

# The Weekly Tidings

Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

[www.htelc.com](http://www.htelc.com)

22 Fox Run Road \* Newington, NH 03801 \* 603-436-1704

[office@htelc.com](mailto:office@htelc.com)

Come Together, Grow in Faith, Serve the LORD

## Fire Safety Training



Holy Trinity is offering training with the Newington Fire Department scheduled for Thursday evening, August 3rd at 6 pm. The fire extinguisher training will take place first; the CPR training will take 2-3 hours and will follow. There is a \$5 per person charge for the CPR training to cover card costs. You may choose only the extinguisher training which should be fairly quick or stay for the entire session. If you are able to attend, please email Mark Donahue at [office@htelc.com](mailto:office@htelc.com).

## Back to School supplies

We are looking for a volunteer to coordinate the collection of back to school supplies to support the children in our community who are in need. This would also include delivery of these supplies to Operation Blessing the middle of August. This event would take approximately 4-5 hours of your time. Please contact Donna Huot at 603-303-7073 or [kailambr@myfairpoint.net](mailto:kailambr@myfairpoint.net) if you are interested. Thanks for your consideration!



## Summer worship is underway

All summer services take place at 9:30 am through September 3. Here are some special services for this summer:

- July 9: Worship and Organ recital by Laura Belanger
- July 16: Hymn Sing during the service
- August 13: Worship service with The Greatest Gift, gospel group.
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There will also be an outside worship service in July and in August.

We hope to see you all for summer worship!



## Pastor George's Article

### "A Summer Potpourri"

Summertime is a time for glorious potpourri- whether the bunch of bright, mixed fragrant flowers, or a mélange of spices, vegetables and meats served hot or cold or even a bunch of disparate small items for a newsletter like this. So here is my Summer Potpourri:



A) What do we mean by "Trinity?" Anyone who tries to define what the Holy Trinity is, risks opening themselves up to charges of heresy. After all, there have been SO many heresies: Adoptionism, Apollinarism, Arianism, Arabici, Docetism, Gnosticism, Macdonianism, Monarchianism, Monophysitism, Nestorianism, etc. But you can't just say nothing about a chief article of faith, especially on Holy Trinity Sunday! Many people told me how accessible and helpful my sermon on Holy Trinity was. So, with some trepidation, I am including it in my blog so it can be reread. I hope you find it helpful. **(Editor's Note: Please turn to Pages 5-8 of the Tidings for Pastor George's sermon on Holy Trinity, June 11, 2017)**

B) HIPPA laws and the church. If you are used to the pastor visiting you in the hospital, please make sure that you call the church office or ask the hospital call for you. Even if I go to the hospital and enquirer, they will not give out any information- including whether you are there- because of HIPPA laws. So, make sure to let us know. We want to visit you!

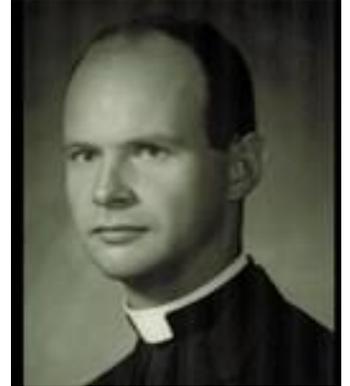
C) We love bulletins! If you are on vacation, be sure to bring back a bulletin from whatever church you go to. We are always looking for better ways to do things and often find tidbits in the way other churches do things. So bring back bulletins! We'd love to see them.

Blessings,

***Pastor George Koch***

## Christian Sympathy

Pastor Earl Werdelin passed away on Friday, June 30, 2017. Many of you know his ex-wife, Barbara, who is still a member here and one of our shut-in members. Pastor Werdelin served Holy Trinity in the late 1980's and early 1990's and was here for the 50th anniversary celebration ten years ago. Please keep Barbara and the Werdelin family in your prayers as they mourn the loss of Pastor Earl. Here is a copy of his Obituary, published by the Hartford Courant on July 4, 2017.

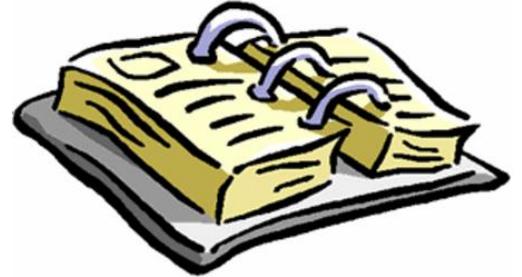


The Rev. Earl D. Werdelin, 75 passed away on June 30, 2017. He was born October 25, 1941, in Manchester, CT the son of the late Helmer and Edna Werdelin. He is survived by his daughter, Joy Roelike (Bryan) of CA, his sons, Bart Werdelin of CT and David Werdelin (Dorna) of GA, his grandchildren Kendra Timm (Kyle) of AZ, Antoinette Torres of CA., Malcolm Werdelin, Carter Steel Werdelin, and Jordan Scott of GA., and a great-grandson, Jeremiah Timm of AZ. Earl is also survived by his sisters June Roncarti of Manchester, CT and Carol Storksen (Henrik) of OR., and his goddaughter, Karen Pinheiro (John) of Newington, CT, along with many nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends. Earl was a graduate of Manchester High School class of 1959 and the University of Connecticut College of Agriculture class of 1964, and later graduated from the Philadelphia Seminary in 1969. This year was the 49th anniversary of his ordination. After his ordination, Earl served Lutheran Parishes in New Britain, CT., St Croix in the US Virgin Islands, West Boylston, MA., and Newington, NH. It was while serving the parish in Newington, NH, he met and proudly mentored, the future pastor, the Reverend Paul Christian who's current ministry is in Petersburg, VA. Earl concluded his pastoral career at the Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Claremont, NH. In recent years, Earl enjoyed spending time in his seasonal cabin near the Stark family homestead in Newbury, VT which he built with family and friends. He also attended Emanuel Lutheran's (Manchester, CT), Men's Breakfast at Friendly's, always eating a five-scoop sundae with whipped cream and three cherries, while the others ate breakfast. There will be no calling hours. Family and friends are invited to attend the graveside service on Thursday, July 6, 2017, at 10:00 am at the East Cemetery (Section B), in Manchester, CT., followed by a memorial service at 11:00 am at Emanuel Lutheran Church, 60 Church Street, Manchester, CT. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be sent to the Lift Fund care of Emanuel Lutheran Church, or a charity of the donator's choice. For additional information, or to leave words of condolence, please contact the Holmes-Watkins Funeral Home at [www.holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com](http://www.holmes-watkinsfuneralhomes.com) who is in charge of the funeral arrangements.

**CREDIT:** <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/hartfordcourant/obituary.aspx?n=earl-d-werdelin&pid=185986193&fhid=4108>

## Worship Team

The Worship and Music team is putting together a **Worship Assistants handbook** to describe the roles of each type of worship assistant. There are many of you who have or are currently serving as a worship assistant. We would like each of you to contribute in the writing of the job description for the various assistants. Please submit a description for any and all worship assistant roles you for which you participated in the past or presently. Notes and letters can be put in Yvonne Topping's mailbox or emails can be sent to Mark Donahue, our office coordinator. Please consider doing this soon!



## Property Team

Take a message to Garcia! This phrase has been on my mind recently. A little history is appropriate here. In the run-up to the Spanish-American War in 1898, the United States dispatched a young Army officer to Cuba with orders to deliver a message to the leader of the rebels trying to overthrow the Spanish government there. All I remember from my history lessons is that the message was unlikely to be well received. So it was that three expressions came into common use in American lexicon in the years following that war. The rebel leader was named Garcia, and the expression, "Take a message to Garcia." has come to mean a risky task involving telling someone something they may not want to hear. Similarly, as the story goes, the young Army officer was told to "Keep one foot in the stirrup" meaning be ready to get back in the saddle and get out of there if things did not go well. A third related expression may well have originated with the young Army officer, "Don't shoot the messenger!"



As regards our tent, I feel a bit like the Army officer and some of you are my Garcia. Recent rules from the State of NH require us to have a permit for our tent and the process results in restrictions on how many people we can have under our tent. We now have a permit which limits us to no more than fifty people. The requirements become significantly more complicated when the number of occupants exceeds fifty. I know this occupancy limitation impacts our use of the tent. I have made council aware of the pertinent aspects of the state rules so we can make informed decisions about future tent use. I have no idea where all this is going. I only ask that you do not shoot the messenger or cast our local FD in a negative way. We have a very good relationship with them and I have always found them to be reasonable. In this case they are doing what the State Fire Marshal Office requires in terms of tent permits and inspection criteria for tents.

***David Mercer, Property Team Leader***

## Pastor George Koch's Sermon

### Holy Trinity: June 11, 2017

In this the five hundredth year of the Protestant Reformation, I will from time to time bring up some tidbits about Martin Luther and the Lutheran Reformation, both flattering and unflattering. At the beginning of his career, Martin Luther was apparently sympathetic to Jewish resistance to the Catholic Church. In 1523, Luther accused Catholics of being unfair to Jews and treating them “as if they were dogs,” thus making it difficult for Jews to convert. “I would request and advise that one deal gently with them [the Jews],” he wrote. “... If we really want to help them, we must be guided in our dealings with them not by papal law but by the law of Christian love. We must receive them cordially, and permit them to trade and work with us, hear our Christian teaching, and witness our Christian life. ***If some of them should prove stiff-necked, what of it? After all, we ourselves are not all good Christians either.***” Oh, that that were the only words that he had on the subject. However, it was not. After twenty years of trying to cordially convert Jewish people to Christianity and they resisted, he turned violently against them.

In 1543, three years before he died, Luther wrote some of the most vile words that a Christian could write, “First to set fire to their synagogues or schools and to bury and cover with dirt whatever will not burn, so that no man will ever again see a stone or cinder of them,” he said in his pamphlet. “This is to be done in honor of our Lord and of Christendom, so that God might see that we are Christians, and do not condone or knowingly tolerate such public lying, cursing, and blaspheming of his Son and of his Christians. For whatever we tolerated in the past unknowingly – and I myself was unaware of it – will be pardoned by God.” These last words of Luther were so repugnant to his friends, that they repudiated them at the time and these words have also been repudiated by most Lutheran denominations in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, not only because they were wrong, but because Hitler used these words to justify the Holocaust.

Christians, Jews and Muslims share the same God. And for all three religions there is only one God. Christians argue, however, that our one God exists in three persons – as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, something that Jews and Muslims have a hard time believing, even as they acknowledge that we worship the same God. How can this be?

Two years ago this week I went back to Pennsylvania for my 50<sup>th</sup> High School Reunion. It was great seeing many old friends. But one old friend was conspicuous by his absence – Tony, who had been one of my best friends. We were lab partners in High School and inseparable during college summer vacations. When he flunked out of College, he joined the Air Force and was stationed here at Pease. I would regularly drive up to see him. When he got out of the Air Force, I

got him a job at Prudential where I had been working. However, in the Air Force, he had begun using drugs. He began with Marijuana and went on to stronger stuff, including LSD. He went out to California and joined the Center for Feeling Therapy, a cult-like approach to take care of your psychological problems. He became estranged from his family and his friends. While I tried, over the years, to reconnect, the gap was too wide. We could never be friends again.

The gap between Christians and Jews – and later Christians and Muslims – is similar to the gap between Tony and me. There was so much we had in common, and yet, the layers of his experience experimenting with Drugs and primal scream therapy broke everything we had in common. The gap between Christians and Jews and Muslims centers on **two experiences and two mysteries**. The two experiences are these: 1) The Christians experienced God from the very beginning as the Creator, the savior and the sanctifier, or more commonly, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And while each role taken on by Father, Son and Holy Spirit is unique, it is still the one same God who does all of this.

The second experience is this: The early Christians understood Jesus as both true and authentic human, and, at the same time, true and authentic God. He is not one or the other; he is both at the same time. And while most Jews and Muslims have no problem understanding Jesus as a prophet – and perhaps one of the greatest prophets – They have difficulty believing that he is also God. These two experiences were so strong for the early Christians, however, that they could not go back to worshipping as Jews, but rather kept praising Jesus in the temple and in the synagogue until they were kicked out permanently. Like the gap that grew between Tony and me to the point where our friendship was broken, the gap between Jews and Christians was too wide at that point for reconciliation.

The Corinthian letters of St. Paul were written around 25 years after Jesus's death and resurrection. Matthew's gospel was written perhaps 50 years after the crucifixion. In our lessons for today, both Paul and Matthew reflect this understanding that God has shown himself in three ways – As Father, Son and Spirit. Both Paul and Matthew also confess that Jesus is Lord and take their direction from Him, something that Jews and Muslims do not comprehend. The gap is just too wide.

**In his landmark book, *The Nature of Doctrine*, George Lindbeck argued that doctrine comes from experience, which, in turn, regulates belief.** Thus, the early Christians, though willing to worship with their Jewish friends and neighbors, were not willing to go against their experience of God as Trinity or against Jesus as God and man. This leads to the two mysteries. Even though the **Christians experienced God in three persons and Jesus as God and man**, they had to answer

for themselves the questions – How can these things be? How can God be three in one? How can Jesus be both God and man? Christians have experienced God in this way, but how?

St. Augustine once wrote that if something is a mystery, it is by its nature, incomprehensible. And if it is comprehensible, it is not a mystery. Now Augustine was brilliant, one of the best thinkers of his age. But his dilemma was this: how can you talk about something which, by its nature is beyond common speech? How can you experience something that is beyond our normal experience? How can finite creatures know God who is infinite? One could only trust the experience of God – who comes to us as trinity and as both God and man.

This does not mean that Christians gave up trying to comprehend God. Indeed they pushed language to its farthest reaches in order to understand God, culminating in the Athanasian Creed. This is about as far as we can understand the mystery. So where does this lead us? To a dead end? So we know that the early Christians experienced God as a three in one, a trinity, and that they experienced Jesus as both God and man. What does this have to do with us?

The Great Preacher, Frederick Buechner, once wrote that the doctrine of the trinity says two things about God, not three. The doctrine of the trinity says that God is infinite, far off, unapproachable. If our universe is billions of light years wide, then God must be infinitely vaster than the universe or God is not God. Whether it is the Father, creating us and all that exists, or Jesus, the Word incarnate who is with the Father at the creation and through whom everything came into being or the spirit, brooding over the primordial chaos and making everything exist, this God, this trinity is vast, all powerful and unknowable.

At the same time, says Buechner, God is close, approachable and caring. “God is nearer to us than we are to ourselves,” St. Augustine also said. This infinite God comes to us as a baby in a manger, as a miracle worker and as a crucified and resurrected one. He took on our form so that he could take on our sorrows, take on our estrangement, take on our death in order to bring us close to God.

When you think of it, God has revealed himself in a trio of opposites that are still somehow connected:

- 1) The experience of God in the persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each with a unique role but still the one same God who does all of this, and the experience of Jesus as both true and authentic human, and, at the same time, true and authentic God.

2) The two mysteries – How can God be three persons and, at the same time one God? How can Jesus be True God and True Man?

And lastly 3) God – in three Persons – is both as infinite as the universe and, at the same time, closer to us than we are to ourselves.

Others may never understand God the way we do. It's hard enough for those of us in the faith to understand God. But this complex God still comes to us, makes a home in us and leads us in love, now and forever. AMEN