



# Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter

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## Wesleyan (United Methodist) Theology The Duty of Constant Communion

*<sup>16</sup> The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? <sup>17</sup> Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17*

**“All churches are pretty much the same.”** How often have you heard, or even said, something along those lines? And there is some truth to that statement. All churches share a belief in God, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the work of the Holy Spirit, the duty to share the Gospel, the duty to make disciples and so forth. However, as another old saying goes, “The Devil is in the details.” For instance, most governments share the purpose of insuring the public good and maintaining order. A number have some form of elections and duties split among Legislative bodies, Executive offices and a Judiciary. Yet, there are great and significant differences between the government of the United States and that of Great Britain, France, Italy and Russia.

So it is with Christian traditions. There are real differences in belief and theology among the various traditions. There are real differences in theology between United Methodist, Baptist, Church of Christ and so forth. It’s important that you understand something of the Wesleyan Tradition that formed Methodist Theology and Mission. It’s not just academics and meaningless differences. What we believe should be reflected in how we choose to live our lives.

Over the next couple of weeks we’ll focus on getting back to the United Methodist basics. And, as John Wesley taught, when Christians are called to focus on the basics the starting place is the Eucharist. The Lord’s Supper is where we come to understand Who we are, Whose we are and What we are called to do.

I.

We are first and foremost a people of the Cross. The Cross is a reminder that God became human in order to reach into our reality, in order to reach into our lives. We don’t worship the old Roman and Greek Gods on Olympus. These are Gods that are separated from us in nature and Spirit. We worship the one true God who created all that there is, and who actually came to live among us, to live and die as a human being, so that we might be forever in relationship with God. We couldn’t go to God, so God came to us. But, we are not **just** a people of the Cross. We are also a people of the Table. The primary symbol of our relationship to God and one another is the dinner table. We gather around a dinner table, for a meal hosted by Christ, and ask that we be made one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to the world.

Understanding Communion can begin with the Gospels. Consider this passage from the Gospel of John:

<sup>25</sup> *When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?”*  
<sup>26</sup> *Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.”* <sup>27</sup> *Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.”* ...  
<sup>35</sup> *Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.*  
John 6:25-27, 35 NRSV

In this passage, Jesus chides the people for following him looking to fill their bellies. Jesus says, “You’re not looking for me because you think I am from God. You’re looking for the free meal! You are seeking me out because I fed you once and you want to be fed again.” Jesus then tells the people that he himself is the bread of life. Just like the manna that God gave the people in the wilderness, Jesus is the bread from Heaven that brings life to the world.

In a passage from Mark, Jesus tells his disciples that **they** must feed the people.

<sup>35</sup> *When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, “This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late;”* <sup>36</sup> *send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat.”* <sup>37</sup> *But he answered them, “You give them something to eat.”* Mark 6:35-37.

The Disciples are all worked up because there is a huge crowd of hungry people and they are worried that the crowd will get nasty. So Jesus tells the Disciples, “You give them something to eat.”

Those two ideas express our theology of communion as well as our belief about the meaning of communion. God gave us Christ as the bread that we need to live. And we are called to feed that bread not just to ourselves, but to the world.

## II.

Still, it’s one thing to say that Communion is central to our faith. It’s another to really believe that. Too often, protestants who tended to reject all practices of the Catholic Church, pushed away from the Table of Christ. Sort of like saying, “thanks anyway God, but we don’t want to pig out. We’ll just take communion every now and then.” This is not a new phenomenon. John Wesley preached his sermon on the duty of constant communion 250 years ago.

John Wesley called the Methodists back to the table of the Lord. Many of them had almost stopped celebrating the Lord’s Supper except for once or twice a year. They had a lot of good excuses for this. The Church of England told its members that they should take communion at least 3 times a year. Most members took that as all that was required.

Others said, “But I am unworthy to take communion. I shouldn’t take communion unless I’m truly worthy of this gift of Grace.”

Still others said, “Taking Communion too often would cheapen the sacrament for me. It would no longer be special.”

And there were still other excuses. But Wesley understood that celebration of The Lord's Supper was central to who we are as a Church; central to who we are as the Body of Christ. And so he set out to speak to these objections.

### III.

Why celebrate communion as often as possible? Wesley began with Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Here we have the earliest reference to the institution of the Lord's Supper:

*<sup>23</sup> For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, <sup>24</sup> and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." <sup>25</sup> In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." <sup>26</sup> For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.*

Just looking at this passage from 1 Corinthians, what is the best reason for celebrating the Lord's Supper every time we come together? What reason stands out above all others? **Christ said to do it.** This is virtually his last command to the Church before he is crucified. Christ says to do it.

How often does Christ tell us to do this? He doesn't limit it. In the early Church the Lord's Supper was celebrated as a meal and it was the tradition to celebrate it whenever the Disciples ate together. This tradition carried into what became the Catholic Church and the Lord's Supper was celebrated at every worship service. That is still the tradition in many protestant and catholic churches today.

Christ says to do it. God says to do it. Which one of us is qualified to say it is best only every now and then? We celebrate the Sacrament because Christ told us to celebrate the sacrament.

### IV.

Some people say that they are unworthy to take communion. How many of you feel unworthy to take the sacrament? You know what? Go with those feelings. You are unworthy. We all are unworthy to receive the grace of God. What else is new? Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. That proves God's love for us. If we are going to wait to be worthy to receive God's grace we have a long wait coming. And, you know, when we feel the most unworthy is when we are probably most in need of the sacrament.

Well what of the words of Paul that says you shouldn't take the sacrament in an unworthy manner? I've talked about this before but the answer bears repeating. When he wrote those words Paul was addressing a problem in the church at Corinth. The congregation didn't share the meal together. Some members, principally the richest, got there early and ate all the food. Other members, especially poor members or slaves who had to work hard all day long, arrived late to find all the food eaten. In Paul's opinion **that** was taking the Lord's Supper unworthily.

We are all unworthy to receive the Lord's Supper. If we wait to be worthy, we will never celebrate communion.

### V.

Some people feel that celebrating the sacrament every week would make it seem routine and would make it so it was no longer special and would make them lose reverence for the sacrament.

Wesley had an answer for this objection too. In so many words Wesley said, “That sounds like a personal problem to me.” Go back to the starting place. Jesus didn’t say a thing about our opinions or our “feelings.” Jesus said, “Do this.” Doesn’t that make it special enough to do? And, even if you find it a grind, isn’t it enough to do what Christ asked of us during his last hours on Earth?

Sharing the Lord’s Supper isn’t about what we like or don’t like. It’s about what we need. We need that Grace that comes through the sacrament. That healing that comes through the sacrament. God giving us comfort, drying our tears and strengthening us for ministry in the world. When we deny our need for that Grace, we are in effect, denying that we need God in our lives. Communion is special because it comes from God. Communion has meaning because it comes from God. Celebrating communion whenever possible can’t possibly remove that meaning from the sacrament.

The title of Wesley’s sermon was, “The Duty of Constant Communion.” Wesley believed that we should celebrate the sacrament of communion every chance we got. We celebrate communion because Christ told us to do so; “Do this in remembrance of me.” We celebrate communion because we need the grace that God offers in communion. We need the healing, the comfort. We need God to dry away our tears. We celebrate communion because, through the table, God makes us one: One with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to the world.

Throughout the Season of Lent, and on Easter Sunday, we will share the Lord’s Supper.

## **Message from the Lay leader**

Greetings!

As your Lay Leader, I would like to take this opportunity to communicate to all of the congregation Trinity’s Ministry Goals for 2014. At the Program Council meeting held in January, Pastor Dennis Meaker presented his vision and ministry goals for Trinity and challenged the Program Council to meet these goals. In turn, the Program Council adopted these goals and pledged support for completing them over the next 12 months. I have felt led to communicate to the congregation as a whole the goals we have set forth and pledged to accomplish, and ask for everyone’s prayers and support for meeting these goals.

- Bring in a total of ten new members this year. Have five confessions of faith.
- Increase average worship attendance by 20%
- Develop enough interest within the congregation to be able to start one new bible study this year.
- Have at least one “non-worship” event at the Church each month whose purpose is to invite the broader community to come to the Church and become acquainted with its members and ministries.
- Offer a VBS program this year (need volunteers within the church to organize)

Achieving the goal of having at least one “non-worship” event each month has already challenged the Men’s Club to host a pancake breakfast this coming Saturday, March 1<sup>st</sup> at 8:00 a.m. I hope you can attend and support this event. Please contact me if you have any ideas that would invite the community in to Trinity to learn about the ministries of our Church.

As Methodists we are a “connected” church. We continue to support missions in our community as well as mission work throughout the world. But our “mission field” is also our neighbor, and focusing on the ministries that serve the needs of our congregation and community. I am asking that you please communicate with me or

Dennis any needs or concerns that you may have. I want to encourage an environment of two-way communication so that we are “connected” to each other as we seek ways to serve as a congregation.

In the weeks ahead I’ll be highlighting upcoming special events that will be opportunities for each of us to share the love of Christ with our neighbor. See you this Saturday at the pancake breakfast and Sunday at worship!

Brooks Crowell  
Lay Leader,  
Trinity UMC

## 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](http://www.Justicebible.org).

*<sup>5</sup> Our God, from your sacred home  
you take care of orphans  
and protect widows. Ps 68:5*

In many quarters it is unpopular to assert that we should seek to help those in need. Some have even argued that we should allow the hungry and homeless, as well as their children, to starve because then they will be motivated to do something. Yet, the people of Israel understood that God held the weakest members of society in high regard. Did God provide manna for the poor? No. God blessed the nation of Israel whose members, in turn, were to share those blessings.

*<sup>19</sup> “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. <sup>20</sup> And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, <sup>21</sup> who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. Luke 16:19-21*

Jesus uses the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus to bring this point home. After death, the “Rich Man” is sent to eternal torment and Lazarus to paradise. Based upon the parable, what was the Rich Man’s sin? He ignored Lazarus when it was within his power to help him.

## 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

**March 9<sup>th</sup>: The Journey to Easter: *Starting the Journey*.** “But I’ve been a disciple for years, decades. How can I just be starting this journey?” My texts are Genesis 2:15–17, 3:1–7 and Matthew 4:1–11.

**March 16<sup>th</sup> : The Journey to Easter: *There’s No Map*.** We are on a Journey of Discipleship? But where will that lead us? My texts are Genesis 12:1–4a and John 3:1–17.

## Worship Leaders Schedule

### March 9

Elaine Rohrig, **Liturgist**

Betty & Herb Haynes, **Greeters**

Sam Richardson & Linda Robinson, **Ushers**

### March 16

Renita Hartsock, **Liturgist**

Pat Moran & Jeanne Rybolt, **Greeters**

Tommy & Jo Cotton, **Ushers**

## Announcements

Please join us for a reception honoring **Colette Keyser** for her wonderful service to Trinity as our accompanist on **March 16th** following the service. Please see Dana Bauguess or Julia Moore for more details.

**Ash Wednesday Service on March 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM.** For those who desire to wear the mark of the ashes all day, Rev. Meaker will be at the Church on Wednesday morning from 7:00 AM on.

The dates for serving at **61<sup>st</sup> United Methodist Church** are **April 19, August 16, November 15**. These occasions are all Saturdays. We are planning one more date but at the time of this writing, the date is uncertain.

Jeanne Rybolt and Julia Moore are planning an **Easter egg hunt** for the church. This event is planned for **Saturday, April 19**. (Easter Sunday is April 20). Further details will be forthcoming.

Our **nursery** will have a paid staff member and will also need a volunteer each week. Please let Judy know if you would be willing to serve in the nursery during church hours on a rotating basis so that a schedule can be drafted.

For those of you who have a computer and have not made Judy Richardson aware of your picture selection, please do so at your earliest convenience.

For those of you who do not have a computer, John (our photographer) and Judy will make a selection of your most attractive pose for the directory.

## 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](http://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](mailto: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.

### **March Birthdays**

**Pat Moran, Marty Bauguess, Tom Moore, Herb Haynes, Mary Ellen Salazar**

**Happy Birthday to each of you!**