

...what's happening at the friendly church on the hill

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This Week at Trinity

...what's happening at the friendly church on the hill

From the Rector

A Christmas Carol Story of Stewardship

[Discipleship & Generosity](#), [Preaching Resources](#)

By Dan Conway

We all remember the scene from old movies and TV specials. Two “portly gentlemen,” as Charles Dickens calls them, enter the offices of Scrooge and Marley hoping to raise money “for the poor and destitute who suffer greatly at the present time of year.”

They make their case, pointing out that “hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts,” but Scrooge is not impressed. “Are there no prisons?” the old miser asks. “Aren’t the workhouses still in operation?” he snarls.

“Yes,” one of the gentlemen replies, “I wish I could say they were not.” Undaunted, the two gentlemen continue. “What shall we put you down for?”

“Nothing!” says Scrooge.

“You wish to be anonymous?” the gentlemen ask.

“I wish to be left alone!” says Scrooge.

The gentlemen leave with hearts full of sadness.

Reminder:

Sunday morning we will have one service at 9:00 am.

Sunday Evening's Christmas Eve Service will begin at 4:45 pm with Christmas music and Carols followed by Festival Holy Eucharist at 5:00 pm.

Lectionary December 24, 2017

4 Advent

[2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16](#)

[Romans 16:25-27](#)

[Luke 1:26-38](#)



Prayer List

They grieve for the poor and the homeless “who would rather die” than suffer the humiliation of a 19th-century English workhouse; but they also grieve for old Ebenezer Scrooge whose self-centered misery has blinded him to the simple joys of Christmas.

How many times have we heard similar versions of this same old story? How many times have we found ourselves playing the part of Scrooge – saying to those who ask for our time or our money, “Please don’t bother me. I wish to be left alone.”?

Although he never uses the word, Charles Dickens’ wonderful story, A Christmas Carol, is about stewardship. It is about the joy of giving and about learning to care for (and be responsible for) all of God’s creation. And, as Mr. Dickens makes very clear, A Christmas Carol is about more than just the sentimental (or commercial) “Christmas spirit” that comes and goes each holiday season.

Scrooge is not a good steward. He hoards what he has been given (time, talent and treasure) and he buries his gifts deep within himself. He cannot give or share, and the result is a twisted, self-absorbed misery. Along with his gifts and talents, Scrooge accumulates and hides all the hurts, resentments and disappointments of a lonely lifetime. In the end, nothing makes him happy. Nothing gives him peace.

There is only one thing that can save this miserable old man from the hell he has made for himself. Giving. Open, generous, unrestricted giving is the only cure for the likes of Ebenezer Scrooge. As long as he holds back – asking “What’s in it for me?” – Scrooge is condemned to live the life that he has fashioned for himself through many years of lonely self-centeredness.

Immediate Needs: Elianna, Don, and Dottie

Chronic Needs: Ann, Cal, Norlyn, and Marlene

Military: Sgt. Gabe Davis, Lt. Jacob Drodz

The needs of the world: For the homeless and the hungry, for those affected by natural disasters, for those dealing with issues of aging, mental illness, or addiction

Thanksgivings: For all the colors of Fall, for the search committee, for those who protect and serve, for the blessing of friends, family, and neighbors



Parish Activity Schedule

Sunday, December 24

8:30 am Trinity Choristers Rehearsal

9:00 am Holy Eucharist Rite II

followed by coffee hour

Christmas Eve

Christmas Music and Carols at 4:45 pm

Maria Coffin, Organ

Festival Holy Eucharist 5:00 pm

with traditional Christmas Carols

Monday, December 25

Merry Christmas!!

OFFICE CLOSED

Tuesday, December 26

OFFICE CLOSED

Fortunately, Mr. Dickens believed in a God who is generous and forgiving. Old Scrooge is given one last chance to experience life as it was truly meant to be lived. The spirits who visit Scrooge (including Jacob Marley, a former business partner now condemned to haunt the spirit world in chains of his own making) help Scrooge to face painful truths about himself. And by caring enough to confront him with his selfishness, the spirits give Scrooge something far more valuable than all his gold; they give him a glimpse of who he was, who he is now, and who he could become – if only he would let go of his bitter resentment and embrace the joy of giving.

Recall that, following this change of heart, as he hurries to join his nephew's family for Christmas dinner, Scrooge encounters one of the two "portly gentlemen" who had asked him for a contribution the day before. After greeting the gentleman so warmly that the man barely recognized the old miser, Scrooge whispers in his ear the amount of his pledge to help the poor and destitute.

"My dear Mr. Scrooge, are you serious?" cries the gentleman, "as if his breath were taken away."

"Not a farthing less," says Scrooge. "A great many back-payments are included in it, I assure you. Will you do me that favor?" he pleads.

And then the most amazing thing happens. As the astounded solicitor tries to express his gratitude, stammering from both appreciation and disbelief, old Scrooge says it for him.

"Thank you," says Scrooge. "I am much obliged to you. I thank you fifty times. Bless you!"

In A Christmas Carol, Dickens wants each of us to discover what old Scrooge had to learn the hard way: the only way to hold onto something is



Foodbank

This week: sweet potatoes or yams

Next week: pancake syrup

The Seymour Oxford Food Bank would like to thank all the volunteers who donated their time to help pack and distribute 93 Thanksgiving baskets for our clients of the Food Bank in November. Your help was very much appreciated!

Best wishes for a blessed holiday season.

Seymour Oxford Food Bank

*Thank
you* 

Dear Friends,

to give it away. This is the paradox of giving: the one who gives a gift, from substance and without counting the cost, is the one who is most grateful. Besides being a donor, the generous person is also a beneficiary. That's why Scrooge says thank you "fifty times" and also why he asks the gentleman, quite sincerely, to do him a favor by accepting the gift.

Ever afterwards, Mr. Dickens writes, it was said of Scrooge "that he knew how to keep Christmas well." Like any good steward, Scrooge kept it well by giving it away. And so, as Mr. Dickens observes at the conclusion of his story, "May that be truly said of us . . . every one!"

This article first appeared in the November 2004 issue of "Networking," the TENS newsletter.

Dan Conway is a writer, teacher and consultant who has worked in secular and religious venues for the past twenty years, currently serving as Senior Vice President for RSI Catholic Services Group. He has published many articles on stewardship and philanthropy. Dan specializes in the integration of stewardship principles with the practice of professional fund-raising. Contact him via e-mail at Danconw@aol.com.



WINTER HEATING COSTS - HELP IS AVAILABLE

Now is the time to think about applying to TEAM for assistance with winter heating costs. Households qualify for assistance if they fall

Many of you took a mitten off from 'the giving tree' and provided Christmas presents for a child in need. Let me offer my sincere thanks for your care and participation. Because of your generosity, we served all of the children on our tree. Marian Russo, who many of you met when she visited us in October, is our contact with Connecticut Alliance of Foster and Adoptive Families, and sent a thank you that I would like to share with you. It's one thing for me to keep encouraging you to participate, but I would like you to hear from one directly involved. I hope it warms your Christmas as much as it has mine!

With Christmas Blessings, and Best Wishes,
Fr. Steve

Dear Friends,

Thank you all so very much for choosing to support our children & families! I want to share with you that I just left the home of a family of 7, two adults and 5 children. Two of the children are biological, three of the children, this young couple are related to and stepped up two years ago when a home for the children was needed. After two long years, they have recently become the legal Guardian of the children, which means DCF steps out of the picture. Unfortunately, this couple who stepped up when children needed them, are now struggling financially. The home they are renting is cold and drafty, there are sinks and other things that don't work at all. The landlord, unfortunately, has no intention of fixing anything, so they are struggling to find another 4 bedroom home for \$1500 a month rent in East Haven (so their children can maintain school). Their 3-year-old can no longer attend the daycare that DCF was paying for because even at the discount rate of \$150 a week it is just not

below these income levels:

\$34,366 household of one

\$44,940 household of two

\$55,514 household of three

\$66,089 household of four

Applicants are eligible based on a review of their total gross household income, such as wage earnings, unemployment compensation, social security, pension, etc.; household size; and liquid assets, as shown through bank statements. If an applicant is approved for assistance, TEAM will make direct payments to their home heating provider.

Both homeowners and renters who are residents of Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Bethany, Derby, Milford, Orange, Oxford, Seymour, Shelton, and Woodbridge can apply for energy assistance from TEAM.

To schedule an appointment with Energy Assistance please call 203.736-5420 and follow the prompts.

Milford residents – 203.783-3253

Woodbridge residents - 203.389-3429

Orange residents – 203.891-4787

Bethany residents – 203.393-2100 X 124

TEAM, Inc. is a private 501(C)3 nonprofit corporation whose mission is to strengthen our community by educating, supporting and empowering individuals and families. TEAM programs impact the communities of Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Bethany, Derby, Milford, Naugatuck, Orange, Oxford, Shelton, Seymour, Waterbury, and Woodbridge.

at the moment rate of \$100 a month is just not affordable (I will be on the hunt for organizations that can help, I've also encouraged them to speak with DCF central office for help). I provided you more info than I meant to but it seems necessary in order for you to fully understand how grateful they were when I showed up today and surprised them with gifts from your parish for each of their children. This is the work we all do, as an extended team, together we do God's Work.

Thank you for all you do and all you've done.

God Bless and Happy New Year!

Sincerely,
Marian Russo
Connecticut Alliance of Foster & Adoptive Families

Calling all women at Trinity Parish.

The Episcopal Church Women "White Envelope" ministry is a long time tradition at Trinity. Participants receive "White envelopes" and make a monthly contribution of their choice. The collected monies are mailed to ECW Diocesan Board to help accomplish the ministries to which they are committed. This year's projects are New York Haiti Project and Educational Resources for Children Inc. Please consider becoming a part of this very worthwhile mission. Please contact Dianne Berritto [203-888-1301](tel:203-888-1301)



What Can I bring to the Christ Child?

We have a wonderful opportunity to support the Valley Diaper Bank in Seymour to provide Diapers and Baby Wipes for our young Valley families in need. As we celebrate this wonderful Feast of Christmas, let us remember that the Christ Child is still with us in those children in need. Let us offer a gift of Diapers and Baby Wipes as our special gift to the Christ Child. We will be collecting Diapers and Baby Wipes from December 24 through January 28. There will be a collection container in the Parish Hall.

We sincerely Thank You for any help that you can offer.

Deacon Tom, Kim, Leslie & Fr. Steve



Christmas Schedule of Services:

A Christmas Eucharist for those Traveling

December 22—6:30 pm

Christmas Eve

Christmas Music and Carols at 4:45 pm

Maria Coffin, Organ

**Festival Holy Eucharist 5:00 pm
with traditional Christmas Carols**

Christmas Day

9:00 am— Holy Eucharist Quiet Service

A Service of Christmas Lessons & Carols

December 31— 10:00 am

Epiphany Celebration

**January 9— 6:30 pm
with Bishop Ahrens**

[forward to a friend](#)

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