

**TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**The Rev. Nancy R. Easton**  
**Assistant Pastor's Report**  
**January 1-31, 2009**

Sunday a.m. services:		Saturday services:	1
Preach/Preside:	4	Thursday services:	2
Preside only:	2	On-Call weekends:	1

My responsibilities with Strategic Planning filled numerous hours this month. I attended 2 meetings of the Strategic Planning team and prepared and offered a temple talk about our mission document and feedback process at 5 worship services between Jan. 8-11. As well, I served on the subcommittee of Strategic Planning charged with revising the mission document into final draft form to go to congregation council in February. The revision work was a linguistic and theological workout, not without stress and strain, debate and compromise. The final draft, I hope, will bear much fruit for Trinity.

Leading the new members class in a discussion of God's Word as Law and Gospel is always a treat. One never knows where our conversation will take us, but I so appreciate our new members' engagement in the discussion. So, too, with the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders, whom I took on a "Holy Communion Field Trip" to our altars and sacristies and places of worship. They had wonderful questions—both practical and theological—about the sacrament of Holy Communion. Their teachers and shepherds (the parents and other adults who help with the rotational Sunday school program) also asked good questions, and were a help in leading the students from place to place.

I attended several Trinity events including the Epiphany Luncheon with Pastor Prois, a belated Christmas staff luncheon, the annual congregational meeting, and our January staff retreat. Debbie Wilson and I selected music through the season of Lent for our 10:45 worship service. It is beneficial to both of us in our individual roles that we have taken the time together to discuss each service and select appropriate music. While music may be subject to change, we have a baseline that fits the scripture themes and seasonal emphases, and are able to prepare well for each Sunday.

Speaking of Lent, I generated a theme and lessons for our Midweek Lenten services. Referring to Isaiah 53, the theme is "By His Bruises We are Healed." Each week during Lent our Midweek services will consider our sins which have wounded our Lord, and yet, how he bears those bruises, and then brings gracious healing into our lives.

Pastor Hardy and I took on 2 additional worship services at Dauphin County prison in January, while their new chaplain had some continuing ed. I led a service with male inmates on January 25, and found the lesson from Jonah compelling as I shaped my sermon. Praying with these men, and leading them in worship, is most rewarding. It must be meaningful for them as well. One young man—so young I could have been his mother—came up to me afterwards and asked wistfully, "Will you be here next week for worship?" It makes your heart break to see where they are.

Regarding contact with our own parishioners, I had significant pastoral conversation with 27 Trinity members this month.

Finally, I took up a volunteer opportunity I had considered for awhile. Once a week I travel to Foose Elementary School in Harrisburg and tutor second-graders for an hour. Having always enjoyed reading and writing workshops in my own children's elementary classrooms, I thought it would be good to offer my services in a place where the need is great. My student is able to read, but her math skills are pitiable, and so any one-on-one time with her is important. I am glad to be helping in some small way. But what really impressed me was learning the number of our parishioners who do this tutoring stint each week! Here are my brothers and sisters in Christ who have been giving of themselves in these quiet but incredible ways for, in some cases, years. It is a privilege to carpool with them and share our experiences each week.

In Christ's Service,

Nancy R. Easton