



# HOLY TRINITY NEWS

April 2021



## Father Rob's Reflections

April 2021

Dear Holy Trinity Family,

It is what we refer to as Eastertide beginning on April 4<sup>th</sup> (Resurrection Sunday), and thus the beginning of the 50 days of walking together, albeit virtually, as we head to the culmination of those 50 days at Pentecost. This journey of learning and growing as individuals and a church community, just coming off our fasting, prayers and reflections for Lent, is a time to take stock of what is important. It is a time to look for the ways in which, when faced with the vicissitudes of life, we come to terms with those we have done well and those that may have been done better. I learned as a Principal and teacher to work a crisis without showing panic. As there was plenty of that, a steady hand was needed. However, if not everyone cooperated, my steady hand would be thwarted. True story--- I remember at my fairly brand new school in NC, we had a major tornado threat requiring we go to the center of the building. Unfortunately, this was the gym, but the authorities said it was the safest place. I remained a calm, but assertive presence; however, one teacher, frightened understandably, began yelling, screaming that we were going to die---this was panic in front of 900 students and staff. They were already concerned, rightfully so as, by the way, this tornado missed the school by a football field length and killed people in a part of our county. I had to guide my teacher to the hallway to calm her and remind her that as a team we needed to work together. That I could depend on her to help as she loved the young people as I did. She calmed, went back in, and we averted an external and internal disaster.

Folks respond differently to panic times. Some press in, others press out, many change their minds and waffle. This is normal. But there is a cost, as my story illustrates, when we do not work to row together. Eastertide teaches us to walk as one. It teaches us to take care, do self-maintenance, reach out for help as needed, make our needs lovingly known to those we need, and then offer our healthier self for the care of others. One of the ways to accomplish this is thru Holy Week and Eastertide reflections on our best and our less than best moments in the past year. Have we been a source of joy to others or perhaps pain? While we certainly did not do the later on

purpose, where are we today if we recall honestly? This is a time to let go of hurts and anger, fear, and frustration, and begin to see the glimmer of hope before us. To practice forgiveness as we are forgiven. To do as Jesus did in his lowest moments and reflect on following God's will as we already know how. When the mission to stay as one, to row together, is not maintained, as with my teacher who, out of her fear, almost jeopardized the school of 900 gathered, the ship can take on water. It will not sink, for many will bail the water and hold it together. But the listing can occur and slow the progress of the journey. Now that that the spigot is being turned a bit more (see the recent Article below from the Restart team published late in the week of March 22<sup>nd</sup>), it is truly time for all of us to row together. The emphasis is not on where we have been or how well the response has been, but instead to setting the boat to rights and sailing smoothly and quickly on our mission. It takes the whole crew to make it work effectively.

This has been an exhausting year emotionally, physically, and mentally for everyone. It has worn us out, frayed nerves, and as with many crises, has pushed many to our fallback modes for survival. In this coming season, reflect on your journey. What were your fall-back modes? Was it to push in or pull out? Was it to look for the culprits behind the pain, or solutions to make it better? Did we reach out for help or wait, hoping another would somehow intuit our need? It is important to take stock of our own picture, mostly so that as healthy persons we can then listen to voices who call out for help and be able to walk with them in their distress. There is hope. There is change coming. Many have had one or two vaccines. I get my first one on March 30<sup>th</sup> at Collins Perley. Now, let's start thinking of how we can reconnect if we have disconnected. Let us row together and work not out of the past, but in hope for the future.

PS A team has solicited ideas of current virtual activities, of activities outdoors and in person all following the science and Restart guidelines. (see in this newsletter) Thank you for your input. There is hope.

In Christ's love,  
Fr. Rob+

We will review the following page with Vestry and let you know what is decided very soon.

## Updates from Restart Committee

### **Streaming Services from Sanctuaries Effective March 24, 2021**

In light of recent revisions to the State of Vermont COVID-19 guidelines, congregational leaders are now permitted to stream services from their sanctuaries with the following provisions:

\*With the consent of the clergy and vestry or bishop's committee, a maximum of four people may gather if at least three of them are fully vaccinated. This means that they should have received either both doses of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccines, or the single-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine, and should also have waited for two weeks for full immunity to take effect. Only one person in this group of four or fewer may be unvaccinated. The group might typically include clergy, musicians, wardens or liturgical assistants or readers.

\*Everyone must be masked unless everyone present is fully vaccinated and no one is at high risk of severe COVID-19 or living with someone who is at high risk.

\*Everyone must observe 6 feet of social distance, unless everyone present is fully vaccinated and no one is at high risk of severe COVID-19 or living with someone who is at high risk.

\*Singing is not permitted.

\*The space must be adequately ventilated.

As a reminder to all, we follow CDC and Vermont state guidelines as our minimum standards, while taking a more cautious approach in applying many of them in our church context.

### **Opening Sanctuaries for Prayer Effective April 4, 2021**

With the agreement of clergy and vestries, congregations in the Diocese of Vermont may set days and times for individual and household prayer in church sanctuaries beginning in Eastertide.

\*This is for individual and household private prayer and meditation only, and is not intended for public services.

\*Those coming to pray together must be living together in a single household. Family members who are not living in the same household will not be permitted to visit the sanctuary at the same time.

\*There should be an hour between the time one individual or household leaves the space and the next individual or household enters, in order to minimize risk of spreading the coronavirus. Masks should be worn to minimize the risk of virus transmission. Singing is not permitted.

\*Parishes can institute a sign-up system of their choice in order to ensure the sanctuary will be used by only one person or family group at a time and that an hour will elapse before the next occupancy.\* Online reservation systems such as SignUpGenius may be useful. Parishes offering the sanctuary for prayer should publicize this guidance for their members and stress our concern for the health and safety of all.

\*Parishes are encouraged to inform the Restart Team of the Diocese of Vermont if they elect to open their sanctuaries for prayer, and provide details of the days, times and sign up method, but this is not required.

Please feel free to contact the Restart Team if you have any questions or concerns about this matter. Thank you for your help as we seek to open our churches in a safe and prayerful manner.

\*While these guidelines suggest "one hour" for ventilating spaces between uses, we recognize that in some situations a full hour may not be necessary and in others it may not be enough. We strongly encourage clergy and local vestries to begin evaluating their own spaces with respect to safe and adequate ventilation, set their own standards, and begin taking such action as may be needed to address any inadequacies in their spaces.

Vestry at a Glance  
March 8th, 2021

- \* Approval of Feb 22, 2021 minutes.
  - \* Tenants in the upstairs apartment at 40 Grand Ave -things are moving along.  
Downstairs tenant has plans for moving.
  - \* Adult Sunday School has 10 participants.
  - \* Fellowship and Outreach Committees had a meeting to explore getting together outside in late Spring.
  - \* Pastoral Care - sending cards as needed.
  - \* Fr Rob desperately need help with Technology/ Audio Visual -please volunteer if you can.
  - \* Columbarium Commission needs 2-3 people to be on this commission along with the Sr Warden, Les Stutzman.
  - \* Vestry Retreat scheduled for March 20, 2021 with Auburn Watersong.
  - \* Ministry Fair is scheduled for March 21. Google form and/or hard copy for Parish members to sign up for a Committee will be sent out.
- Submitted by,  
Sheri Moore

Dear Rob,  
Many many thanks for your generous donation to library's Summer Reading Program... Please pass on to all at Holy Trinity how grateful we are and how much we appreciate your support. You've made a tremendous difference.

The Swanton Public Library

Trustees



Dear Friends at Holy Trinity,  
I want to personally thank you for your gift to the General Seminary Annual Fund. Your faith and support is a blessing to our community and as a current seminarian, I am deeply grateful for your generosity. These times demand as many well-equipped spiritual leaders as ever and your support makes that possible. You strengthen my call to serve the church and our entire community. We hold you in prayer and offer encouragement for your own work!

Blessings,  
Robert Mathis

Dear friends at Holy Trinity, especially those in the fellowship and outreach commissions,  
Thank you for your support and comfort that you have provided for me at this time of my husband's death. The "care package" was outstanding! The lovely peace lily is in my den, I hope I can keep it alive. I am very grateful to be a part of the Holy Trinity family.

Love & Gratitude,  
Beverly Montiel



### Sunday Prayers

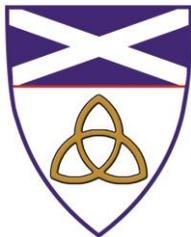
Dear God who made us all,  
A year ago we did not know that we were about to learn:  
what we could lose and somehow live anyway  
where we would find comfort and where it would elude us  
whose lives matter to whom  
why we have kitchens in our homes.  
In mid-March 2020 all I knew for sure is that hoarding toilet paper doesn't make you safe - it just makes you selfish.  
But God it feels like the world is about to open back up.  
And I'm both thrilled and kind of scared about that.  
Because I'm not who I was a year ago.  
I want so badly  
to hug my friends again  
and laugh a lot again  
and have amazing conversations again  
and yet I am not sure how long I could do any of this before crying or just getting really quiet.  
My emotional protective gear has worn so thin, and grief just leaks out everywhere now.  
And yet, when I quiet my anxious thoughts, I start to suspect that I am now closer to the me you have always known and always loved. So help me trust that, Lord.  
As things change, help us be gentle with ourselves and with each other. We are all wearing newborn skin right now.  
AMEN.

*Nadia Bolz-Weber*



### **For People Facing Uncertainty**

God of the present moment, God who in Jesus stills the storm and soothes the frantic heart; bring hope and courage to us all as we wait in uncertainty. Bring hope that you will make us the equal of whatever lies ahead. Bring us courage to endure what cannot be avoided, for your will is health and wholeness; you are God, and we need you. Amen.



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### **APRIL BIRTHDAYS**

- 2 Rob Giroux**
- 6 Erin Gagne**
- 9 Barbara Trushaw**
- 10 Dorothy Wootton, Annie Hartman**
- 12 Shawn Robtoy**
- 14 Stella Wood**
- 17 Sylvia Garrison**
- 19 Joe Cava**
- 20 Linda Wirts, Oliver Gagne**
- 21 Connor Nielsen**
- 24 Sarah Hadd**



### **APRIL ANNIVERSARIES**

- 29 Sylvia & Ethan Garrison**



### **In New Life**

**March 7 John Montiel  
May he rest in peace & rise in glory**