



# THE TORCH

INSPIRATION TO LIGHT OUR WAY



## SHEDDING NEW LIGHT

*"Behold, I am making all things new" - Jesus in Revelation (21:5)*

Okay, maybe an overstatement for a newsletter; however, we do believe God has led us to do something new and are pleased to introduce you to the newly redesigned and formatted church newsletter – *The Torch: Inspiration to Light Our Way*.

Our newsletter has been a primary means of promotion and information for decades. Over the past several years, communication media has evolved rapidly. Consider the declining circulation of major print media such as newspapers and magazines. Digital media affords the readers up to the minute news and information. It can also be accessed from anywhere and allow for interface and interaction.

Our church over the past several years has embraced digital media through our website and weekly email, as well as our podcast *The Woven Word*. These mediums allow us to update events and news in a timely fashion so as to keep you current on important happenings in our church. In the meantime, we have come to realize that the printed newsletter is less relied upon to inform members and friends of events and news.

On the other hand, we have also noted that print-style media still appeals to folks for inspirational articles and stories. In consideration of these factors, the staff has decided, with Session's concurrence, to change the format of the newsletter from that of primarily *information* to primarily *formation*. We will have articles ranging from those with an educational purpose to others with an inspirational and devotional focus. There will be some that are reflections on experiences as well as others that are testimonies from members on how they have experienced Christ through our ministry. Contributors will be the staff, Session members, Deacons, Stephen Ministers, and others. For those of you who preferred the former newsletter in hard copy, you will receive the new *Torch* in the same manner. For the readers who prefer the electronic version, it will continue to be delivered via email.

We are excited about how this change will be a means of faith formation for our congregation and we hope this new format will enlighten and inspire you to follow Christ's light into the world as those *Called by God to be the heart, voice, hands and feet of Christ where the Spirit leads us*.

Grace and Peace,  
Patrick

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## SYMBOLS & COLORS – WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

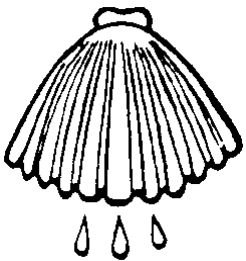
When I was a child, I would look at the symbols on the pastors' stoles and wonder, "What does that mean?"



One example was "IHS" which is typically embroidered on communion table cloths and brass crosses. Some creative interpretations have been assumed - "In His Service," "I (Jesus) Have Suffered." If you were raised Catholic, you may have learned it as, "Iesus Hominum Salvator" (Jesus, Savior of Humanity) or "In Hoc Signo" (In This Sign). These ways of interpreting are called "backronyms," or ways to interpret acronyms after the fact. Thus, the acronym is an ancient monogram for Christ, called a *Christogram*, derived from the first three letters of "Jesus" in Greek, (Ihsou): iota-eta-sigma: **I H S**.



This one is also Greek, from the symbols Chi "c" and Rho "R" -- the first two letters of Cristou (Christ). For the early church, before Christianity was legalized in the Roman Empire, codes and acronyms were commonly in use so Christians could communicate their faith with one another without risk of imprisonment and execution.



We had two baptisms in January and displayed the banner depicting the shell. The shell has been associated with baptism since the first centuries. We know this because it has been found in paintings on walls in catacombs where early Christians worshipped, illustrating people being baptized with water poured from the shell. Sometimes it is depicted with three drops of water, symbolizing the triune God. It is likely this came into use for practical reasons. In places where there was not deep enough water for full immersion baptism, the candidate would wade into the water and the presider would scoop water into a shell or other similar object. As it could hold more water than a hand, it came to signify God's grace liberally poured out for us. It was also preferred because it is found in nature, from a creature fully submerged in water. And finally, it reminds us that Christ calls us to discipleship, even as he

These are but a small taste of the richness of symbols in our tradition. I encourage you to explore our church campus (go to John Knox chapel and look at the stained glass) and do some research on the ones you want to learn about. As followers of Christ, it is important to know our history (much of which is captured in ancient symbols), to consider the depth of its meaning, and to pass this knowledge on to our children and grandchildren.

Happy Exploring! En Cristou (In Christ), *Patrick Dennis, Senior Pastor*

## CONFIRMATION

*Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world? Who is your Lord and Savior? Will you be Christ's faithful disciple obeying his word and showing his love? Will you devote yourself to the church's teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers?*

These are the questions we ask when people join the church. These are not easy questions to answer. These are the questions that eight of our seventh and eighth graders are wrestling with in Confirmation Class this year.



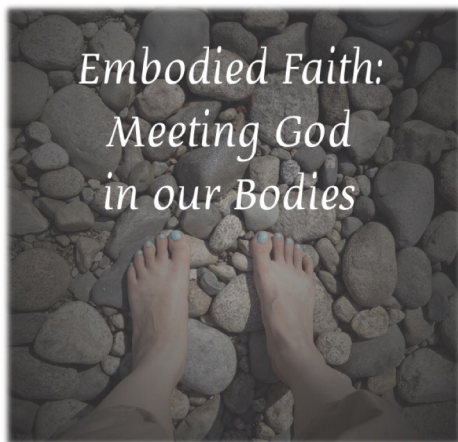
Over the course of 12 sessions and a retreat at Camp Hanover we have been studying scripture, asking questions, answering each other's questions, and have begun to put into words what it means to each of us to be a disciple of Christ, and for sure-- we laugh and eat some good snacks!

*This year's Confirmands are: Tanner Albertson, Baker Mahoney, Risher Martin, Ben Barksdale, Connor Fabrie, Claire Smith, Courtney Fabian, Ethan Park.*

The confirmands will join the church in worship on **Sunday, February 16**. We hope you will pray for them in their journey and join us in celebrating this part of their spiritual journey as they covenant to be part of this community in worship. ***Sarah Dennis, Covenant Pastor***

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## EMBODYING SPIRIT: A LENTEN LECTURE



In Romans 8:6, the Apostle Paul writes: *"To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace."* These words carry with them a troubled legacy for the church and beyond. Too often they are misread as a warrant for discounting, even denouncing, the importance of the body in the life of faith. How often are we inclined to read our bodies as dispensable tools, even as mere sinful distractions from our 'spiritual' lives and destinies? Against these readings, however, presides the question: if the body were so unimportant, why did our Savior take on flesh?

Join us Wednesday nights this Lenten season as we explore what it means to be embodied children of an embodied God. Over five Wednesdays (March 4<sup>th</sup> through April 1<sup>st</sup>), we will look at particular accounts of Jesus' own ministry as well as various perspectives from the church's history. Touching upon themes such as pleasure and pain, feasting and fasting, and devotion and service, we will reflect on what Christ and tradition can teach us about being "fleshed-out" disciples—engaging all five senses along the way! ***Martin Pinckney, Seminary Intern***

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## CONNECTIONS

### BIRTHS

**Sallie Donovan**, December 9, 2019  
Parents, Connor and Emily Donovan.  
Proud grandmother, Sallie Rhett.

**Evelyn Juniper Wolfe**, January 22, 2020  
Parents, Annie and Jay Wolfe.  
Proud grandparents, Walter and Dot Smith.

**Lily Ann Stallings**, December 16, 2019  
Parents, Bryce and Sarah Stallings.  
Proud grandparents, Bill and Jackie Stallings.

**Hezekiah Michael Bodapati**, January 28, 2020  
Parents, Marliana and Sundeep Bodapati.  
Proud grandparents, Mike & Ginger Spence.

### DEATHS

**Doris Siceloff**, December 22, 2019  
**Sibbie (Louise) England**, December 26, 2019

### BAPTISMS

**Bohdi & Huxley Chervenack**, December 22, 2019  
**Paige Marie Zeilinger**, January 19, 2020  
**Graham Luckett Johnson**, January 26, 2020

### WEDDINGS

**Dylan Kane and Bailey Cadden**, December 28, 2020

### *Let's Stay Connected!*

Sign up for our weekly e-mail  
to receive up-to-date information  
on upcoming events in your inbox  
each Friday!

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

Blessings and Peace,  
Tuckahoe Presbyterian Church

*We hope you enjoy the new format of **The Torch**. If you no longer wish to receive the hard copy, please let us know if you wish to receive it electronically, or opt-out entirely: [office@tuckahoepres.org](mailto:office@tuckahoepres.org)*



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