



Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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Wesleyan (United Methodist) Theology The Hymns of Charles Wesley

*¹ Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty firmament! ² Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his surpassing greatness!*

*³ Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp! ⁴ Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe! ⁵ Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud clashing
cymbals! ⁶ Let everything that breathes praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD! Psalm 150 NRSV*

John Wesley was the relentless evangelist of the Methodist movement, traveling through-out England, Scotland and Ireland. He trained preachers, proclaimed the Gospel in mining camps and in open fields and opened his arms to the poorest people in England who had, by and large, been ignored by the Anglican Church. He faced down mobs and dared to preach to and about Bishops, priests, mayors, members of parliament and the King. He had a very unhappy marriage and a wife who at times, joined forces with John Wesley's foes to condemn him. John Wesley had no children.

Charles Wesley was also a committed Methodist and suffered his fair share of attacks. In his early years he often travelled with his brother. Unlike John, Charles was happily married and, after 1753, traveled very little preferring to stay close to home. He had eight children, three of whom lived into their adult years. He did not always see eye to eye with his brother John and especially disagreed with John's decision to create the Methodist Episcopal Church in the newly formed United States.

Charles Wesley's principal legacy to the Methodist movement was hymns. He wrote hundreds of hymns praising God and also proclaiming Methodist theology. Fifty-one are included in the United Methodist Hymnal and two in The Faith We Sing. Charles Wesley's hymns are also sung in many other faith traditions. Among his best known are:

*O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing
Christ The Lord Is Risen Today and
Hark! The Herald Angel Sings.*

Hymns are intended to be both prayers of praise and proclamation of our beliefs. Charles Wesley's hymns were important as teaching tools for people with little education and little experience in the church. For instance, a keystone of the Methodist Societies was Holy Living. The Methodist Societies believed that it was essential to spiritual growth to commit yourself to God in all that you do. At the beginning of each year the Methodists celebrated a Covenant Service where each member renewed his or her covenant to serve God in all that they did. Central to that commitment was the concept that God enabled Holy Living through God's Grace. Charles Wesley wrote *Come, Let Us use the Grace Divine* to be sung at the Covenant Service:

1. *Come, let us use the grace divine, and all with one accord, in a perpetual covenant join ourselves to Christ the Lord; give up ourselves, thru Jesus' power, his name to glorify; and promise, in this sacred hour, for God to live and die.*
2. *The covenant we this moment make be ever kept in mind; we will no more our God forsake, or cast these words behind. We never will throw off the fear of God who hears our vow; and if thou art well pleased to hear, come down and meet us now.*
3. *Thee, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, let all our hearts receive, present with thy celestial host the peaceful answer give; to each covenant the blood apply which takes our sins away, and register our names on high and keep us to that day!*

Holy Living was part of the process of "going onward to perfection" as discussed a few weeks ago. A hymn that emphasized that commitment was *A Charge to Keep I Have*:

1. *A charge to keep I have, a God to glorify, a never-dying soul to save, and fit it for the sky.*
2. *To serve the present age, my calling to fulfill; O may it all my powers engage to do my Master's will!*
3. *Arm me with jealous care, as in thy sight to live, and oh, thy servant, Lord, prepare a strict account to give!*
4. *Help me to watch and pray, and on thyself rely, assured, if I my trust betray, I shall forever die.*

Sacramental understanding has always been difficult in the Church. One of Charles Wesley's best known hymns outlining our basic sacramental beliefs is *Come Sinners to the Gospel Feast*:

1. *Come, sinners, to the gospel feast, let every soul be Jesus' guest. Ye need not one be left behind, for God hath bid all humankind.*
2. *Do not begin to make excuse; ah! do not you his grace refuse; your worldly cares and pleasures leave, and take what Jesus hath to give.*
3. *Come and partake the gospel feast, be saved from sin, in Jesus rest; O taste the goodness of our God, and eat his flesh and drink his blood.*
4. *See him set forth before your eyes; behold the bleeding sacrifice; his offered love make haste to embrace, and freely now be saved by grace.*
5. *Ye who believe his record true shall sup with him and he with you; come to the feast, be saved from sin, for Jesus waits to take you in.*

I've underlined some of the phrases that are particularly meaningful for me. In the Methodist tradition, we emphasize an open table and proclaim that God's goal is the salvation of all humankind. We also believe in the "real presence" of Christ in the sacrament. As I say when we celebrate the Lord's Supper, "Christ is the Host of the feast and would turn no one away."

At that time, one of the on-going disputes between Catholics and Protestants and among the Protestant traditions was the manner that God's grace is conveyed in the sacrament of communion. The Anglicans and Methodists, along with the Presbyterians, considered these disputes meaningless. It was a mystery. How can

humans fully understand the working of God? Charles Wesley wrote *O Depth of Love Divine* to encourage the Methodists not to become involved in what he viewed were meaningless theological disputes and instead, embrace the mystery of God:

1. *O the depth of love divine, the unfathomable grace! **Who shall say** how bread and wine God into us conveys! How the bread his flesh imparts, how the wine transmits his blood, fills his faithful people's hearts with all the life of God!*

2. ***Let the wisest mortals show** how we the grace receive; feeble elements bestow a power not theirs to give. **Who explains the wondrous way**, how through these the virtue came? These the virtue did convey, yet still remain the same.*

3. *How can spirits heavenward rise, by earthly matter fed, drink herewith divine supplies and eat immortal bread? Ask the Father's wisdom how: Christ who did the means ordain; **angels round our altars bow to search it out, in vain.***

4. ***Sure and real is the grace, the manner be unknown;** only meet us in thy ways and perfect us in one. Let us taste the heavenly powers, Lord, we ask for nothing more. Thine to bless, 'tis only ours to wonder and adore.*

See also, *O Thou Who This Mysterious Bread*.

A final hymn that every Methodist should know is *And Are we yet Alive?* Early in the Methodist movement Wesley began bringing his circuit riding pastors together once a year to discuss what should be preached and taught in the Church. But, the life of a Methodist circuit rider was too often short and brutal. Many died young victims of accidents, violence from highway men and disease. In the early years of the Methodist movement a number of Methodist pastors were killed by mobs who believed that the Methodist movement, with its emphasis on holy living and care for the poor, was too radical and would lead to religious unrest. Wesley recorded the following edict that came from the Justices of the Peace in and around Bristol, England:

Several disorderly persons, styling themselves Methodist Preachers, go about raising routs and riots, to the great damage of his Majesty's liege people and against our Sovereign Lord the King: [We command you] to make diligent search after the said Methodist preachers, and to bring him or them before some of us... to be examined concerning their unlawful doings. Heitzenrater, Wesley and the People Called Methodists (Abington Press, Nashville 1995) 133.

John Wesley was set upon by one such mob and was being dragged by his hair through a field when a mob of Methodists came to his rescue. Caught between the two mobs, he later spoke of the hand of God keeping him from coming to harm despite the efforts of many to land deadly blows. Charles Wesley commented that John's short stature probably had more to do with avoiding harm than the hand of God. These are the lyrics of *And Are We Yet Alive?*

1. *And are we yet alive, and see each other's face? Glory and thanks to Jesus give for his almighty grace!*

2. *Preserved by power divine to full salvation here, again in Jesus' praise we join, and in his sight appear.*

3. *What troubles have we seen, what mighty conflicts past, fightings without, and fears within, since we assembled last!*

4. *Yet out of all the Lord hath brought us by his love; and still he doth his help afford, and hides our life above.*

5. *Then let us make our boast of his redeeming power, which saves us to the uttermost, till we can sin no more.*

6. *Let us take up the cross till we the crown obtain, and gladly reckon all things loss so we may Jesus gain.*

This hymn is still sung at the opening of every United Methodist Annual conference.

Keep an eye out for the hymns of Charles Wesley. Taken together, they provide a guide to Wesleyan Theology.

Scholarships to Cedar Crest Camp

Bishop William McAlilly has issued a call to United Methodists throughout the TN Annual Conference to contribute to the 99+1 Fund for scholarships for children to participate in our camping ministry at the Cedar Crest Camp. Remembering Jesus's parable about the shepherd seeking after the lost sheep, our goal this year is to find 100 (99+1) scholarships given to allow TNUMC kids to experience the love of Christ through camping. There are two ways that Bishop McAlilly and the Camping and Retreat Ministries team are asking for participation:

1. To recruit at least one child from your church to participate in a faith forming camp experience at Cedar Crest Camp this summer.
2. To raise funds to provide one \$300 scholarship for a child who could otherwise not attend camp.

Please send all scholarship funds to:
The Bishop's Cedar Crest Scholarship Fund
C/O The Rev. Dickie Hinton
P.O. Box 414
Monterey, TN 38574

More information on this important program can be found at <http://cedarcrestcamp.org/> or by emailing camp director Russell Casteel at russell.casteel@tnumc.com.

Easter Sermon Series Christian Essentials

On Easter Sunday I started a new sermon series called "Christian essentials." The second Sunday in Easter I preached on the subject "Doubt is Good." The third sermon in the series was titled "it's All About Christ." The fourth Sunday I preached on "We Worship god, Not the Bible." This series will continue through the next two Sundays in Easter (The time between Easter Sunday and Pentecost is Easter). The purpose of the series is to address some of the questions common to new Christians and old alike. The sermon Titles are:

How Can I Believe in the Resurrection? (Easter Sunday)
Doubt is Good (2nd Sunday in Easter)
It's all About Christ (3rd Sunday in Easter)
We Worship God, Not the Bible
God Will Not Leave You Behind
We Are the Body of Christ

Any time is a good time to invite someone you know to share in our worship. But a sermon series, in particular, provides an opportunity to open such a discussion and make an invitation. Always remember, most new people come to a church because someone they know invites them.

Sermon Topics

It has been a while since I reminded everyone that I would like to hear from you regarding sermon topics. Not all topics lend themselves to a sermon format, even as part of a series. But if there is a topic you would like addressed I'd be glad to do so. If, in my judgment, we cannot fit the topic into a sermon format we can schedule a class to study the question from a Christian and biblical perspective.

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.

⁵ *Life will go well for those
who freely lend
and are honest in business.*

⁶ *They won't ever be troubled,
and the kind things they do
will never be forgotten...*

⁹ *They will always be remembered
and greatly praised,
because they were kind
and freely gave to the poor. ¹*

Ps 112:5-6;9 CEV

A number of passages of Scripture emphasize that honesty in our business dealings with one another is a concern of God. In psalm 112 this concept is combined with an emphasis on giving freely to the poor. Moses admonished the people that they should not treat the blessings of their lives as arising solely from their own work and effort:

¹⁷ *When you become successful, don't say, "I'm rich, and I've earned it all myself." ¹⁸ Instead, remember that the LORD your God gives you the strength to make a living. That's how he keeps the promise he made to your ancestors. Deut. 8:17-18 CEV*

¹ *The Holy Bible: The Contemporary English Version.* (1995). (Ps 112:5-9). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Having been blessed by God in their business dealings, the faithful should share their wealth with the poor.

¹⁵ Then he said to the crowd, “Don’t be greedy! Owning a lot of things won’t make your life safe.”

¹⁶ So Jesus told them this story:

A rich man’s farm produced a big crop, ¹⁷ and he said to himself, “What can I do? I don’t have a place large enough to store everything.”

¹⁸ Later, he said, “Now I know what I’ll do. I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones, where I can store all my grain and other goods. ¹⁹ Then I’ll say to myself, ‘You have stored up enough good things to last for years to come. Live it up! Eat, drink, and enjoy yourself.’ ”

²⁰ But God said to him, “You fool! Tonight you will die. Then who will get what you have stored up?”

²¹ “This is what happens to people who store up everything for themselves, but are poor in the sight of God.” Luke 12:15-21 CEV

Jesus is offering the teaching of the Psalms and Deuteronomy in a slightly different way, but the message is the same. If you have been blessed, it is not solely by your own hand. Honesty in business dealings is not enough. You must still be willing to share your blessings with those who have little.

Bible Study

For the last two years I have led a bible study on Thursday mornings. We are currently studying the Book of Joshua. 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.

Disciple Bible Study Opportunity

Disciple Bible Study is a 32 week study of the bible from Genesis to Revelation. It has guided many people to a deeper understanding of scripture and their faith over the years. Many in the Church have completed this study.

I have been approached by two people who would be interested in a Disciple Bible Study to meet from 7:00 to 9:00 on Thursday evenings. I would like to get at least five more people to participate in this study. If you have considered undertaking a study of the bible before, this is a wonderful opportunity. If you are interested in being a part of this group, please contact me.

Prayer Ministry

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

Elva Beard
Larry Eastwood
Leslie Eastwood

Sarah Jordan
Mac McAfee
Rachel Newman

Kenneth Stevens
Patricia Stevens
Sam Richardson

Judy Richardson
Charles Wilson

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

May 18th: Christian essentials: *God Will Not Leave You Behind.* If you asked a non-Christian what Christians believed, it's likely that a significant number would refer to something called the Rapture and to a time when God will punish the world with something called the tribulation. Yet, these beliefs represent the tradition of a small group of Christians who are espousing a theology developed by a Scotsman in the late 19th century. In reality this theology has little to do with the Gospel of Jesus Christ as we understand it. My texts are John 3:16-17 and Genesis 1:26-31.

May 25th: Christian essentials: *We Are the Body of Christ.* Too many Christians think of their faith solely in terms of having a "personal relationship" with Jesus Christ. Yet, the core of our theology is that God has made all of us, together, into the Body of Christ, the Presence of Christ on earth. My texts are Matthew 22:34-39 and 1 Corinthians 12:12-31.

Worship Leaders Schedule

May 18

Renita Hartsock, **Liturgist**

Mike & Elaine Rohrig, **Greeters**

Sam Richardson & Tommy Cotton, **Ushers**

May 25

Jason Aldred, **Liturgist**

Linda Robinson & Pat Moran, **Greeters**

Donnie & Renita Hartsock, **Ushers**

Announcements

Please consider being a volunteer in the nursery. There is an opportunity each Sunday for you to be blessed by spending time with the youngest among us. Both men and women are welcome to be a part of this ministry. Please let Julia know of your interest.

The dates for serving at **61st United Methodist Church** are **May 24, August 16, November 15**. These occasions are all Saturdays. Volunteers are needed on these occasions. You will be blessed as you serve.

There are sign-up lists on the Bulletin Board for volunteers who will prepare communion as well as hosting the First Sunday meal. Please sign up!

May Birthdays

Tommy Cotton, Sam Richardson, Jim Winton

Happy Birthday to each of you!