

November 2020



The
ROAD
Ahead

“Go and produce lasting fruit” - Jesus¹

The culture wars we face today may appear heightened, but they are really nothing new. It is an age-old clash between winners and losers, us against them. To live a life devoted entirely to one side or the other is to know only anger, frustration and disappointment.

As this newsletter comes to your home, we are on the eve of a historic election. The outcome will have a significant effect on how our nation finds a way through the COVID crisis and the pandemic's far reaching effect on our society. This election will determine how we navigate the ongoing racial tensions, respond to climate change, marriage equality, immigration law, global diplomacy, health care, criminal justice, the economy, poverty, unemployment and every single aspect of how we live together as a nation.

No matter what the outcome, there is little doubt that like-minded activists on all sides will be organizing, the outrage will be loud and vocal, the accusations will be hurled like live grenades, and it is very likely that, in some communities, the pressure will boil over.

The real problem we face is that human beings have a strong compulsion to win and losing seems to unleash a primal rage. We think that our identity and self-worth are contingent on being right. Our sense of power and control is fueled by certainty and bolstered by the unshakable conviction that that *our* intentions are morally sound, *theirs* are misguided. *We* are entirely justified in our outrage; *they* are simply argumentative. Our call for reform is absolutely necessary, they are obstructionist. The tension is pulled tighter and tighter as the chasm between us and them widens. Our ability to locate the common ground and find compromises needed for lasting change becomes all but impossible.

But when you really think about it, winning and losing are ephemeral conditions. True societal reform must be a “lasting fruit” that endures beyond the current cycle of winners and losers.

Jesus taught an alternative way, a way of peace, humility, acceptance and kindness. But the Way of Jesus requires a radical transformation of our minds to free us from the toxic, rigidity of binary thinking. Transformed minds allow us to see an expansive horizon beyond the limiting confines of liberal and conservative, winner and loser, my way or the highway. This is the revolutionary thinking that allows us to humbly release the compulsion to always be right and loosen our grip on the need for certainty. A transformed consciousness awakens the soul to a larger, more enduring reality; love is stronger than hate, peace is never won through war, and not one of us has the perfect solution. Only together can we find our way forward.

Clearly, social reforms are critically needed. Advocating for justice is spiritual work. But the only certainty we should hold tightly to is that we are energized in love, not anger and resentment. It is the power of God's transforming love that paves the road ahead leading us to enduring reformation, true justice and lasting peace. To humbly walk with our God is to engage our social action with a peaceful heart and compassionate state of mind.

As followers of Christ, we are empowered to “go and produce lasting fruit”. In a world on the brink, we have been transformed by grace to become brokers of peace. In all the uncertainties and trials that await us on the road ahead, may the Spirit keep us firmly rooted in God's transformative love.

In faith and hope,

Bob

Rev. Robert Brown – Senior Minister

¹ John 15:16

I recently ran across this poem by Margaret Atwood which expresses a beautiful understanding of stewardship as far more than having to do with our finances.

The Moment

The moment when, after many years of hard work and a long voyage you stand in the centre of your room, house, half-acre, square mile, island, country, knowing at last how you got there, and say, I own this,

is the same moment when the trees unloose their soft arms from around you, the birds take back their language, the cliffs fissure and collapse, the air moves back from you like a wave and you can't breathe.

No, they whisper. You own nothing. You were a visitor, time after time climbing the hill, planting the flag, proclaiming. We never belonged to you. You never found us. It was always the other way round.

David Lose (pastor of a Lutheran Church in Minneapolis) writes this reflection on it. I share his thinking 100%.

A sense of ownership, of deserving, of having earned the good we enjoy in this life is, I believe, the mortal enemy of gratitude. For gratitude recognizes our empty hands and can only give thanks for what has filled them. Gratitude looks around in wonder at all that furnishes our life and feels no sense of accomplishment, only a surprised delight in good fortune. When we feel grateful it is hard to be mean or cruel or indifferent, for we perceive that all of life is a gift, and gifts make us feel special and capable and both responsible and responsive. How can we not give back when we realize how much has been given to us?

But the moment we've decided that we are not stewards but owners, not recipients but creators, not blessed but entitled, all the wonder and magic of the world vanishes, leaving us alone with our self-satisfied hearts, grateful to no one but ourselves, connected by no obligation of love or duty, triumphant in our loneliness.

May we never tarry in such moments for long. Not on Thanksgiving. Not at Christmas. Not even on our birthday or the day of our promotion or retirement. No, not ever.

God has blessed us, sought us out, and found us. And acknowledging that in grateful surprise is surely the beginning of both wisdom and happiness. Which, when you think about it, means that perhaps the most important words to say across the journey of our lives is not, finally, "I love you," but the shorter, sweeter phrase, "Thank you."

Thank you, Margaret Atwood, for your poignant poem.
Thank you, David Lose, for your good words.
Thank you, God, for everything else!

With you on the journey,



Rev. Gail Miller, Minister of Congregational Life



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 PRAYER REQUESTS
prayers@triconchurch.org

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

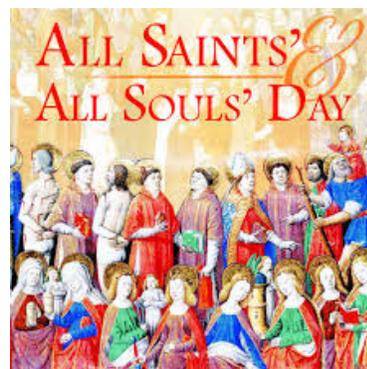
The ZOOM links are emailed every week on the Friday eblast, and again on Sunday morning. Please let Amy Bruning know if you are not getting the emails. abruning@triconchurch.org



11.1	Rev. Gail Miller
11.8	Rev. Bob Brown
11.15	Rev. Bob Brown
11.22	Rev. Gail Miller
11.29	Rev. Bob Brown

Remembering Those Who Have Died All Saints' Sunday - November 1st

November 1st is All Saints' Sunday. All Saints' Day is a day the church has celebrated since the 5th Century to remember and honor the lives of those who have died in our congregation. **Please email Gail (revmiller@triconchurch.org) with the names of your beloved who have died in the last year or so if you would like them added.**



TriCon Church Blessing of the Animals



November 1st @ 1 PM
Come celebrate all God's creatures!

Our pets bring such special, loving relationships to our human experience.

Bring your DOG, CAT, BIRD, CHICKEN, RABBIT, HAMPSTER, or even your STUFFED ANIMAL

We'll meet on the front lawn of the church, weather permitting. **Wear a mask, or a leash!**

Please join us, pet-owner or not,
all welcome.

TRICON
COMMUNITY

NOVEMBER 1ST AT 1:00 PM
Rain or Shine (unless it's a deluge!)

Music by Bob Lawson.

Each pet receives a blessing certificate.

Any questions, call the church office. We hope to see you there!

We are dedicating our pledges for 2021 on November 15th. Please return your pledge card, or make a pledge online, by November 14th. Thank you!

74% remaining

we have received
70 pledges, out
of 270

26%
of pledges
collected to date



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, or clicking on the 'offset' button to cover CC fees. Thank you.

THANK YOU to everyone who has continued to financially support the church as you are able. Contact Judy or Amy if you have any questions.

From the Call to Stewardship, given October 25th, 2020:

In one of my walks around Carlisle this week, I passed a sign that read, "Oh My God, please make it stop." I paused for a moment of reflection and realized how deeply these words spoke to me. Whatever your political views, wherever you are on your life journey, I think it's safe to say, that the events of this year have pushed us all to the proverbial "breaking point."

But in the midst of all the pandemonium and despair and just plain noise, there is a place, a community, and people to whom we can turn who stand by and with us. For me, TriCon is a sanctuary and even though we cannot worship and spend time together there right now, it represents a beacon of hope, a place of peace and good will, of kindness and compassion, of humor, of laughter.

And even though church looks very different right now, nothing about it has truly changed. We need TriCon right now more than ever before.

And TriCon needs us. As we enter into the last few days of the Stewardship season, I would urge all those who have not yet done so to complete and return their stewardship envelopes. TriCon cannot fulfill its critical work of caring for us without our full and enthusiastic support.

-Dale Ryder



community

2021 PLEDGE CARD

I/We will increase our pledge this year by _____ %

I/We pledge \$ _____
(pledge payments can be made yearly, quarterly, monthly, weekly -- at your convenience)

Name(s) _____

Email _____

*Please return this card to the church in the envelope provided ...
Or, you can make a confidential pledge online at triconchurch.org*

Trinitarian Congregational Church, 54 Walden Street, Concord, MA 01742
978-369-4837; jwalpole@triconchurch.org; abruning@triconchurch.org

Advent at Home – Wreaths and Candles!

As we continue to worship 'together' from our homes, we want to provide you with the ability to participate more fully in the coming season of Advent. In particular, we are hoping you will join in the lighting of the advent candles with us each Sunday. Our church is offering small advent wreaths and a set of candles (3 purple and 1 pink, just like at church), for you to have in your homes.

These will be available for you to pick up beginning November 19th, in the bin outside the door to the Parish Hall on Walden St. Be sure to get yours before the First Sunday of Advent – Nov. 29th – the Sunday of Thanksgiving weekend.

Jesus said, "I am the Light of the World." As the body of Christ endeavoring to be the light of Christ, joining together in this way will strengthen us as individuals and as a church as we make our way into the dark days of winter.



Sign up, booklet, and more details coming soon. Look for information in your early November Friday e-mails from TriCon Church about the upcoming [Advent Small Group series](#):

Between Memory and Hope

Holiday Gift Bags for our local Prisons

Matthew 25:35-40 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'"

For many years, our church has supported the Holiday Gift Bag Project where the men in our local prisons are given a simple bag of necessities- often the only gift they receive. **This year, it is more important than ever!** Volunteer programs in all state prisons are on hold and the men incarcerated in the two Concord prisons have had no contact with volunteers, while the dangers of COVID-19 have made life in these close quarters even more stressful. This holiday season, we want to assure them that good-hearted people in the surrounding communities have not forgotten them.

We are unable to accept donations of gift items or cards but Concord Prison Outreach will purchase all the gift bag items and a festive printed card will be included in each bag.

If you would like to make a monetary donation, it would be very appreciated. Your check may be sent to Holiday Gift Bag Project, Concord Prison Outreach, 6 Walden Street #1, Concord, MA 01742; or checks may also be made out to the church, marked "holiday gift bag project," and mailed to TriCon at 54 Walden Street, Concord.



Men's Anchor Group

For meeting dates and times, please email Greg Howes: greg@howesinsurance.com

Women of Spirit

Wed. @ 7:30AM
November 11th & 28th
Cheryl Shea:
cheryl.shea@verizon.net



Thurs. @ 7PM
November 12
Liz Crowell: lbenema@gmail.com
ALL WOMEN WELCOME!!

Monday evening Bible Study 7 – 8:15 PM

via Zoom

Continuing through Novmber 23rd, the TriCon Bible Study is examining the **Book of Luke**. All are welcome to join, as able, you do not need to commit to each week. Contact Otto Judicke for zoom link, or find it in your Friday TriCon “weekly update” emails.
ojudicke@comcast.net



THE UPPER ROOM

New daily devotional booklets are available. Pick yours up outside the parish hall – they are in a plastic bag on top of the milk crate, by the Walden Street door.

Gifts of Stock

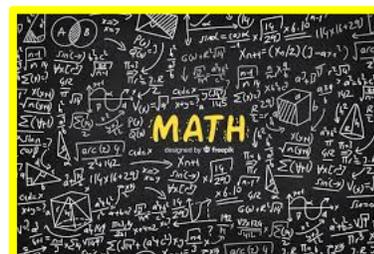
We received a gift of FACEBOOK shares as a donation, but the giver was not named. Please *show yourself* so we may acknowledge your contribution. jwalpole@triconchurch.org or call the church office 978-369-4837.



We celebrated the baptism of Hallie James Hoffman on October 17th. Hallie is the daughter of Eric and Meghan Hoffman, and little sister to Lucas.



Our sympathies are with the Skinner family following the death of Sylvia Skinner on October 13th. Sylvia and her late husband Jay were TriCon members in the 1990's.



Need MATH help?!?

Church member Betsey Wood, retired head of LS Math Dept. and math teacher, has volunteered to be a resource to our TriCon community for those trying to learn or teach at home. If you are a parent needing help remembering lessons from high school math, or a teen trying to figure out new math concepts, email: betswood@gmail.com.



While our children’s education year may look different this fall, one thing hasn’t changed - our mission to continue to find safe, meaningful and fun ways to minister to you and your family.

See below for our November Children’s Ministry line-up. There is something for kids of all ages. Please note that there may be updates, so please check Carrie’s weekly family emails.

Sunday, November 1st, Blessing of the Animals, 1pm

Week of November 2nd

Faith at Home Focus – Jonah and the Big Fish

Sunday, November 8th, SEEKER and Voyager Hike, 3pm

Week of November 9th

Faith at Home Focus – Isaiah’s Vision in the Temple

Week of November 16th

Faith at Home Focus – A New Covenant

Week of November 23rd

Faith at Home Focus – Hope in the Lion’s Den

Each week Children’s Ministry Director, Carrie O’Brien, emails families Faith at Home lessons, details about upcoming Voyager and SEEKER events, news and other programming opportunities. If you are not receiving Carrie’s emails, or would like to begin receiving her emails, please shoot her an email at cobrien@triconchurch.org.

Check out Carrie’s Children’s Messages during our 10am Zoom service each Sunday!



TRICON
COMMUNITY

YOUTH GROUP

Christine Kelley, Youth Leader
ckelley@triconchurch.org
email or text 978-337-6171

Sunday night Youth Group

NOVEMBER 1st, 8th

TWO sessions ... please SIGN UP for one.

3:00 - 4:00 PM and 4:00 - 5:00 PM ** note new earlier times!!

Meet outside in the play yard, enter off Hubbard Street.

NOVEMBER 15th

Movie night, time TBD (one event)

Wednesday Discussion Group

NOVEMBER 4th & 17th

6 – 7 PM in the TriCon church courtyard, enter off parking lot. New (propane/safe) FIRE PIT for light and warmth. Bring a blanket.



**SIGN UP
ONLINE
REQUIRED!**

**SUG is
refreshed
every
MONDAY!**



One of the annual autumn rituals at TriCon is the meeting of the Nominating Committee to assess and fill openings on each of the church committees. Serving on a committee is a great way to meet new friends and play an active role in the running of our church.

The bylaws state that you must be a member of TriCon to serve on a committee but apart from that one stipulation, all that is required is a positive attitude, your ideas and input and a willingness to commit some time. Because of COVID, committees are all meeting via Zoom for now so during these strange and uncertain times, those of you who in the past may not have been able to sit on a committee, may find that you have more flexibility to participate.

We hope you will consider this very important way to contribute to our community. Each committee and its members are listed in the Annual Report and the role of each committee is described in our By-Laws, both these documents are available on our website under "parishioner resources." If you are interested in serving on a committee or have questions, please contact Dale Ryder at 978-549-0238 or at dale.r.ryder@gmail.com. And if you choose not to reach out, we ask that if called, you give us a friendly greeting and consider saying "yes!".

In Faith,
*Thad Jackson, Anne Lehmann, Dale Ryder (Chair),
 Charity Tremblay, Tussie Williams*

www.triconchurch.org



DID YOU KNOW??

There is a **CALENDAR** on the homepage, listing upcoming events. If you click on an event you are interested in, you have the option to save to your iCal or google calendar, seamlessly keeping you organized!



WANT THE NEWSLETTER ELECTRONICALLY ONLY??

Some of you have indicated in the past a desire to reduce mail or save paper, and so have asked for the Newsletter electronically *only*. It had been difficult to manage that from the office, but now we are happy to offer an "OPT-OUT" mailing list. Contact the church office via phone or email and we will update you to **electronic communication ONLY** of the monthly newsletter. Thank you!

Confirmation Class for 2020-2021

Our combined 9th & 10th grade Confirmation program begins on November 8th. Families should have received communications about the upcoming program and an opportunity to register your child(ren). If you did not receive this, and want to participate, please contact Amy Bruning now: abruning@triconchurch.org

***A Centering Moment:
 Finding Peace Within
 Wednesdays 11/4 & 11/11; 12PM***

Slowing down, being in community, breathing,



resting, and centering in order to move through our new reality from a place a calm and strength. Breath into stillness once per week and experience peace and gratitude. We will take a few minutes to check in at the beginning of each

session and then will experience a meditation led by Leslie Ackles to calm your soul and fill your spirit with hope. Centering yourself in order to be present for your life. No previous experience needed.

The Zoom link for the WEDNESDAY meditation group is in your "Weekly Update" emails on Fridays, or by contacting Leslie Ackles at BillLes@aol.com.

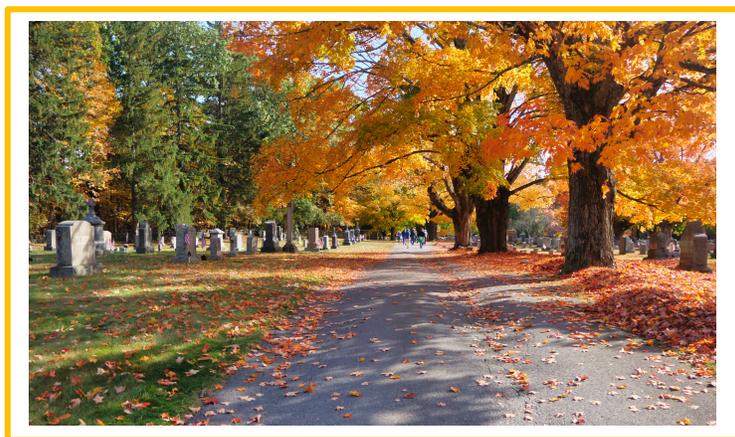


We are finding ways to
“Welcome New Members”

inside of our Zoom worship services and look forward to welcoming Nancy Smith on November 8th. Please email Amy Bruning at abruning@triconchurch.org, or call the church office at 978.369.4837 if you are interested in learning more about becoming a member at TriCon. Dates available in November and December.

The TriCon Welcoming Committee hosted a ‘Walk ‘n Talk’ on October 18th. We enjoyed a gorgeous fall day in historic Concord. Thanks to all who participated!

We will be offering more opportunities for outdoor gatherings, from Courtyard Visits to Neighborhood Walks as weather permits. Watch for details in your Friday e-blasts and on the website.





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Concord, MA 01742
Permit No. 60

TO:



Your vote is your voice and it needs to be heard!

November 3rd