

**Report of  
Pastor for Parish Life  
The Rev. John H. Brock  
February 2020**

February seemed to be a month of preparation. I had a several pre-baptism meetings with families, I had a couple of funeral planning sessions. I took part in the AED preparedness training. I had a pre-marriage counseling session. And I had to get ready for my monthly session with the Tuesday Morning Men's Bible Study group (we're in the book of Judges, and dealt with some of scripture's famous toilet humor, as well as some surprisingly resourceful women of scripture - Deborah and Ja-el), along with my Wednesday Connect Class.

I presided at the funeral for long time Trinity Member Josephine Freund. It was a joyous, music-filled celebration of her life, with a couple wonderful messages by former students. First, the Rev. Tim Mentzer, from Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Lancaster, followed by Bishop Bill Gohl, of the DE/MD ELCA Synod.

I attended, along with Sister Marianne Brock and Pastor Liz Frey, the annual LSS Healthy Leaders Retreat, held at The Warehouse Hotel at Spooky Nook Sports, Manheim, PA. The theme this year was *Fostering Civil Conversations*. In brief, we watched several segments of an *On Being with Krista Tippett* (heard locally Sunday mornings on WITF Radio) episode, concerning two individuals talking about an issue where they held differing views. Then, breaking into small groups, we discussed each section. In the afternoon, the whole group attempted to practice what we had learned that morning. It was a good and enlightening event.

February also saw us celebrating Ash Wednesday. As you are all hopefully aware, we attempted something different on Ash Wednesday this year: Ashes to Go. We have noticed for several years that early morning worship during Lent and Advent was drawing fewer and fewer worshippers, which in turn has made us consider the effectiveness of our pastor's time in preparing for a small turnout. Last year, we had nine people attend 7:30AM Ash Wednesday worship. The hope for Ashes to Go was to offer a short time of prayer, repentance, and ashes for individuals in the morning, and still have the noon and evening regular format of worship. We were hoping to attract those who attend our morning support group, parents dropping off children at pre-school, folks on their way to work, or anyone simply passing by who might not normally walk into a church on a Wednesday morning.

One of the first vehicles to stop turned out to be a father and his two, probably middle school age, daughters. His opening comments were "I'm so glad you're doing this. With my work, and their sports schedule, we wouldn't be able to get to church. Thank you." We spent a little over a minute with each individual / family, going through a prepared liturgy that they could take home with them, and applied ash to their foreheads. We also left with them a little booklet entitled "What Is Ash Wednesday?" put together by our own Danelle Andrews.

I had my concerns about how well we could do this and how well it would be received. I felt that if we attracted twelve to fifteen people, we could consider our attempt a success. We ended up ministering to over fifty people. That's a bit more than the nine or so we would have gotten otherwise. I feel it is safe to say, this new venture was a success.

God's peace,  
Pastor John Brock