

# 12 Steps@Trinity



How Do You See God?

September 21, 2023

## **Make use of what we offer...**

...if not members of religious bodies we sometimes select and memorize a few sets of prayers which emphasize the principles we have been discussing. There are many helpful books also. Suggestions about these may be obtained from one's priest, minister, or rabbi. Be quick to see where religious people are right. Make use of what they offer.

*~Alcoholics Anonymous Pg. 87*

To us, the Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive; never exclusive or forbidding to those who earnestly seek. It is open, we believe, to all.

*~Alcoholics Anonymous Pg. 46*

## **12 Steps for All**

1. We admitted that our lives had become unmanageable and uncontrollable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood that.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood that, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## 12 Steps@Trinity

12-Step Spirituality is not a defined body of wisdom or particular collection of books and sayings. Indeed, the steps are rooted in a tradition much older and extending back millennia through the Judeo-Christian-Islamic religions. The Steps are now used by hundreds of different kinds of recovery groups and millions of people throughout the world. We could even say that 12-Step Spirituality is the combined knowledge and experience of all those who have used spiritual surrender and 12 Steps as a passage to recovery, and the things they have learned along the way. We are fortunate to include in our community many who have journeyed toward liberation with the 12 Steps and so we look to share what we have learned, as well as celebrate the presence of God in our midst.

### A Centering Prayer

Let us pray together:

**Gracious and eternal God,  
so draw our hearts to you,  
so guide our minds,  
so fill our imaginations,  
so control our wills,  
that we may be wholly yours,  
utterly dedicated to you;  
and then use us, we pray,  
as you will, and always to your glory  
and the welfare of your people;  
through Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.**

### First Reading

**Y**our image of God creates you—or defeats you. There is an absolute connection between how you see God and how you see yourself and the whole universe. The word “God” is first of all a stand-in for *everything*—reality, truth, and the very shape of your universe.

This is why theology is important, and why good theology and spirituality can make so much difference in how you live your daily life in this world. Theology is not just theoretical but ends up being quite practical—practically up-building or practically defeating.

Most peoples’ operative, de facto image of God is initially a subtle combination of their Mom and their Dad, or any early authority figures. Without an interior journey of prayer or experience, much of religion is largely childhood conditioning, which God surely understands and works with. But this is what atheists and many former believers rightly react against because such religion is so childish and often fear-based, even if their arguments are blowing down a straw man. The goal, of course, is to grow toward an adult religion that includes both reason and faith and inner experience that you can trust. A mature God creates mature people. A big God creates big people.

If your mom was punitive, your God is usually punitive too, and you actually spend much of your life submitting to that punitive God or angrily reacting against it. If

*12Steps@Trinity is offered as a worship experience rooted in the spiritual wisdom of the twelve-steps, which themselves are rooted in the ancient spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius.*

*~Richard Rohr*

*God comes to you disguised as your life.  
Paula D’Arcy*

your dad (or your minister or early God teachers) were cold and withdrawn, you will assume that God is cold and withdrawn—all Scriptures, Jesus, and mystics to the contrary. This is why denominational affiliations in the end mean very little.

Hear the Spirit as it speaks to us.

**Amen.**

## **Musical Interlude**

### **Second Reading**

**A**ctually, we were fooling ourselves, for deep down in every man, woman, and child, is the fundamental idea of God. It may be obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, but in some form or other it is there. For faith in a Power greater than ourselves, and miraculous demonstrations of that power in human lives, are facts as old as man himself.

Alcoholics  
Anonymous

We finally saw that faith in some kind of God was a part of our make-up, just as much as the feeling we have for a friend. Sometimes we had to search fearlessly, but He was there. He was as much a fact as we were. We found the Great Reality deep down within us. In the last analysis it is only there that He may be found. It was so with us.

*Each man's  
life is a road to  
himself.*  
Hermann Hesse

We can only clear the ground a bit. If our testimony helps sweep away prejudice, enables you to think honestly, encourages you to search diligently within yourself, then, if you wish, you can join us on the Broad Highway. With this attitude you cannot fail. The consciousness of your belief is sure to come to you.

Hear the Spirit as it speaks to us.

**Amen.**

### **First Prayer**

*Let us pray together.*

**Days pass and the years vanish, and we walk sightless among miracles.**

**God, fill our eyes with seeing and our minds with knowing.**

**Let there be moments when Your Presence, like lightning, illumines the darkness in which we walk.**

**Help us to see, wherever we gaze, that the bush burns unconsumed.**

**And we, clay touched by God, will reach out for holiness, and exclaim in wonder.**

**How filled with awe is this place, and we did not know it! Amen.**

Chaim Stern,  
Mishkan T'filah

## Third Reading

**T**welve Step recovery gives me great spiritual freedom because it encourages me to find a personal understanding of God, and to allow others the same freedom. Until I could think of God in terms that were meaningful to me, I was not able to truly turn my life over to a Higher Power.

My concept of God evolves. It changes and grows as I continue to change and grow. How wonderful it is, for I now sense a Higher Power that is as alive as I am! Never in my life did I dream of finding such a source of serenity, courage, and wisdom. There is a sense of unique purpose to my journey through life. I am the only one who can live it, and I need the help of the God of *my understanding* in order to live it fully. Grounded in faith, I can hold tight to my course and meet the future with confidence.

Hear the Spirit as it speaks to us.

**Amen.**

## Second Prayer

*Let us pray.*

**You are the still clear voice within us.**

**Therefore, O God, when doubt troubles us, when anxiety makes us tremble, when pain clouds the mind,  
we look inward for the answer to our prayers.**

**There may we find you,  
and there find courage, insight and endurance.**

**And let our worship bring us closer to one another, that all of us, and all who seek you, may find new strength for your service. Amen.**

## Musical Interlude

## Reflection

*The reflection seeks to be evocative not prescriptive, so there is no expectation that you will agree with the homilist. Instead, allow the reflection to lead you into your own contemplation and feel free to follow your own inner voice rather than remaining focused on what the homilist is saying. Sometimes our journeys converge and sometimes they diverge. Enjoy!*

## Meditation

*The meditation will be a brief period of quiet to allow us to center and quiet the mind. Please feel free to participate with whatever method you prefer.*

Courage to  
Change

*Harvey J.  
Fields, Mishkan  
T'filah*

*To have reason  
to get up in  
the morning,  
it is necessary  
to possess  
a guiding  
principle, a  
belief of some  
kind.*

**Days of Healing  
Days of Joy**

## Reconciliation, Release, and Reclamations

*A Thursday@7 tradition, you are invited to come forward and symbolically offer your prayer for the reconciliation of a fractured relationship, the release of a resentment, or the reclamation of lost hopes and dreams.*

### Shared Reflections

#### The Serenity Prayer

Let us pray together.

**God grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change,  
the courage to change the things I can,  
and the wisdom to know the difference;  
living one day at a time;  
enjoying one moment at a time;  
accepting hardship as a pathway to peace;  
taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is,  
not as I would have it;  
trusting that you will make all things right  
if I surrender to your will;  
that I may be reasonably happy in this life  
and supremely happy with you in the next. Amen.**

*Relying on God  
has to begin  
all over again  
everyday as is  
nothing had been  
done.  
C.S. Lewis*

#### The Peace

*The earliest Christians shared a kiss or embrace as a sign of solidarity and reconciliation among those in spiritual community with one another. We continue that tradition with a common greeting:*

The Peace of the Lord be always with you.  
**And also with you.**

#### The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

## Financial Support

Your financial support is not only a practical necessity. It can also be a very meaningful symbolic gesture, expressing your gratitude for all the blessings in your life and your hope for health in the world. You can place cash or a check in the big blue urn at the head of the aisle or you can [donate online here](#), text TRINITYBUFFALO to 73256, or send a check to: Trinity Episcopal Church, 371 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, NY 14202  
Thank you for your participation and contribution. Peace.

## Trinity Discussion Group: When We Get Angry at God

Do you ever get mad at God? Anger at God can produce several emotions and can affect our relationships with people and with God. On Wednesdays starting **September 20** with Tim Lane and Jeffrey Tooke, we will watch a short video and discuss the anger we can feel with God and how it can have a transforming effect on our lives.

You are invited to join Tim and Jeff on **Wednesdays @7pm** using the zoom link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81668634672?pwd=eTVJZXFoNzVYdHZvSHZONG1NUUowZz09>

Meeting ID: 816-6863-4672

Passcode: trintalk

If you have questions, please email Jeffrey Tooke at [jeffreytooke@outlook.com](mailto:jeffreytooke@outlook.com) for more information.

## Dedication of Memorial Bench

The new bench that is near the front entrance to the church is given in memory of parishioner Jim Barbee (1947-2019), who made such a difference in the lives of so many during his time at Trinity and in other places before moving to Buffalo. **Following the 10:30 service on October 1**, we will gather briefly by the bench to offer a dedicatory prayer and celebrate his memory.

## Annual Pet Blessing in Honor of St. Francis

In the courtyard, **Saturday, October 7, 1pm -3pm.**

## Parking at Trinity's Franklin Street Lot

When you come to a church service or other Trinity event, you can park in Trinity's Franklin Street lot without paying. The parking fees will not be enforced during Trinity events. But you can use the lot any other time you are in the neighborhood, too! Park in your church's lot any time you would have to pay for parking in the neighborhood so that Trinity gets the parking fee! Use your smartphone to pay.

## Explore Buffalo

Learn more about Trinity's windows and the impact they have had on American art history. Share this Buffalo treasure with your friends! Explore Buffalo leads tours of Trinity's windows as part of its Sacred Spaces series. Check the website listed below or scan the QR code for the schedule. You can help the wider community appreciate the resources Trinity has to share. Post this link on your social media or email it to friends. Better yet, invite someone to come on the tour with you. <https://explorebuffalo.org/sacred-spaces/trinity-episcopal-church/>

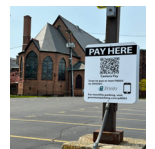
## Trinity Spaces for Rent

Our church has work spaces available for rent at 371 Delaware Ave. We hope to rent to groups or individuals that share our vision of community betterment. We also have coveted downtown parking space available on Franklin Street. We are hoping to rent the entire 75 spaces, which are available Monday-Friday until 5pm, to one group. If you know someone that would be a good fit, please share this QR code which links to a webpage description at <https://www.trinitybuffalo.org/trinity-center-rentals>.

## Comfort and Care Team

Please let the Comfort and Care Team members (listed below) know how we can be of help and support to you or someone you know who may be experiencing health or other life challenges. You may email anyone of us as we share with each other the information concerning the needs of those that reach out. Support may be offered in many ways such as a caring phone call, notes, information on resources, and a friendly visit. We can also assist with arranging needed meals. Our prayers are always offered. Sincerely, the Comfort and Care Team.

You can also donate by scanning this QR code:



Phoebe McKay, [phoebemckay@gmail.com](mailto:phoebemckay@gmail.com); Judy Atkinson-Miller, [jatk1812@gmail.com](mailto:jatk1812@gmail.com);  
Susie Green, [susie432@gmail.com](mailto:susie432@gmail.com); Patti Nisbet, [tudorspace@aol.com](mailto:tudorspace@aol.com); Marie Keane, [MNMKKeane@gmail.com](mailto:MNMKKeane@gmail.com);  
Sara Merritt, [smerrit172@gmail.com](mailto:smerrit172@gmail.com); Victoria Kearns, [kearns.vr@gmail.com](mailto:kearns.vr@gmail.com)

### **Friends of Night People**

We are looking for volunteers to help out at Friends of Night People, which provides food, clothing, medical care, counseling and other necessities to people in our community experiencing homelessness and poverty. We would love to have you join us on the **second Monday** of each month from 4:45 until 7. For more information, please speak to Emily Carlin or email: [emily.g.carlin@gmail.com](mailto:emily.g.carlin@gmail.com).

### **Donations to welcome asylum seekers to Buffalo**

Justice for Migrant Families is collecting supplies to welcome asylum seekers to Buffalo. We are currently in need of:

socks (adult, all sizes), underwear (adult, all sizes), shorts (adult, all sizes), children's toiletries, children's summer clothing and fun supplies, grocery cards (Wegmans, Tops, Walmart, etc.)

If you would like to donate supplies, please contact [Jennifer@jmfwny.org](mailto:Jennifer@jmfwny.org) or [EmilyRose@Jmfwny.org](mailto:EmilyRose@Jmfwny.org) to coordinate. You can also drop off supplies at Burning Books, 420 Connecticut St, Buffalo 14213, Monday-Sunday 11am-7pm. Thank you for your ongoing support!

Sign up [here](#) to get Trinity's eNews to stay in touch!



## **12-Steps@7**

Trinity Episcopal Church • 371 Delaware Avenue • Buffalo, New York 14202  
The Rev. Matthew Lincoln • [mcolin@trinitybuffalo.org](mailto:mcolin@trinitybuffalo.org)  
[www.TrinityBuffalo.org](http://www.TrinityBuffalo.org) • (716) 852-8314