

HEAD LINES

A Monthly Message from Chip Denton, Head of School



December 2018

Dear Trinity Community,

I bring you good news of great joy which shall be for all the people of Trinity.

Schools are teeming with news. Some of it is not so good: the draft paper bleeding red marks, the announcement that your best friend is in another section of first grade, the basketball roster that doesn't have your name on it, or the Instagram post that reveals the birthday party you weren't invited to. I wish it weren't so, but there's enough bad news at any school that when I call parents on the phone I often start with "No one is hurt or in trouble." Unless, of course, they are. Which is my point.

But I don't want to go all Eeyore on us here at Christmastime. There is a fair amount of *good* news at schools, too. I love it when teachers email parents to tell them how incredibly friendly their Middle School son was to a visiting prospective student. Just last we opened a letter with a five-figure donation to the Trinity Fund. An alumni parent told us how a college prof called their son to stay after class to ask him, "Where did you learn to write like this?" Parents can read the good news of great joy from our Middle and Upper Schools in Dr. Hall's and Mr. Gould's weekly Friday emails. And come May, there will be good news from colleges across the country who want our seniors to enroll.

I wish all the news could be good, but even if it were, here's the rub: There is no good news that cannot or will not be turned bad by what the writer of Ecclesiastes calls life "under the sun." The doctor calls with the good news that your cancer is in remission, but you remember that no one gets out of here alive. A parent tells me that Trinity is the best school they could imagine, but I know, from twenty-four years of experience, that one day we will disappoint them. A visitor to school remarks, "It's amazing what has been built here in twenty years," and I say to myself, "Oceans rise, empires fall, in the Kingdom we are small—oh, and I think I heard that heaven and earth will pass away!"

The problem with good news, such as we know it, is that it is always contingent, always dependent. It's not secure and never final. We could lose it at any time. Happy marriages, healthy children, nest eggs, and good reputations—they are, at best, insecure blessings.

Please turn over...

Right about now is a good time for us to remember the Good News that Mark wrote (and that we read this past summer). “Gospel” means good news. And the Gospel of Jesus means a kind of good news that is incapable of being eaten up by cancer or spoiled by sin. It is, really, the best news we could ever have heard. It is not contingent on anything, because it comes from the sovereign God who gives it freely, who is beholden to no one, and who promises that it will never be taken away:

Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed,
Yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken
Nor my covenant of peace be removed,”
Says the Lord, who has compassion on you.
Isaiah 54:10

We do not know any news like that in this world of change and uncertainty—this is the kind of news that could have come only from a foreign place. We couldn’t make this up.

Please join us in January and February as we take a good look at this, the best news we could ever hear, the kind that never lets us down? We will look again at Mark’s Gospel in a class called Christianity Explored. We plan to meet in The HUB on Tuesday evenings starting January 8 and running through February 19. If that’s too much for you to commit to, just come to the first one and check it out. We will sit around tables with friends and hear a clear, short video presentation from Rico Tice, a minister at All Souls Church in London. And we will read the Gospel together and talk about it.

I think we’ll all learn a lot, and you might just hear the best news you’ve ever known.

Merry Christmas,



Chip Denton
Head of School

TRINITY SCHOOL OF DURHAM AND CHAPEL HILL

4011 Pickett Road • Durham, North Carolina 27705 • trinityschoolinc.org • 919-402-8262