



Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter

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Worshipping Ignorance Rather Than God

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ² the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. ³ Then God said, "Let there be light..." Genesis 1:1-3 NRSV

In the early 1600s, Galileo Galilei was ordered to stop teaching the "Copernican theory." The Copernican theory had been declared heretical because it was deemed to contradict scripture. The Copernican theory stated that the Earth was not the center of the universe but rather that the sun was the center of the universe and that the Earth, along with other planets and stars, circled the sun. No one today questions that proposition insofar as it describes the solar system. We have sent devices and people into space and we know that the Copernican theory is correct in so far as it describes the solar system. Even Copernicus had not grasped the vastness of the universe; had not envisioned a universe filled with galaxies and other astronomical wonders. He had not envisioned a solar system that orbited a gigantic black hole at the center of the galaxy. We can look back now and marvel at the ignorance of those Church leaders who condemned people to torture and death in a misguided attempt to "protect" the bible and God from the discoveries of science. Yet, 400 years later, the same sort of attacks continue to take place.

This coming weekend is "Evolution Weekend". Evolution weekend is an offshoot of something called *The Clergy Letter Project* started nine years ago by a university science professor named Michael Zimmerman. Professor Zimmerman believes that "religion and science are compatible and [there is a need] to elevate the quality of the debate of this issue." <http://www.theclergyletterproject.org/> Over twelve thousand Pastors, Priests, Rabbis and Imams from around the world have signed a statement supporting the proposition that studying of science and faith are not antithetical. The Christian variant of the letter states, in part:

We the undersigned, Christian clergy from many different traditions, believe that the timeless truths of the Bible and the discoveries of modern science may comfortably coexist. We believe that the theory of evolution is a foundational scientific truth, one that has stood up to rigorous scrutiny and upon which much of human knowledge and achievement rests. To reject this truth or to treat it as "one theory among others" is to deliberately embrace scientific ignorance and transmit such ignorance to our children.

I signed the letter when it was first proposed in 2004.

This resurgence of religious opposition to science is of real concern to everyone, especially to parents of children still in elementary or high school. Tennessee, like many Southern states, has passed legislation that allows such pseudo-science as “Intelligent Design” or “Creationism” to be taught in public schools as “alternate theories.” The supposed rationale for this legislation is to allow all theories to be taught. However, the legislation’s use of the term “theory” is unrelated to a scientific understanding of a “theory.”

A scientific theory is derived by forming a hypothesis regarding physical laws based upon observation. The hypothesis is then tested by experimentation to see if it accurately predicts how those physical laws work. The results of the experimentation are observed and the hypothesis refined. The method and results of the experimentation are carefully recorded to allow others to reproduce the experiment and observe the results for themselves. Once the hypothesis has been thoroughly tested experimentally it rises to a level of a theory. A theory may still be wrong in some respects but it provides a basis for forming new hypotheses and new experiments. A theory then is not some wild conjecture totally lacking in scientific evidence, but a thoroughly observed phenomenon that has been experimentally tested and proven by hundreds, thousands or millions of scientists. Our science is based upon the work of scientists throughout the centuries patiently building upon what others learned through careful experimentation. As Sir Isaac Newton said in a letter to a colleague, “If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants.”

In contrast is the pseudo “theory” of “Creationism” or “Intelligent Design.” Rather than starting from observation of the physical world and moving forward by careful experimentation, intelligent design declares that there was a creator who created all that exists. This is a religious proposition with which I and many Christians agree. However, it **IS NOT** a proposition that can be proven by applying the scientific method. There is no experiment that can be created by human beings that will prove that God created the Universe or prove that God did not create the universe. **Belief in God as the creator of the universe is a matter of faith, not science.** There is no science of Creationism or Intelligent Design. Teaching these propositions as science not only undermines our children’s education but, in public schools, is unconstitutional as an establishment of religion.

As Christians we profess belief in the existence of a God who cannot be seen but whose existence we nevertheless experience. Science cannot prove the existence of God nor can it disprove the existence of God. Science can help us understand the complexity of the universe God created. For many scientists, the more they see of the wonders of the universe the greater their faith.

John Wesley believed that our faith beliefs must be reasonable. He proclaimed that he would as soon give up his soul as his God given power to reason. Our faith proclaims that God created the universe and that God desires us to live in the universe, sharing it with all the rest of God’s creations. We should move forward with the call to live in the Kingdom of God and live in wonder at the complexity of the universe being disclosed by modern science. For the sake of our children, speak out against the effort to teach religion as science in our schools.

The Poverty and Justice Bible

The Poverty & Justice Bible is a bible that highlights each passage of scripture that deals with the issues of poverty and justice. There are more than 2000 references in scripture to poverty and justice, as opposed to four or five on such controversial subjects as homosexual acts or marriage. Yet many Christians seem to think that helping the poor is a pointless and even harmful act. As an on-going part of this newsletter, I will be providing citations to passages from the Old and New Testaments each week that deal with what scripture tells us about poverty and justice. If you are interested in learning more about *The Poverty & Justice Bible* you can check on Amazon.com or go to www.Justicebible.org.

*... Win victories for truth
and mercy and justice.*

...

*⁶ You are God, and you will rule
forever as king.
Your royal power
brings about justice.*

⁷ You love justice and hate evil... Ps 45:4-7 CEV

Psalm 45 is believed to be a psalm written for a royal wedding, possibly even one of King David's many weddings. Yet it highlights what was believed to be important to God. A King was to win victories not for personal gain, but for truth, mercy and justice. The King, like God, was to love justice and hate evil (injustice.)

*¹⁰ God blesses those people
who are treated badly
for doing right.
They belong to the kingdom
of heaven.*

¹¹ God will bless you when people insult you, mistreat you, and tell all kinds of evil lies about you because of me. ¹² Be happy and excited! You will have a great reward in heaven. People did these same things to the prophets who lived long ago. Matt 5:10-12 CEV

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus emphasizes that it will be unpopular to stand up for the Gospel and its call to give to the poor and love your neighbor. Yet the call remains the same. If we love God, we must also speak up for those things that scripture tells us are special concerns of God, even if that causes us to experience persecution.

Bible Study

For the last two years I have led a bible study on Thursday mornings. We are currently studying the Book of Psalms. There is room for as many as would like to participate. Please call me if you have questions or simply come and be a part of our study. We meet from 10:00 to 11:30 on Thursday mornings.

I believe that the study of scriptures with other Christians is an essential part of our journey as Disciples. If you would like to be a part of a bible study at another time, during the day or evening, please contact me. If we can interest four or five people in gathering at a particular time I would be glad to lead another study.

Prayer Ministry

The following persons have agreed to be part of the prayer ministry at Trinity UMC:

Elva Beard	Sarah Jordan	Kenneth Stevens	Judy Richardson
Larry Eastwood	Mac McAfee	Patricia Stevens	Charles Wilson
Leslie Eastwood	Rachel Newman	Sam Richardson	

The members of the prayer ministry of Trinity United Methodist church covenant with one another to pray daily for:

- Those concerns on the prayer list of the Church and for healing of body and spirit for all persons listed;
- For each ministry of the church that each ministry would work to bring the Gospel to those within our community and most especially to bring the Gospel to those who have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior;
- For all the members of the Trinity UMC community that they be led and enabled to live as the Body of Christ;
- For our local community and all its needs, especially for those who are struggling with the burden of poverty;
- For our nation and our world that God help lead the people of the world to live in peace with God's Kingdom.

If you would like to be a part of this ministry (or if you have already spoken to me about it and were inadvertently left off the list) please let me know and I will see that you are added.

Up-Coming Sermons

February 9th: God and Evolution, Faith and Science: I never cease to be amazed that this debate continues centuries after Galileo was imprisoned for saying that the Earth was not the center of the Universe. We'll consider the relationship between God, Faith and Science. My texts are Genesis 1 and John 1:1-5.

February 16, 2014: Working the Garden: "Religion is a very personal thing." So say many people including, unfortunately, many Christians. Yet, while there is some truth in the statement, it overlooks the call of Christ to preach the Gospel and make disciples. Paul puts the issue in a specific context; what are our responsibilities? My texts are Deuteronomy 30:15-20 and 1 Corinthians 3:1-9.

Worship Leaders Schedule

February 9

Renita Hartsock, **Liturgist**

Maurice & Joyce Edwards, **Greeters**

Mike & Elaine Rohrig, **Ushers**

February 16

Rachel Newman, **Liturgist**

Betty & Herb Haynes, **Greeters**

Joyce & Maurice Edwards, **Ushers**

Announcements

The Men's Club is hosting a **Pancake Breakfast Saturday, March 1** in Fellowship Hall. Please plan to support this event from **8:00 to 10:00 AM**. Donations will be accepted to support the Mission and Ministries of our church.

Learn more about TN'S widespread sexual slavery. You are invited to a free program which is open to the public, " Exposing the ugly truth. " Matthew Villamain, from " End Slavery Tennessee" will speak on this topic. Why does this subject affect us? We have approximately 200,000 refugees in the Nashville area. Our children are unknowingly targeted by people who lure children into this illegal trade. We have children being kidnapped or sold into this trade.

Soroptimist International of Franklin is sponsoring this program on February 18th, 7:00PM, in Otey Hall at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, at the corner of 6th & Fair, downtown Franklin. Doors open at 6:30 PM.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ACCESSING YOUR DIRECTORY PICTURE

1. Open Browser. Ex: Internet Explorer, Google Chrome, etc.
2. At top of page, type in web address: www.bluelightphoto.org/tumc2014
3. Page will open and you will see a space requesting a password. The password is: Judy (Capital J, other letters are lower case).
4. A gallery of pictures will come up. Find your picture and click on the picture itself. This will take you to your personal gallery of pictures. The number of photos ranges from 2-10.
5. When you click on a picture in your gallery, the photo will enlarge and you will be able to see the photo in detail.
6. To navigate from picture to picture (in your gallery), use the arrows on the side of the computer screen or use the left/right arrows at the bottom of the keyboard to scroll through them.
7. You will then select the specific picture that you want to have published in the directory by identifying a unique number under each picture.
8. You will then provide that number to Judy Richardson by email at: Richardson824@msn.com.
9. Please check your name under the picture for correct spelling. This is the name that will appear in the directory with your picture.

Next week, instructions will be given to download your picture so that you can print (or have printed) your photo.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR DOWNLOADING YOUR PICTURE(S)

Feel free to download one or more of your pictures for your own personal use! Here's how to do it:

1. You will need to open Internet Explorer in order to download your picture.
2. After you have selected the picture that you want, click on the picture. At the top of the picture, you will see a button, "download." Put your cursor on "download." A drop down box will appear with two options, "original" and "all available originals." Click on "original."
3. A box will appear near bottom of the screen with three options: "Open", "Save", and "Cancel".
4. Click on the arrow beside the word, "save." and click on "Save as."
5. A window will open to see where you want to save your picture.
6. On the left of that window you will see several options, including LIBRARIES and underneath it PICTURES. We suggest you save in "pictures." You could also create a folder within the "pictures" folder, after you double click "pictures", and near top of screen will be an option for "new folder". Clicking it creates a new folder, which you can rename and download your picture(s) into it by double clicking it.
7. You may want to rename your picture to something useful (in File name: near bottom of window) such as your name, date, and a sequence number (1, 2, 3, etc) if you download more than one. You can also just keep the default camera name for your picture.
8. Click "save" at bottom right of window. It is now saved! Do this for each picture you want to keep.

If you do not have a computer, John and Judy will confer and select your most attractive pose for the directory.

January Birthdays

Dawn Stevens, Aislinn Crowell, Cherry Klein, Dennis Meaker, Judy Richardson, Jessica Moore

Happy Birthday!