



# NEWSLETTER

*April 2020*

This is a very different looking Newsletter than our usual format. Inside you will find the necessary information you need to stay connected with us through our daily check-in chats, and our Sunday online worship services.

In this time of social distancing, isolation from friends and families, economic uncertainty, the disappointment of missed school, graduations, sports, projects, and all the many things that make up our rich and busy lives, we hope you know that your church, TriCon, is here for you. Please let us know how we can help.

If you don't have email or a computer, you can still telephone into our Zoom meetings/worship. You can call the clergy or staff at any time. Let us know how we can help keep you connected!



[www.triconchurch.org](http://www.triconchurch.org)



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These days, it's as if God is saying:

*Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid. I am with you. (Frederick Buechner, Wishful Thinking)*

On Christmas Eve we read a passage from the Gospel of John that ends with these words:

*And the word became flesh and lived among us. (John 1:14)*

The word "lived" is actually "tented." God in Christ pitched his tent among us and lived with us - on our terms, fully human and fully divine, as the ancient creeds put it. For a time, (Jesus' lifetime) God lived among us, as one of us, and so God from the inside knows what it means to be human. There is nothing that we experience that God in Christ has not experienced. God knows us and the human condition because he *tented* among us.

So I suppose we could also say that God in Christ is quarantined among us. I like that! To imagine that God experiences all the things we are experiencing...worry, boredom, frustration, joy...fills me with peace and a measure of comfort enough for the day.

As we anticipate walking through Holy Week, this anecdote from Debi Thomas gets to the heart of Jesus' journey to the cross:

Some years ago, when my daughter was in middle school, she became anorexic. During the worst of her illness, she had to be hospitalized for both her physical and mental health. On the morning of her admission, after the doctors explained that I would not be able to see my depressed, malnourished child for several days, I walked out of the hospital, got into my car, and started driving without aim or purpose.

I ended up in the parking lot of a Catholic gift shop I'd never seen before. Shaking, I walked in and wandered the aisles until a woman with a kind face approached me. "Can I help you find anything?" she asked. I burst into tears and said nothing. She gave me a hug and said, "Wait here." After disappearing for a minute, she returned with a small, velvet box. Inside it was a tiny silver crucifix on a chain. Pressing the necklace into my hands, she said, "Hold this. Keep it with you. Only a suffering God can help."

I've never forgotten the line (which I later learned was Dietrich Bonhoeffer's), and I've been thinking about it pretty much nonstop since the coronavirus pandemic began. *Only a suffering God can help.*

God in Christ is quarantined among us. And just as Christ will be raised from the dead, we too will be released (someday) from our physical isolation. But in the meantime, remember, we have a suffering God, a "quarantined" God right with us.

With you on the journey,

Rev. Gail Miller, Minister of Congregational Life



## BUILDING CLOSED

But We Gather



7 Days A Week

Join our continuing community  
practicing *FAITH* & living in *HOPE*



In our efforts to be available to you in the easiest and most accessible way, Rev. Bob Brown and Marcia Macres worked quickly to update our website, streamlining the home page, so the essentials are front and center.

***Be sure to visit [www.triconchurch.org](http://www.triconchurch.org) for all up to date information!***

We've included live links to our daily 'Zoom at Noon' check-in chats, our online Sunday worship at 10 AM, and the texts and audio of the scripture and sermons.

Though our building doors may be closed, we ARE OPEN to all of you.

In addition, we will be sending weekly email updates on either Wednesday or Thursday. If you are *not* receiving these emails, please let Amy Bruning know: [abruning@triconchurch.org](mailto:abruning@triconchurch.org).

**What is ZOOM at Noon?** We are hosting daily check-in chats, online, via the platform Zoom. You can join us with video and audio through your PC, Mac, iPad, iPhone, or Android device. Or, you can telephone into the meeting, audio only. You do not need to create a Zoom account. Simply click on the link on the home page of the church website, or found in a daily email reminder, and "join the meeting" to see some familiar faces, and to let us know how you are doing. These chats are designed to be about a half-hour in length, and you can jump in or out as your schedule allows.



← **Look for this in your email or online for a live link to the daily chats. Simply click at noon.**

**You can phone into the meetings by calling:  
1-646-558-8656 and using Meeting ID: 194 349 653**



On Sunday mornings at 10 AM, we are hosting

*online worship services.*

Please look for a link in your email, or simply go to [www.triconchurch.org](http://www.triconchurch.org) to click on the live link on the homepage to join us.

**EMAIL CONFIDENTIAL PRAYER REQUESTS  
to Bob or Gail - anytime!**

[revbobbrown@triconchurch.org](mailto:revbobbrown@triconchurch.org)

[revmiller@triconchurch.org](mailto:revmiller@triconchurch.org)

**A Note on Stewardship - Pledges**

In the face of this global crisis, TriCon Church continues to offer hope, fellowship, spiritual connection, encouragement and care to those who need it.

Because of your support we are able to continue to

- Hold Sunday Worship and many other ministries online
- Organize ways to minister to the most vulnerable in our community
- Offer care and resources for those facing hardship
- Support the elderly and others who may be isolated.
- Continue our support for the organizations that provide direct services for those less fortunate.

It's an extraordinary privilege to shine the Light of Christ, offer comfort and bring hope in this time of crisis. The Church was made for this.

**Everything we do at TriCon Church is only possible because of your continued support.** While the church building is closed, expenses continue.

Pledges and offerings can be mailed to the church or dropped off in the mail slot in the Walden Street door. On-line payments may be made thru our website either by electronic funds transfer (EFT) from your bank or by credit card. With credit card payments, the amount received is reduced by 3-3.5%, so if possible, please consider doing a bank transfer (EFT).



## WHAT REALLY MATTERS

In an instant, everything changed for every one of us. We each have a story to tell. Some are isolated on their own while others are quarantined with young children. Some pray for loved one's who are working on the front lines of the healthcare system while those being cared for can only hope they get the attention needed. Graduations have been canceled, weddings postponed and travel plans scrapped. Layoffs are on the rise, the market is tumbling and business ventures are deferred. Anyone who was compromised physically, insecure financially or on the edge emotionally before the pandemic is now at even greater risk. Whatever we thought the future looked like a few short weeks ago is now one big question mark.

In a climate of such uncertainty, loss and peril, what can we hang on to? Where can hope be found? When normal life is suddenly stopped cold, we begin to reevaluate priorities and question the direction of our life. In isolation and boredom, we are forced to grapple with the crucial existential questions; What really matters? What is my purpose in life? Where do I belong and to whom do I belong?

The pandemic itself is a big clue. Even in dislocation we see how acutely interwoven we are. Each and every being is part of a much bigger whole. There is no denying that we are inextricably bound to one another. Life is one dynamic organism functioning in dependent relationship. The fullness of God's love begins to come alive when we discover that our participation in the whole has lasting significance. In the center of this global crisis we are seeing that connection to the whole is what endures and community is what really matters. People are reviving old relationships, checking in with one another, innovating ways to contribute and seeking out ways to lend a helping hand wherever opportunity presents itself.

Because much of our life has been put on hold, we are finding room to connect with each other. In community we are finding strength beyond ourselves. In connection we affirm our place and belonging. In service we are caring for one another like never before. Maybe this is what it takes to get our attention realigned back to what really matters.

In faith and hope,

*Bob*

Rev. Bob Brown, Senior Minister

### **Sabbatical Postponed**

Due to the seriousness of the pandemic and the fluid nature of adjusting to the changes, it seems best if I delay going on sabbatical at least until June 1. I am honored to be journeying with TriCon Church at this time and couldn't bear to be away. Updates as they happen!

Trinitarian Congregational Church

# EASTER SERVICES

Palm Sunday  
April 5th, 10 AM

Maundy Thursday  
April 9th, 8 PM

Good Friday  
April 10th, Noon



Easter Sunday  
**APRIL 12TH**

one online service, 10 AM



*Our Holy Week services will all be ONLINE.*

*Please visit our website and keep an eye out for email announcements with instructions on how to join us using your phone or computer devices.*

**Christine Kelley, Youth Leader, and Rev. Gail Miller** have continued to minister to our high-school youth via online gatherings, continuing Sunday nights' Youth Group and Wednesday evenings' Discussion Group. These are OPEN to all ... if you are not receiving the online links in Christine's emails, please let her know asap. [ckelley@triconchurch.org](mailto:ckelley@triconchurch.org) 978-337-6171



## APRIL CHILDREN'S MINISTRY at TRICON

*For surely*  
**I KNOW THE**  
**plans**  
*I have for*  
**YOU,**  
*says (the)*  
*Lord...*  
**TO GIVE YOU A**  
**future**  
**WITH**  
*Hope.*  
Jeremiah 29:11, NRSV

Each week, while Children's Ministry programming is on hiatus due to our current health crisis, I am emailing faith-based ideas and activities that you and your family can do at home. Activities include Creating a Sacred Space, Baking Prayer Pretzels, Making a Gratitude Wall, Sharing Happiness with Others, Learning About Lent and more.

Our focus for the first two weeks in April will be Holy Week and **EASTER!**

If you are not receiving my emails, please contact me. I am also available if you have any questions or would like more ideas of ways you and your family can grow closer to God at home.

**Join us for Sunday Worship and Church Chats via Zoom -- there is a children's message for those aged 0 - 99 each Sunday service!**

Blessings,  
Carrie O'Brien, Children's Ministry Director  
[cobrien@triconchurch.org](mailto:cobrien@triconchurch.org)



DISASTER RESPONSE

### **COVID19 Relief**

Our Christmas offering raised over \$17,500 for relief in the Bahamas through Team Rubicon, a wonderful organization that utilizes the skills and experience of our service veterans as volunteers to assist in disaster relief and rebuilding efforts. Due to the expanding needs created by the COVID 19 pandemic, they asked, and we agreed, to re-allocate our donation to their "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" initiative.

Team Rubicon volunteers have mobilized and connected with food security partners across the country to fill a void created by the tempo of the spread of the virus and the need for operational safety requirements for volunteers. They are already on the ground in 70 communities distributing food, and medical supplies, facilitating transportation and assisting with day-to-day tasks for those in quarantine.

***Our donation will make a difference in this vital work.***

## MUSICAL NOTES

The staff and choir receive daily "Musical Notes" e-mails from Vickie. They aim to nurture the spirit with a morsel of sacred music, along with her commentary about the day's selection.

If you would like to be added to the recipients list, please e-mail Vickie: [vwagner@triconchurch.org](mailto:vwagner@triconchurch.org).

### *In Sympathy*

We send our sympathies to the Kohl family following the death of **John Kohl** on February 18th, in Texas. John Kohl was the widower of Deana Kohl, who worked at the church as the Church School Director. John was the church Treasurer for many years.

We are also saddened to learn of the death of **Warren Pyle**, a member of our choir in past years.

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## **Tired of Singing Happy Birthday while washing your hands?**

**These first verses of the Hymns below take approximately 30 seconds to sing.**

### BE THOU MY VISION

Be Thou my Vision,  
O Lord of my heart

Naught be all else to me,  
save that Thou art

Thou my best Thought,  
by day or by night

Waking or sleeping,  
Thy presence my light

### MORNING HAS BROKEN

Morning has broken  
like the first morning

Blackbird has spoken  
like the first bird

Praise for the singing  
Praise for the morning

Praise for them springing  
fresh from the world



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TO:

Visit our updated and streamlined website for  
lots of great TriCon information:

**[www.triconchurch.org](http://www.triconchurch.org)**