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LIVE COURAGEOUSLY: 3. Share With the Next Generation

1 Timothy 6:11-19 2 Timothy 1:1-6

When we baptize a child here at Trinity, we all vow to help nurture that child in the Christian faith. Every one of us helps to pass the gospel to the next generation. The Apostle Paul commended a young church leader named Timothy for his strong and sincere faith that came to him by his mother Eunice and his grandmother Lois. They passed their faith to the next generation. How? How did they do that? How do we?

They lived it! Paul wrote to Timothy, *“I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you.”* Our faith is a living faith – not dead, dry, doctrine, but a living relationship with God and other people that gives substance and direction to our daily lives. Eunice and Lois lived out their faith in front of Timothy such that it shaped his faith development. *You know, faith is more caught than taught.* When you parents live out your Christian faith, values, and principles in front of your children, your children soak it up; they begin to emulate what they see and hear in you, in your behavior and habits and speech.

They intentionally taught Timothy. Read on in 2 Timothy and you’ll discover that Timothy’s family directly taught him their faith. 2 Timothy 3:15 says, *“From childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus Christ.”* We must intentionally teach our children the Bible, God’s truths, our beliefs, and our practices. Praying together, reading the bible together, and talking about how Jesus would have us live, how we are to treat people and how to respond to injustice...all these are valuable ways to pass on your faith to your family.

Teach Stewardship. What we teach our children about money imprints their whole lives with an awareness of God’s gifts to us and our responsibility to use our gifts, including our money, to bless others. Putting your money, your envelope, your check in the offering plate reveals that your faith in God is not mere sentimentality. You are participating in God’s work!

Who are the Lois’s and Eunice’s in your life? Who has shown you how to live this Christian life? Who carried casserole dishes to the homes of bereaved friends and neighbors, who put an offering envelope in the plate every Sunday, who sang their faith in church and taught you their faith in Sunday School? Who read devotions in your home, who knelt for bedtime prayers, who instilled in you a spirit not of timidity, but of power and love and of self-discipline? Now it’s time **that we become** Lois and Eunice for the next generation of believers.

Until you take ownership in Trinity and what we are doing for the kingdom of God, you won’t give money. But when you do contribute, you show your children that your faith is real, and

that the kingdom of God is worth your investment of time, energy, and money. In giving, you put your money where your mouth is: giving real, tangible service. In giving to God's work you are passing on to the next generation the sincere faith that Lois and Eunice passed on to Timothy.

Tithing says, "Thank You." Your giving shows the next generation your gratitude to God. Dr. Jimmy, a family physician in a church I served, wrote all twelve of his monthly offering checks to the church on New Year's Day and set them aside in envelopes so each was ready at the first of the month. On the "For _____" line, he'd write in something for which he was thankful: for family, for health, for safety, for food, for America, for education, for help in years past, for Jesus, for the bible, for whatever. His notes gave thanks to God for blessings he received, in return for which Dr. Jimmy supported the church's work and witness.

Recall 1 Timothy 6:18-19: *"Do good, be rich in good works, be generous and ready to share, thus storing up yourself the treasure of a good foundation for the future, take hold of the life that really is life!"* **Besides treasure in heaven, your giving is laying a foundation for the future here at Trinity.**

Work toward our four major goals for 2021, and conversations in our Purpose Driven Life small groups study this fall have generated a host ideas and proposals. The beautiful renovations to our Sunday School/TLC preschool wing last summer have sparked ideas for programming for families and children. Ideas are coming out of the woodwork and inspiring people to think big. We will launch a capital funds campaign in January to raise \$85,000 to be matched by Legacy Funds for additional Education Wing/preschool renovations over the next two summers. As we looked at those plans, other ideas about our programs and facilities began to generate.

One year ago, in September 2018, we adopted four goals for 2021:

OUR SERVICE GOAL: In 2021 75% of Trinity members served God and neighbor by participating in one or more ministries to Trinity or to our Pensacola/global community. In 2019 we listed all volunteer positions needed for our present ministries and wrote job descriptions for every volunteer position. Some teams expanded their volunteer base this year and incorporated new members. In January we will hold a missions fair and several Mobilization Sundays to engage more members in our existing work and to expand our teams and programs in 2020.

OUR DISCIPLESHIP GOAL: In 2021 twenty new Small Groups have met weekly for Bible Study, spiritual growth, and fellowship. Your Small Group Ministry Team added 11 new groups this Fall, and 106 people gathered to study *The Purpose Driven Life*. Those groups and new groups will next explore John Ortberg's study *"If You Want to Walk on Water You Have to Get Out the Boat."* During Lent the whole church is invited to join small groups working through Mark Batterson's *Draw the Circle: A 40 Day Prayer Challenge*. Based on 2 Chronicles 7:14 calling us to pray to our our country, for our communities, our churches and our lives, every day at 7:14AM or 7:14PM we will kneel and pray for those in our circles. Our long-standing small groups and new small groups are enhancing our faith sharing and prayer support as we make new friends and connections!

OUR WORSHIP GOAL: In 2021 our worship incorporated creativity and variety in music and liturgy that attracted and involved worshipers of all ages in worship and service to God. Our worship attendance now sees an average of 400 weekly participants.

With Clara on board as our new Director of Music, we are expanding our musical offerings and our vocal ensembles. We love our adult choir and musicians! I look forward to the return of the Worship Band in November and the fresh music they will add to our mix. This week we added new sound equipment to coordinate them and to balance our audio in the sanctuary. Theo Baars and I are coordinating new liturgists/readers to assist in worship and scripture readings; we will launch that in November and add more readers later. We plan to bring back our visual arts and drama ministries. Our youth and children have begun singing more frequently in worship and they will play their musical instruments to accompany our music. Our average weekly attendance has risen just a bit over last year, 229 vs 204 last year, and that is with making only small changes in our worship. I look forward to the enrichments ahead.

OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY GOAL: In 2021 we have expanded our children and youth ministries to attract and retain 100 children and youth weekly. Our ministries help our youth to love, trust, and serve Christ for a lifetime and incorporate our youth into the broader body of Christ.

In our average weekly attendance has risen from 20 youth to 35 youth. The youth ministries team has planned out programs and events a year ahead and included elements of discipleship and faith sharing.

In addition to these official plans, a variety of ideas have emerged from hallway conversations and Sunday School classes and small groups:

We are working with an area graphic artist to create a new look for our publications, our newsletter, our mailings to present a fresh look for Trinity and to reach out to the public to invite them to come and see who we are what we are doing. At Trunk or Treat we will hand out invitations to our Advent season and we'll direct mail them to people in our zip codes.

We're going to replace the oversize and awkward Information booth with a sleek Welcome Kiosk manned by volunteers who greet guests in the narthex and usher them to classrooms and collect contact information before and after worship.

As our church library is used very little these days, so we're considering how to convert it into a multi-purpose meeting space – add a coffee bar and variety of high top and low top tables and chairs for different set ups for small groups, circle meetings, community workshops. It may become the gathering spot for people between activities. I've seen a sign in other churches over their coffee counter, *COFFEE: Christ Offers Forgiveness for Everyone Everywhere*. How might *everything* we do and offer also incorporate a welcoming witness?

It's time to replace the furniture in the parlor that is showing its age. But rather than replace it with furniture just like what we have, let's clarify how we envision using the parlor, and why – how might our parlor and narthex and sanctuary and classrooms best present Trinity's

atmosphere and identity and accommodate new ministries? Don't limit our design to how we are using it now – how might that expand in future programming and what does that say about the style furniture we need? What technology updates or changes in lighting and furnishings are needed?

Room D is the most used room in our building – but speakers at our recent workshops and classes found that their new laptop computers and tablets won't connect to our outdated video equipment; they struggle with our sound system. Let's add a wall mounted big screen TV like the new one in the parlor that works with new multi-media and does not require that you turn out the lights to use an overhead projector. Let's simplify the sound system.

If we are serious about employing a part time children's ministry staffer, might the nursing mother's room revert to an office and the old library reference room by the women's rest room become the nursing mother's room? Or are there other configurations we don't yet see.

For years I have wondered why we don't have a stoop over the front doors by the sanctuary to shelter you from the rain while closing your umbrella. It's been suggested that we not add a portico but instead expand the narthex out a bit so that we don't bottle neck in the front hall. Perhaps we add a beautiful and dramatic lighted architectural canopy soaring over the sidewalk out to the parking lot.

It's been suggested that we add an entryway to the Activity Center echoing the canopy outside the TLC entryway so that visitors recognize where to enter that building and are protected while unloading in the rain. Might we replace the double doors with glass doors to add light and to improve visibility? We need signage throughout our buildings to direct visitors.

The Facilities Team suggest we begin putting money aside each year toward roof replacement and air conditioning replacement so that we're not caught off guard when the need arises.

Might we sponsor for local churches various conferences on adult education or youth ministries, or congregational care, or family ministries, or ministries to young adult in their 20's. Might we use Legacy Funds to bring in recognized experts in new styles of ministry and invite our neighbor churches to gear up for this new era in Christian ministry? Or might we establish an annual spiritual renewal lecture series, bring in noted authors and speakers, and invite our community?

The Session has approved appointing a team and work with an architect or church designer to develop a master facility plan to enhance our facility for the next 25 years of ministries. After we clarify program and facility needs and prioritize proposals, we will consider a capital funds campaign to provide for the future and the next generation. Beyond looking to replace worn furniture, let's ask who are we seeking to serve, and why, and what does that mean for our design and programming needs?

The Session has approved a sabbatical for me next summer, so we're going to work hard to create these master plans and proposals by next May. We'll pursue some projects immediately using restricted funds or Legacy Funds. Other projects will require fund raising. I'm excited to see people thinking outside the box and we look forward to seeking your input too.

Let's explore how we may equip ourselves to pass on our faith to the next generation in new and effective styles of ministry emerging in today's context.

In the meantime, let us continue to improve our efforts at discipleship, nurture, and service to the community. Let's all find ways to be involved, to contribute, to serve. Get involved, enjoy the ministries, the challenges, the victories! "Fan into flame" the gifts that God has bestowed on you. Build up your treasures in heaven and take hold of the life that really is life – in Jesus our Lord! ...and don't forget to thank God for all that is yours through Jesus our Lord! Amen.

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