.
- Helped others implement and troubleshoot community-reaching technology for worship, Zoom classes, etc.
- Aided visitors that come in search of assistance.
- Worked to create and implement a visible, drive-in worship open to any who drove by
- Used many modes of communication to keep connection and information flowing.
- Modernized our office with new computer terminals and a new copier/printer to be able to meet the demands of our new situation.
- Made it possible for our fulltime staff to work from home connecting to the office main computer through the internet (VPN system).
- Upgraded the phone system allowing for our Administrative Assistant to respond to calls from the safety of her home.
- Creatively met the present needs of our congregation and ministries.

#### Members and their Service to the Community

- God has been using some of our Church members in the spirit of outreach in the community at large.
- The COVID-19 virus has impacted each of us, our community and every person around the globe for nearly one year. As such, I have used my scientific background, career in studying viruses, work history in development of vaccines, understanding of the dynamics of infectious disease to:
  1. Teach and inform persons in our congregation, students and faculty at Frederick Community College and the community, through short Zoom monologues at Trinity Church, live Zoom sessions at FCC, through YouTube video recordings and live radio broadcasts via the local radio station.
  2. In terms of global outreach, continued to actively participate and support the international Operation Christmas Child program throughout the year. Together with the members of the men's bible study we made several hundred toy cars for children in countries around the world.
  3. Participated in many of the outreach activities of the Mission team; e.g. community living parties, and religious coalition - family shelter activities at TUMC, Frederick Food Bank.
  4. Locally, through the Fort Detrick chapter of Project Healing Waters, served as a colleague and instructor to servicemen and servicewomen who have suffered handicaps, both physical and emotional, during their service to our country.
  5. In addition, served as Co-chair of the Church Council, perhaps the most rewarding activity is leading the Men's Bible study. Realizing that this activity is more focused on developing a stronger fellowship amongst our Christian brothers, most certainly each of us can carry these lessons of faith and stewardship into our daily lives in the local community.

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### Fix the Electoral College



Common Cause, a public nonpartisan organization, has proposed the **National Voter Compact** as a way to fix the United States' broken Electoral College. This proposal is based on the belief that whoever wins the most popular votes should become President of the United States. The **National Voter Compact** is an agreement among states to guarantee the presidency to the candidate who receives the most popular vote in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. This proposal, if enacted, would make all votes equal; is fair in that the candidate who wins the **most** votes wins the election; and is constitutional in that the selection of presidential electors is specifically entrusted to the states by the Constitution. Contact your state representatives and governor and encourage them to have your state formally adopt the **National Voter Compact**. For more information about Common Cause go to [www.commoncause.org](http://www.commoncause.org).

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Permit #12

## CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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# MONTHLY PRAYER SERVICE

*Celebrate and live into the power of prayer through  
scripture, hymns, individual & collective prayer.*

Trinity's new, online,  
monthly prayer  
service, available  
via Zoom, will  
happen on the last  
Thursday of every  
month from  
6-6:30pm.

To request the link for  
the service,  
please email  
Pastor Eliezer at  
seniorpastor  
@trinityfrederick.org  
or visit  
www.trinityfrederick.org

