



The Vine...

Connecting the Body of Christ one to another

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Essex, 1131 Mace Avenue, Baltimore, Maryland 21221

(410) 687-5531

www.holytrinityessex.org

February 2026



FROM THE PRIEST-IN-CHARGE

Greetings from the kingdom of God, the reign of love and the culture of peace (*already in progress somewhere very, very close to you!*)

I was having a pretty good day until I looked at the calendar and realized that Lent is less than four weeks away. (And it is probably closer than that now as you sit and read this).

I should not mislead you, though. Both Advent - the season of the prophets - and Lent - a season that is all over the board scripturally but touches on some significant themes - are the seasons wherein I abide. There is a deeper reflection inherent in these seasons, and we live in times when deeper reflection is going to be required of us all. We will see what unfolds as we take the measure of the texts we are assigned.

But a word about the day that marks the beginning of the season - Ash Wednesday.

It should come as no great surprise that I believe the time has come for the Church to update the theology of this observance and the liturgy that carries it. The medieval notion of 'sinners in the hands of an angry God' flies in the face of a faith that confesses that God is Love and that God loves unconditionally. That our liturgy repeatedly tells us that God forgives the sins 'of all who are penitent' only reinforces the worst of theologies - that love and forgiveness are ours only if we fill the obligation of being truly repentant. Some ideas - and the need to control the masses that spawned them - have to be put to rest.

Still, I think that Ash Wednesday is useful to us in our journey if we see it as a reminder to seize the day, to be present to the needs of our neighbors and the world in the moment. We are indeed mortal and we do not have much time to make an impact for what is good and life-giving, and the time we waste on the things that we feel are so important - that amount to no more than the ashes of our own vanity - can never be regained.

But rather than mourn the fact that we have missed opportunities - which we all have done - we should celebrate the fact that we still have time to make a difference, and that significant change can occur through even the smallest acts of kindness.

Peace,
Ken+

Church News



Inclement Weather Policy

It is that time of year again when we may have some inclement weather. Our church policy remains the same: We follow Baltimore County Public Schools closures.

SO, if Baltimore County Public Schools are closed or close early and we have an event, meeting, etc. scheduled for that night, it is cancelled. If there is inclement weather affecting our Sunday morning church service, an email will be sent out early Sunday morning...as close to 6:00 a.m. as possible.



Vestry Meeting

The next Vestry Meeting will be held on Thursday, February 12, at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. *Please note: Vestry minutes are posted on the wall in the Parish Hall.*

Ash Wednesday Services

Ash Wednesday is February 18, 2026. We will have a service with Holy Eucharist and imposition of ashes at 12:00 noon and 7:00 p.m.

Pledge Envelopes Information

Before you put your pledge envelope (or a plain envelope) in the offering plate, please make sure to do the following to help ensure that your donations are recorded correctly:

1. Print your name clearly on the name line.
2. Write the amount of your offering on the amount line.
3. If you want your offering to go to a certain budget item (ex., Discretionary Fund), print this information clearly on the envelope on the same side as your name and amount.

You may wonder why you should write everything on the envelope. That is because after the tellers count the donations, the money gets deposited to the bank, but the envelopes are given to another person to enter the information on the computer.

Also, please note:

- The "Initial Offering" envelope is to help defray the cost of the envelopes. So if you can put a few dollars in that first envelope, it will help.
- Any envelopes that have a colored border are considered "extra" and do not count toward your pledged amount.
- If you choose to pay once per month instead of weekly, you can put your full monthly amount in one of the pledge envelopes and make a note on the front that it is for the entire month.

If you have any questions or if you need envelopes, please contact Kathy.

Save the Date Items

-Wine Tasting on Saturday, February 7, 2026, 4:00 p.m. Contact person is Steve Cross.

-Chocolate Easter Eggs for sale during February 2026. Contact person for orders is Barbara.

- Spring Craft Fair (indoors only) on Saturday, April 18, 2026, 9a.m.-2p.m. Contact Sheila or Kay with any questions or if you are available to help.

- Flea Market on Saturday, June 20, 2026, 8a.m.-12noon. Contact Kathy with any questions or if you are available to help.

- Church Picnic in June. Watch for the date and more information.

(Watch for more details on all of these events as planning continues.)



Sunday School

Sunday School is held during the first part of the service on Sundays at 9:00 a.m. for children Pre-K through Grade 5! The children then join their families in church during The Peace portion of the service. If you have any questions, contact Leah.

Helping Hands Ministry

We continue to support members of our faith community who no longer attend services due to advancing age, declining health, and other issues. We offer the following:

1- Holy Trinity Roadrunners whose purpose is driving parishioners who no longer can drive to visit loved ones confined to institutions.

2- Sheila continues to manage prayers for others. So if you can spare a few minutes to say a prayer and/or make a phone call to those on our prayer list and anyone else in need of prayers, contact Sheila and add your name to her team.

3- The Order of St. Luke (OSL) Healing Ministers offer healing prayer at the rail during Holy Communion. *Each one of us has been called to live as Jesus did...loving, praying, and healing in His name.* If you are interested in joining OSL, we meet on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Contact Kathy for more information.

As always, Leah is the contact to add or remove names on our Parish Prayer List and to add names for anyone asking for prayers. *We pray for perseverance, delivery from pain, and community with our loved ones.* If you are interested or have questions, please contact Kathy.

Healing Service

Our weekly Healing Service is held every Wednesday at 12:00 noon in the Sanctuary. Contact Ken+ with any questions.

Craft Group

Our Monthly Craft Group meets on the second Saturday of each month at 1:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall. Bring a craft to work on, and enjoy some conversation! Contact Barbara with any questions. *Please note: In case of a Hall Rental, the date is sometimes cancelled or changed. If you are new to the group, please check with Barb.*



Monthly Extended Coffee Hour

We have our Monthly Extended Coffee Hour/Covered Dish on the last Sunday of each month after the 9:00 a.m. service. Please bring a dish to share! It can be homemade or store-bought, sweet or savory. If you have any questions, contact Millie.



Funeral Planning Forms and Emergency Contact Forms

We have both forms available in the church office. Please at least complete the Emergency Contact Form and turn it in to the church office. If you have not made your funeral plans known to the church yet, please complete that form as well, and turn it in to the church office. If you have any questions about the forms, call or email the office. If you would like to meet with Ken+ for help with planning your funeral, contact him directly.



Outreach Ministries from and to Holy Trinity

from Lynn F., Chairperson



Pet Donations to the Maryland SPCA:

We will be collecting pet food items, toys, and blankets for the local Maryland SPCA now through February 22, 2026. A list of needed items is included on a separate page at the end of this newsletter. Printed copies of the list have been sent via email and are also available in the church office.



Blessing Bags:

Blessing Bags are an Outreach ministry for the homeless in our area. Beginning this month, the second Sunday of every month will be a collection of items to be placed in Blessing Bags.

The items collected will be presented by one or more of the children during the Offertory. After the service, the items will be sorted and placed in bags to be distributed by those who feel called to do so to those in need. Blessing bags can be packed with small items such as granola bars, lotion, and gloves. These bags can be kept in your vehicle and handed out to homeless men and

women at traffic lights, etc. Contact Linda+ with any questions.



Operation Backpack:

Our backpack ministry will again include Sandalwood Elementary School and Essex Elementary School. We will be providing food items to students in need at both schools during the 2025-2026 school year. You are always welcome to contribute by bringing in needed food items such as: single serve oatmeal packets, applesauce cups, fruit cups, raisins, packs of peanuts, crackers, ramen noodles, instant chicken noodle soup, juice boxes, or white or chocolate milk or Yoo-hoo. We also accept small cans of tuna and boxes of macaroni and cheese. You can place any donated food items in the bin marked "Operation Backpack" in the Parish Hall. You can also make a monetary donation at any time. In addition to food items, there is a need for new socks and new underwear for elementary-age children. These items can also be placed in the same bin.

We pack the bags after the service. All are welcome to join in the effort. Also, each week there is a rotation of folks who deliver the bags to Essex and Sandalwood Elementary Schools. We can always use additional volunteers to deliver the backpacks! If you have any questions or are able to make deliveries, please contact Chris or Lynn F.

Eastern Interfaith Outreach (EIO):

EIO is open to serve those in need. They operate on an appointment basis, so please

call in advance. (The address is listed later in this newsletter under "Food Pantry".)

We are still collecting shelf-stable food items such as canned soup, pork and beans, tuna, and chicken for EIO. If you are able to buy a few items on your next grocery shopping trip or if you have any extra items in your pantry at home, please bring them in. ***Please make sure the expiration date is at least several months out.*** There is a bin in the Parish Hall labeled "EIO Donations" where you can place the donated shelf-stable food items to help those in need in our community. (More detailed information regarding EIO is also provided below under the Food Pantry section.)



Ronald McDonald House Baltimore:

Please continue to collect the pull tabs from any aluminum can products. I collect the tabs, and once or twice per year I take them to RMH. The tabs are then recycled with the profit used to fuel the shuttle bus to take family members of the children to the local hospitals. The collection box is located on the lower shelf of the main table in the Narthex.

Watch the bulletins and emails for the date of the next Outreach Committee meeting.

If you have any questions, please contact Lynn F.



Local Food Pantries

Eastern Interfaith Outreach (EIO)

Contact: 410-406-2288 OR 211

Physical Address:

Maranatha Chapel

3 Bowleys Quarters Road

Middle River, MD 21220

410-406-2288

By Appointment Only! Call first!

Donations: Bring in shelf-stable items and place them in the bin in the Parish Hall marked “EIO” or make your check payable to “Eastern Interfaith Outreach” and mail it to:

Eastern Interfaith Outreach

P.O. Box 18122

Middle River, MD 21220

Hunger for Change:

These food distributions are until the food supplies run out on that day. Please call for distribution dates and site information: 443-838-2126.

Baltimore County has a Food Pantry

Locator service. Just click on either of the links below for more information:

<https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/county-news/2023/12/19/baltimore-county-releases-new-food-pantry-locator>

<https://bc-gis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/nearby/index.html?appid=2ec6ceb1732844bbb00a40ec1a0b733f>



Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland offers nutritious, fresh, prepared meals delivered to your home. Eat better with Meals on Wheels!

For those unable to cook or grocery shop for themselves – due to age, disability or illness - look to Meals on Wheels for dependable, friendly service.

To learn more, call 410-558-0923 or apply online at:

mealsonwheelsmd.org/client-application

Meals on Wheels also needs volunteers to help deliver these meals. If you have any time to donate to this worthy cause, please call the telephone number listed above.

“I was hungry and you gave me something to eat.”

Matthew 25:35





February Anniversaries

Dwayne and Carolynn – 2/7
Ken+ and Dianne – 2/13



February Birthdays

Lynne C. – 2/1
Michelle S. – 2/2
Gloria G. – 2/4
Arlene – 2/4
Scotty – 2/20
Mary Anne – 2/23
Mary – 2/25
Rachel – 2/27

ANY ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS, SEE LEAH



O God of heavenly powers, by the might of your command you drive away from our bodies all sickness and all infirmity: Be present in your goodness with your servants, that their weaknesses may be banished and their strength restored; and that, their health being renewed, they may bless your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Alice
Elliott (Alice's great great grandson)
Jason (Alice)
Millie
Elizabeth (Millie's sister)
Kelly (Millie's niece)
Jean C. (Millie)
Beau (Millie)
Helen
Ryan (Helen's grandson)
Henry (Cheryl)
Joan
Bill and Diane (Joan's son and daughter-in-law)
Pam A. (Joan's son and daughter-in-law)
Chris and Patty (Joan's son and daughter-in-law)
Gladys
John and Jeannie
Powell family (John and Jeannie's family)
Heather (John and Jeannie)
Mike (John and Jeannie)
Landon (John and Jeannie)
Christoper (John and Jeannie)
Kurt (John N.)
Ava (Pam N.)
Somo

Hutchins family (Somo)
Eddie (Somo)
Florence (Somo)
Lynne C.
Karen (Lynne C's daughter)
Nancy B. (Lynne C.)
Greg (Lynne C.)
Crosby family (Lynne C.)
Bennett family (Lynne C.)
Wally
Arlene
Gary and Mary
Donald and Sylvia
John and Anne
Mary Anne and family
Linda Q. (Mary Anne's sister-in-law)
Butch and Wanda (friends of Mary Anne)
Tyler T. (Mary Anne)
Christine (Mary Anne)
Chris S. (Mary Anne)
Gloria N.
Nancy T. (Jimmy's significant other)
Kathy S. (Leah's cousin)
Eleanor (Leah's aunt)
Jim C. (Leah's uncle)
Shirlyn (Sam's niece)
Colomba (Michelle S's sister)
Frank S. (Michelle S's brother)
Frank H.
Wendy
Bridget (Kathy's daughter)
Lynn J. (Joan and Michelle)
Laura
Bill
Sharon
Ron
Alan (Ron)
Debbie H. (Ron)
Mary C. (Ron)
Pat (Ellen's husband)
Wayne
Geoff
Brett
LouAnne (Lynn F.'s sister-in-law)
Doug Shaw (Carolyn)
Dianne (Ken+)

Daniel (Sheila)
Darlene (Sheila)
Janice
Eric Z.
Teresa
Jerome
Wyatt
Rigoberto
Williams
Romanio
James
Jack
Demi
Liam
Chris
Eric W.
Allison (Leah)
Colson (Leah)
Dottie
Karen L.

PLEASE ADVISE LEAH OF ANY ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS.



Who do I contact?

The office is generally staffed on Thursday morning from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon.

If you have a non-urgent question, call the church telephone number (410-687-5531) and leave a message on the answering machine OR send Leah an email at HTOfficeSecretary@gmail.com.

For urgent pastoral needs call:

The Rev. Ken Phelps, Priest-in-Charge
410-790-1631 (*Please note: Ken+ will be on vacation February 26-March 8, 2026. Call Linda+ or Chris with any pastoral emergencies.*)

If Ken is not available, call:
The Rev. Linda K. Boyd, Deacon
410-967-7404
OR
Christine Kinard, Sr. Warden
410-382-6928



Vestry Officers and Members

Officers (elected by the vestry for one-year terms; can be re-elected; do not have to be an elected vestry member to be elected as an officer):

Senior Warden – Chris
Junior Warden – John M.
Treasurer – Ellen
Registrar – Lilian

Elected vestry members and date their terms end (initially elected by the congregation; if a position becomes vacant, the vestry elects a replacement to fill the rest of the term):

Lynne C.	2026
Nancy	2026
Sheila	2026
Christine	2027
Gladys	2027
Michele A.	2027
Lynn F.	2028
Carolynn	2028
John M.	2028

The parish clergy are also ex officio members of the vestry and the rector is the presiding officer.



REGULAR REMINDERS



Coffee Hour

Join us for socializing before or after the church service. Light refreshments are available. Please see the sign-up sheet on the wall in the Parish Hall if you would like to bring something to share.

Parish Hall Rental

If you would like information about renting the Parish Hall for an event, please send an email to HTOfficeSecretary@gmail.com or leave a message at the church office 410-687-5531. The cost is \$400 per rental.



Flower Memorials/ Thanksgivings

If you are interested, please complete a form with your instructions, along with a check for \$40.00, and return them to Barbara in person or mail them to the church address listed on the form.

The 2026 forms are available from Barbara or Leah in the church office. Memorials are on a per Sunday basis, not per name. More than one person may donate on any given Sunday.

Housekeeping Notes

Please continue to keep areas clean and sanitized.

Mailing List Updates

For changes to your home address or phone number, call the parish office at 410-687-5531 and leave a message OR send an email to HTOfficeSecretary@gmail.com.



E-mail Messages

Please keep the church updated on any changes to your email address so we can notify you of situations impacting the parish. Please email any changes to: HTOfficeSecretary@gmail.com.



Final Word from the Editor

Items for the March Newsletter are due by February 15.

FEBRUARY 2026 SERVICE SCHEDULE

February 1, 2026, 9:00 a.m.

Ushers: Sam
Lessons: Chris
Prayers: Lilian

February 8, 2026, 9:00 a.m.

Ushers: Gloria G.
Lessons: Nancy
Prayers: Gladys

February 15, 2026, 9:00 a.m.

Ushers: Jackie and Bill
Lessons: Rachel
Prayers: Jackie

February 22, 2026, 9:00 a.m.

Ushers: Sam
Lessons: Chris
Prayers: Elizabeth

**** Please note:** Until further notice, those scheduled to read the Lessons will read the First Lesson, lead the Psalm, and then read the Second Lesson. Thank you!



February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:00 AM Holy Eucharist (also Livestream on Zoom) 9:00 AM Children's Sunday School 7pm-AA Meeting	2 12:30pm-AI-Anon Meeting	3 7:30pm-AA Meeting	4 12:00noon Healing Service	5 10am-12noon Office Staffed	6	7 4pm-Wine Tasting
8 9:00 AM Holy Eucharist (also Livestream on Zoom) 9:00 AM Children's Sunday School 7pm-AA Meeting	9 12:30pm-AI-Anon Meeting	10 7:30pm-AA Meeting	11 12:00noon Healing Service	12 10am-12noon Office Staffed 7pm-Vestry Meeting	13	14 Valentine's Day 1pm-Craft Group
15 9:00 AM Holy Eucharist (also Livestream on Zoom) 9:00 AM Children's Sunday School 7pm-AA Meeting	16 Presidents' Day 12:30pm-AI-Anon Meeting	17 7:30pm-AA Meeting	18 Ash Wednesday 12noon Holy Eucharist/Healing Service 7pm Holy Eucharist	19 10am-12noon Office Staffed 7pm-OSL Meeting via Zoom	20	21
22 9:00 AM Holy Eucharist (also Livestream on Zoom) 9:00 AM Children's Sunday School 10:15 AM Extended Coffee Hour/Potluck 7pm-AA Meeting	23 12:30pm-AI-Anon Meeting	24 7:30pm-AA Meeting	25 12:00 noon Healing Service	26 Ken away —————	27 —————	28 —————>



Our Outreach Ministry is partnering with the local Maryland SPCA to collect needed items for the dogs and cats that are in the care of the SPCA. **We will be collecting donations through Sunday, February 22, 2026.** Please see the list below of needed items, and place them in the bin in the Parish Hall marked “SPCA Donations”. We will also need volunteers to help deliver the donations after they are collected.

If you can help with delivery or have any questions, please contact Lynn F. Thank you.

Pet Food:

- *Canned dog food (grocery store varieties with gravy)
- *Dry dog food (unopened bags)
- *Canned cat food (grocery store varieties with gravy)
- *Dry cat food (unopened bags)
- *Gerber baby food jars, Stage 2, meat only (beef, chicken, or turkey with gravy)-2.5 oz. jars only
- *Soft dog treats (such as Pup-Peroni)

Pet Toys:

- *Scratch pads for cats
- *Cat treats and toys, such as toy mice (no catnip) and ping pong balls
- *Dog toys such as buster cubes (puzzle balls to keep the dogs entertained)
- *Enrichment toys for the larger dogs, such as Busy Buddy toys, large Kongs, basketballs, soccer balls.

Other:

- *Scoopable kitty litter
- *Fleece material and washable blankets (no sheets)
- *Unused plastic litter pans for cats and kittens