



From time to time I revisit newsletters from past years to remind me of where we have been. It can often help to inform where we are going. Last July, I wrote about what we were learning as we closely examined the purpose and meaning of TriCon worship. I found it quite thought provoking in light of the massive shift we have undergone in adapting our worship during the current pandemic crisis. Here is what I wrote:

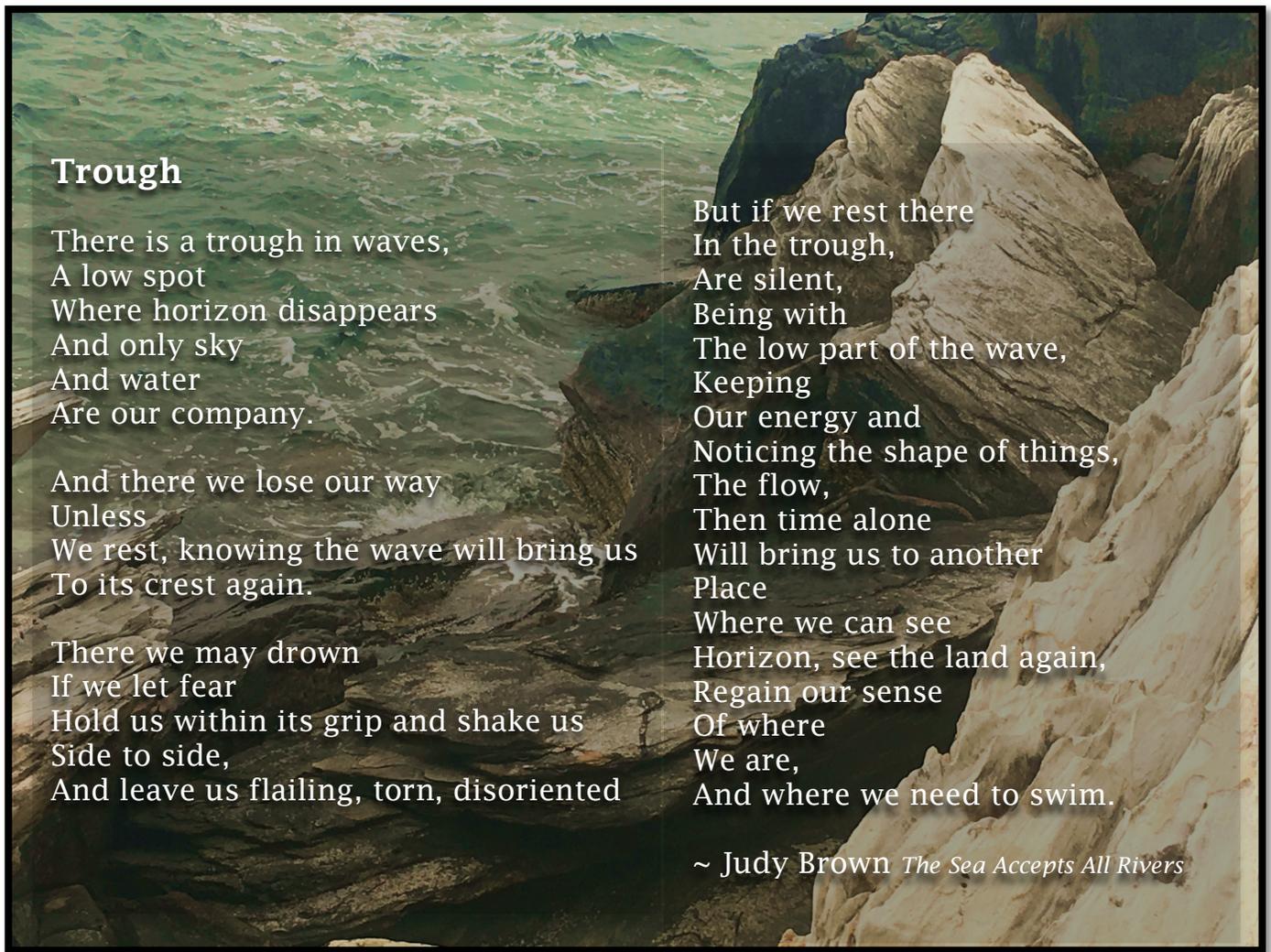
*To me, worship is many things. Individual spiritual practices, small groups and even committee work can manifest as forms of worship. But our Sunday worship has a unique place in gathering together specifically to worship God in community. Sunday morning services should be markedly different than our day to day lives. Our Words of Welcome and Call to Worship are written and delivered to usher us into a sanctified time of total acceptance and absolute worthiness that is not measured or graded by our holiness, piety or personal successes or failures from the prior week. **The goal is to bring ourselves into community exactly as we are and feel welcomed and belonging.** Whether you have lost your faith or never found a faith, we try to articulate through prayer, words, song and silence that faith is something possible, real, relevant, vibrant and critically important to all of us today. Worship, I believe, should involve our whole beings, mind, body, soul, and spirit. What we see and hear, taste and smell all adds to the full embodiment of worshiping our Living God.*

Peaks and Troughs

Even though nearly everything in our lives has been utterly upended since last year, there is still an important through line that remains. Worshiping our God *together*, exactly as we are, gives us strength, renews our hope, and reminds us that we are not alone. Even in isolation we find ways to give love, receive compassion and extend kindness to one another.

This summer we will continue our socially distant worship through Zoom and YouTube. We continue to find new creative ways to usher in a sanctified time of total acceptance, connection and fellowship. There will be continued opportunities for mission and service, socially distanced small group gatherings and creative ways to worship even in this “foreign land.”

As spring emerged, I have found my thoughts turning to what I imagined I would be doing right now on a 3-month sabbatical. I see myself standing on a rocky coastline at sunset. I’m staring out at the ocean watching the tide dance with shoreline and feel somehow part of it. Even though I may not get to Chebeague Island this summer and postponed my sabbatical for a year, this vision in my mind’s eye is quite comforting. Even in the turbulence of crashing waves pounding the craggy rocks, there is a timeless consistency and reliability beautifully woven through disorder and uncertainty. It carries me past disrupted plans and delayed celebrations. There is a magnificent poem by Judy Brown called *The Trough* that elegantly articulates this idea and fosters great hope and important wisdom. I’m making it my summer poem.



Trough

There is a trough in waves,
A low spot
Where horizon disappears
And only sky
And water
Are our company.

And there we lose our way
Unless
We rest, knowing the wave will bring us
To its crest again.

There we may drown
If we let fear
Hold us within its grip and shake us
Side to side,
And leave us flailing, torn, disoriented

But if we rest there
In the trough,
Are silent,
Being with
The low part of the wave,
Keeping
Our energy and
Noticing the shape of things,
The flow,
Then time alone
Will bring us to another
Place
Where we can see
Horizon, see the land again,
Regain our sense
Of where
We are,
And where we need to swim.

~ Judy Brown *The Sea Accepts All Rivers*



Rev. Bob Brown is on vacation until mid-July. In his absence, Rev. Gail Miller will continue working with the staff and others to create vibrant Zoom worship each Sunday at 10am. She will also be available for pastoral concerns. Upon Bob's return in July, Gail will take her vacation.

One of the greatest philosophers of the 20th Century (Ludwig Wittgenstein) said:

I don't know why we are here, but I'm pretty sure that it is not in order to enjoy ourselves.



And I think he's right. I don't take this to mean that we are to spend our lives as depressed and unhappy people, but that the PURPOSE of our lives is not simply to enjoy ourselves. Enjoying ourselves might (and I hope will) occur, but that happens as much because we are fulfilling a greater purpose than satisfying our own desires.

As Christians, we discover our purpose and derive meaning for our lives in relationship to the One who made us and loves us beyond measure. Complicated questions of identity and purpose can (at least for a moment) be recast in the simplicity of the Gospel:

Who am I? *I am a beloved child of God for whom Christ died*

What is my purpose? *To glorify God and enjoy Him forever*

(from the Westminster Catechism, a foundational document for protestant Christians).

How this gets lived out in our daily lives is where things can get complicated:

As a beloved child of God for whom Christ died, how do I respond to my (friend, co-worker, neighbor, spouse, teacher, fill-in-the-blank) when the disagreements begin to escalate?

How does quarantine life where things are the same day in and day out glorify God?

How can I enjoy God when the burdens of caring for all the people in my household make it difficult to get out of bed in the morning as well as fall asleep at night?

I certainly don't have easy answers for these tough questions. But this week I was reminded that Jesus said:

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. (Matt. 11:28)

And I hear "beloved child of God" and "enjoy Him forever" in those words as well. Sometimes we just need to be reminded again, or invited, again.

Gertrude Stein describes an exchange she had with Pablo Picasso. Even though he had painted a portrait of her, years later he did not recognize that it was she he was talking with. Stein murmured to Picasso, "I like your portrait of Gertrude Stein." And he replied, "Yes, someone has said to me that she does not look like it; but that doesn't make any difference, she will."

You and I are growing into the image of Jesus; and even though there are days we do not seem to be very much like him, we will be, some day. In the meantime, know that you are invited again and again into the arms of Jesus.

With you on the Journey,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gail".

Rev. Gail Miller, Minister of Congregational Life

Ode to COVID

I used to be afraid when seeing a masked man,
Now I know he's just doing the best that he can!

Fewer places to go –many fewer demands,
'Cept the 99 times that I'm washing my hands!

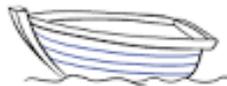
I need tissues, wipes, and toilet paper,
To catch the drips and cleanse the vapor.

Technology's great – love connecting by Zoom,
But how I wish we could be in the same room!

I see my mom thru the window, but I can't reach her,
I never wanted to be a sixth-grade math teacher!

It does help knowing that we're all in the same boat,
And, knowing with God's help, we'll keep it afloat!

-Judy Walpole





**From Vickie Wagner,
Music Director**

On Singing Together

*By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept
when we remembered Zion.*

*There on the poplars
we hung our harps -*

*How can we sing the songs of the Lord
while in a foreign land? - Psalm 137*

MUSIC

The world we live in - for now - is a foreign land indeed. Pandemic comes with profound loss on many fronts. One such casualty – for now – is group singing. Scientific understanding about how this virus is transmitted will continue to evolve. At this time, a body of evidence seems to show that when a person talks loudly, laughs or sings, a cloud of tiny aerosol particles is dispersed. These tiny particles travel much farther than 6' and can float in the air for hours. Practically speaking, no amount of physical distancing indoors can mitigate this aerosol spread.

Even with "social distancing," it's not safe to sing together.

This is heartbreaking news - for now. In time, heaven and earth will once again resound with the joyful singing of congregations and choirs around the world.

In the meantime...

...nothing keeps us from singing together in our homes.

...nothing keeps us from singing along to our favorite recordings.

...nothing keeps us from singing while we garden or take walks.

...nothing keeps us from singing hymns together during our online worship services.

These words, written by Robert Lowry in 1869, may never have been more true:

*My life flows on in endless song; above earth's lamentation,
I hear the sweet, though far-off hymn that hails a new creation.
Through all the tumult and the strife, I hear that music ringing
It finds an echo in my soul how can I keep from singing?*

*No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since Love is Lord of heav'n and earth, how can I keep from singing?*

Vickie Wagner
(with thanks to Peter Sykes)



JOIN US ONLINE

10am Sunday Worship Service
(via Zoom & YouTube Live)

-&-

12-noon Zoom @ Noon
M-W-F
*(Visits with TriCon Friends
via Zoom)*

*Building closed
until further notice*


YouTube


zoom

The church staff has been carefully monitoring the many guidelines, protocols and recommendations regarding church closings and re-openings from the UCC (Southern New England Conference), the Mass. Council of Churches, information from other churches and other denominations, and church resource groups, which have all produced helpful information and perspectives.

Our over-riding concern is the safety and health of our parishioners, visitors and staff. Based on all that we have learned, we believe that we need to remain "Safer at Home."

While Governor Baker has lifted the restrictions requiring the closing of houses of worship, this does not mean that churches should, or can, throw open their doors and invite worshipers to come in as usual.

Based on re-opening restrictions from the State and recommendations from medical professionals:

- Occupancy is limited to 40% of the building's maximum occupancy
- Attendance must be monitored and limited
- Those not in the same immediate household must be seated at least 6 feet apart, meaning the capacity on the first floor of our sanctuary is 25 single worshipers, slightly more for couples and families (we can use only every 4th pew to maintain the safe distance)
- On-line advance reservations would be necessary in order to manage attendance, as well as to be able to set up the room for the anticipated attendees, i.e. how many seats for couples, singles, families
- Persons coming to the building must enter and exit so as to maintain safe social distancing (minimum 6')
- No singing, no hymnals
- No communion, no offering collection
- Masks are required at all times
- Bathroom use limited; restrooms cleaned every 15 minutes
- No pre/post gatherings (i.e. coffee hour) and no childcare is permitted
- All surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected following any use

Monitoring usage, sanitizing, assuring safe physical distancing, managing traffic flow and other requirements, make us unable to open the building for use by anyone at this time.

UPDATE

on the State of the Church

In this time of pandemic, the church, like so many non-profits, institutions and businesses, has been affected both financially and operationally. **We will host a ZOOM gathering on Tuesday, June 16 at 7pm to update the congregation on the church finances and plans going forward.** Look for an email with the link to the 6/16 "Congregational Update" zoom meeting closer to the date.

There is no crisis, no big issues; this is just a chance to get together, virtually, if not physically, and to receive an update on our life together. The Zoom link will be on our website closer to the date and in the weekly emails. Meanwhile, if you have specific questions or topics you would like addressed, please send an email to info@triconchurch.org or leave a message at the church office 978-369-4837.

Concord LEAP School closing

Our tenant in our church school wing, the LEAP School has told us regretfully that they will shutting down their operations at our site and will not be returning in the fall or for 2021. We have had a wonderful, mutually beneficial relationship for the past 27 years and we are sad to see them go but understand the realities of the times. We wish them well as they continue to provide pre-school education in their other locations in Bedford, Sudbury and Lexington.



ZOOM @ Noon is now Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays

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 Monday, Wednesday and Friday chats. Simply click at noon. See you there!

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

Need help?? Call or text any staff member! Or, check out the instructions on triconchurch.org

*Zoom is updating their software. You will need to UPDATE your Zoom by June 1st to join meetings. When you log on, you'll likely be asked to update.

Questions? Watch this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7zERcVLUBM>



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 to click on the live link on the homepage to join us.

EMAIL CONFIDENTIAL PRAYER REQUESTS
to Gail - anytime!
(Bob is on vacation from June 1 – mid-July)

You can watch the weekly worship service on YouTube, either LIVE at 10AM on Sundays, or throughout the week. Please SUBSCRIBE to our channel.

*Zoom is updating their software. You will need to UPDATE your Zoom by June 1st to join meetings.

Questions? Watch this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7zERcVLUBM> (enter into browser, or google zoom update)





Carolyn Stein, Chair of Mission Committee, gave the Call to Stewardship in early May. In case you missed that service, you can watch it on YouTube. Below is part of Carolyn's Call to Stewardship:

The Mission Committee has continued to meet, via Zoom, since we all had to retreat to our homes. As always, we have been taking up the applications of the different organizations that have come to rely on support from TriCon. But there are some big differences in our deliberations. For one, the organizations all submitted their applications BC—that is before Covid-19, or at least before the extent of the reach of the pandemic was understood. So, members of the committee have been in touch with our organizations to find out what is happening with them now—how their operations have had to adapt because of the crisis, what their current needs are.

You won't be surprised to hear that certain of our organizations are especially affected by the crisis: for example, organizations that provide food to those in need, such as Open Table, are experiencing unprecedented demand; organizations that help to support victims of domestic violence, such as the Domestic Violence Services Network, are also feeling, sadly, an increased need.

Our congregation has always been a generous one, including and especially during tough times. Without your continued contributions and fulfillment of pledges, however, we will be severely hampered in our ability to continue in that generous tradition. Now, when our neighbors near and far are looking to us for help, I ask you, as you are able, to fulfill your pledges, to offer as you can, so that TriCon can continue to be a light in our community and our world

On behalf of the Mission Committee and on behalf of the organizations who rely on TriCon, thank you. Blessings to you and to your families—

Carolyn Stein
May 3, 2020

It's easy to make your Pledge payments and offerings!

1. Mail to: 54 Walden Street, Concord MA 01742
2. Drop an envelope through the mail slot in the door facing Walden St.
3. Go to our payment tab on the website: triconchurch.org. Please consider an EFT to avoid CC fees.

THANK YOU to everyone who has continued to financially support the church as you are able. Year to date giving statements were recently mailed. Contact Judy or Amy if you have any questions.



TriCon community Food Drive for Open Table June 8th, 9th, & 10th

Our \$5,000 Mission Donation to OpenTable was sent in April. We are happy to be able to continue to support our local Food Bank during this difficult time.

OpenTable pantry needs supplies!!

We are asking the TriCon community to help by donating items needed. Bring your offerings to TriCon on June 8th, 9th or 10th. Place your food donations in the covered area outside the Walden Street entrance. There will be a marked bin. Do not enter the church.

Items especially needed for their pantry:

toothpaste
bar soap
canned fruit

canned tuna or pouch, in water
canned beans, any kind
soups, with emphasis on protein/stew like

Their supplies are really stretched right now. Folks coming to their pantry who pick up on Tuesday and Thursday nights need our help ... thank you!!

Any questions, please contact Demi Ayres: demi.ayres@gmail.com

WE ARE HERE FOR You

Call or email Rev. Gail Miller with any pastoral care concerns or needs at 978.831.3482 or revmiller@triconchurch.org

Judy Walpole: 978.884.7976; jwalpole@triconchurch.org

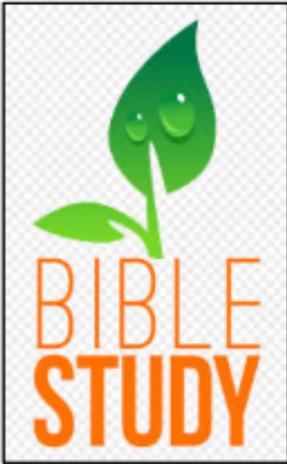
Amy Bruning: 978.394.1916; abruning@triconchurch.org

Vickie Wagner: vwagner@triconchurch.org

Carrie O'Brien: cobrien@triconchurch.org

Marcia Macres: mjmacres@triconchurch.org

Christine Kelley: ckelley@triconchurch.org



Bible Study - the Gospel of Matthew

Monday nights, 7:00 - 8:15 PM

Leaders: Jean Cummings, Otto Judicke, Ghilaine Marino, Ellen Quackenbush

Matthew 17-18 on June 1, Matthew 19-20

on June 8, Matthew 21-22 on June 15, Matthew 23-24 on June 22 and Matthew 25-26 on June 29.

All are welcome! No need to commit to every Monday -- show up when you can!

Contact Ellen Quackenbush for the zoom meeting details: equackenbush206@gmail.com

Contact Otto Judicke with any questions: ojudicke@comcast.net

Men's Anchor Group:

For meeting dates and times, please email Greg

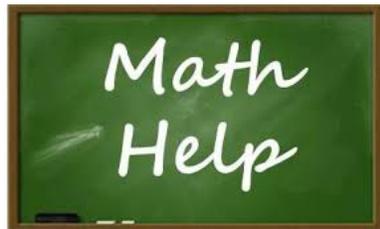
Howes:

greg@howesinsurance.com

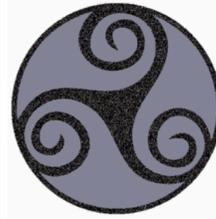


Quadratic Equations anyone?

Church member, Betsey Wood, retired math teacher, has volunteered to be a resource for our TriCon community for those trying to



teach or learn at home. If you are a parent needing help remembering lessons from high school math or a teen trying to figure out a new math concept You can reach her at: betswood@gmail.com



Women of Spirit Group: Spiritual Support and Discovery

Contact Cheryl or Liz for meeting dates and links to zoom.

Morning group: Wed. @ 7AM – next meetings: JUNE 3rd and JUNE 17th (last meeting for season)

Cheryl Shea: cheryl.shea@verizon.net

Evening group: Thurs. @ 7PM – next meeting: JUNE 11th

Liz Crowell: lbenema@gmail.com

The Zoom link will be emailed ahead.

A LITTLE ALL-AT-HOME HUMOR



www.triconchurch.org

TriCon's website homepage is updated on a weekly basis and is a *huge* resource of great information:

latest sermon . weekly updates . children's ministry activities . youth group . newsletters . and more!

We've included live links to our M/W/F '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.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the TriCon Trinitarian Congregational Church website. At the top center is the church's logo, which includes a cross and the text "TRICON Trinitarian Congregational Church" above a rainbow-colored horizontal bar. Below the logo is a navigation menu with the following items: ABOUT, WORSHIP, EDUCATION, MISSION, CALENDAR, NEWS, SIGN UPS, and PAYMENTS (highlighted in a red box). The main content area features a large banner with a green, leafy background. The banner text reads: "10am Sunday Worship Service", "Join Us online" (with "online" in a large orange circle), "zoom & YouTube" (with icons for Zoom and YouTube), and "12noon - Zoom at Noon M-W-F". Below the banner are three smaller promotional boxes. The first box, titled "SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICES", shows a computer monitor with the "online" logo and text: "TRICON WORSHIP Click Here LIVE SUNDAY SERVICE BEGINS AT 10AM". The second box, titled "MID-WEEK ZOOM @ NOON", features the text "zoom @ noon online" and "Click Here VISITS WITH TriCon FRIENDS M-W-F @ NOON". The third box, titled "CONTACT US", has a black background with the text "CONTACT" and the church logo.



JUNE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY NEWSLETTER

Sunday morning emails with opportunities for families to practice faith at home will continue to be sent out until mid-June.

Practicing our faith does not stop, however, when the school year does. Periodically throughout the summer, I will be either emailing or mailing fun ideas and activities to help you engage your children in simple ways to keep them connected to God and TriCon.

In the meantime, please join us for Sunday Worship

Our 10:00am Sunday Worship Services, **including a Children's Message each week** are accessible via Zoom. Refer to the on-line email from TriCon church for information on how to access these opportunities.

Information about all of the above can also be found on our Church website at www.triconchurch.org.

Sending warm hugs to you and your family,

Carrie O'Brien
 Children's Ministry Director
cobrien@triconchurch.org



TRICON
 COMMUNITY

YOUTH GROUP

We continue to meet for Discussion Group on Wednesday nights and Youth Group on Sunday nights on-line via ZOOM. Discussion Group continues to be a way to connect and have interesting and sometimes challenging conversations.

As for Youth Group, some of our recent activities via Zoom have been Boggle Brainbusters and Scattergories, with prizes for the winners. For our "end of the year activity", that is TBD!

The links to join are sent out via email and are texted each "day of" via the GroupMe app. Email Christine Kelley with questions, ckelley@triconchurch.org.

SENIORS – WE NEED YOUR BIOS!!

We love celebrating our YOUTH at TriCon. Every July newsletter, we highlight the graduating high school seniors. If you have not yet replied to CHRISTINE'S email request for your Senior BIO, please do so ASAP!! If you are a graduating high school senior and did not receive an email from Christine, please submit your Bio to ckelley@triconchurch.org.



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Trinitarian Congregational Church
54 Walden Street
Concord, MA 01742

Phone: 978-369-4837

Fax: 978-287-0406

Email: info@triconchurch.org

Website: www.triconchurch.org

TO:

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

www.triconchurch.org