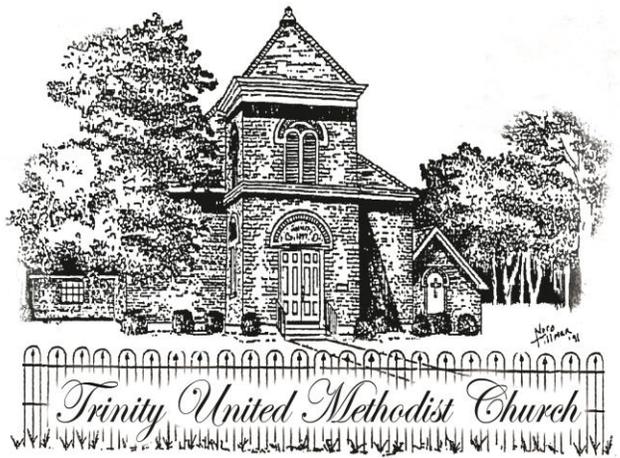




Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter

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November 26, 2014

They Need to Eat The Day After Thanksgiving Too

*⁷ Isn't it [an act of worship] sharing your bread
with the hungry
and bringing the homeless poor
into your house,
covering the naked when you see them... Isaiah 58:7 CEB*

As I was getting ready for work this morning I saw a public service announcement for Second Harvest Food Bank and the down-town Rescue Mission's Thanksgiving Dinner. Graceworks Ministries has also been pushing requests for support in recent weeks. Last week Sixty-First Avenue UMC sent me a flyer asking for volunteers for the Last Minute Toy Store. It is common that such agencies use the openness toward giving that characterizes this season to maximize donations. However, the need exists 365 days a year.

There are times when, as a pastor, I begin to worry about sounding too strident in my preaching, speaking and writing. I feel as if I am constantly reminding people (including myself) that our faith calls us into the world; calls us to care about what happens to those around us. The problem is that the message really hasn't changed over thousands of years. Isaiah was writing in a time 500 years before the birth of Christ but his words were echoed by Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew:

³⁴ "Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who will receive good things from my Father. Inherit the kingdom that was prepared for you before the world began. ³⁵ I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. ³⁶ I was naked and you gave me clothes to wear. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me.'

³⁷ "Then those who are righteous will reply to him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? ³⁸ When did we see you as a stranger and welcome you, or naked and give you clothes to wear? ³⁹ When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?'

⁴⁰ "Then the king will reply to them, 'I assure you that when you have done it for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you have done it for me.' Matthew 25:31-40. NRSV

Every week I include material from the *Poverty and Justice Bible* to remind us that these are not a few aberrant passages of scripture but that concern for the poor is a consistent theme throughout scripture. And, every day I see that the problems described by scripture are still familiar to every person in our society.

One of the reasons I feel compelled to continue to bring this message to the forefront is the image of the poor and poverty I see in our media. Many prominent people, especially many politicians, demonize the poor as if they only have themselves to blame for their circumstances. However, scripture doesn't call us to assess blame. Scripture calls us to help. Moreover, while some people are unquestionably the authors of their own misfortune, many more are the victims of chance circumstances from the economy to catastrophic medical bills. And, poverty is growing faster in American suburbs than it is in urban areas. Many of the newly poor own homes and expensive automobiles not bought with food stamp money but bought when they were able to work in high paying jobs that have gone away.

To help put a face on poverty in our nation I will host one or more showings of the movie "*The Line*" during the up-coming year. *The Line* tells the story of four individuals whose income falls below the "poverty line" established by the government. I think you will be surprised to hear their stories.

The Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant

Every Church Christmas pageant shares these characteristics: there is a rush of preparation over three to four weeks, high levels of anxiety to get the performance organized, the effort to get young children to learn a few lines of dialogue and deliver them on cue and the effort to put the performance on with a minimum of mistakes. There is one more characteristic of Church Christmas Pageants. Despite the best efforts of the organizers the result is a somewhat chaotic presentation of the Christmas Story. However, no one really minds that because their children are part of that chaotic presentation.

The Unrehearsed Christmas pageant also produces a somewhat chaotic presentation of the Christmas story but it substitutes a lot of fun for the anxiety and stress usually accompanying a pageant. Instead of weeks of preparation, everyone arrives the night of the performance. They select a costume as a shepherd or sheep, a star or an angel, a wise person, a cow, a donkey, or an innkeeper and spouse. A narrator reads the Christmas story while the costumed participants act out this old and wonderful story. Christmas songs are sung and the story is retold to a new generation. 'Kids' of all ages are invited to get dressed and participate. Refreshments are then shared in the fellowship hall.

The **Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant** will be held on Sunday, December 14th at 4:30 PM at Trinity United Methodist Church. Please come and be a part of this joyful event and bring a friend or two to join in the fun.

!!!! Ideally we should have a 'Holy Family' (Mary and Joseph) and 'Baby Jesus.' This is a couple with a baby no more than one year old. The Holy Family has no lines and need not bring costumes. We provide those. They need only arrive at the manger and watch the rest of the show. 'Baby Jesus' can be a boy or a girl. The swaddling cloth is white, not pink or blue. If you know a couple with a baby who might be interested in coming to participate as the Holy Family, please let us know. We can go forward with a doll, but a live baby is best. !!!!

Request for Volunteers from Sixty First Ave UMC Last Minute Toy Store

December 18-21

(Received from 61st Avenue UMC)

Could you give a few hours of your time to make this Christmas a more joyful one for Davidson County children from low-income families? Sixty-First Avenue UMC in West Nashville is in need of help with its annual “Last Minute” Christmas Toy Store.

Volunteers are needed for a variety of tasks Thursday the 18th through Saturday the 20th from 11:30 – 5:30 and Sunday the 21st from 12:30 to 6:30. We are urging people to arrange their schedules so they can stay for a complete shift if possible. We have a special need for bi-lingual (English-Spanish) volunteers.

Also, we have a special need for gifts or gift cards for teenagers since most of our donations are for younger children. Last year 4,973 children from close to 1600 families received toys, books, candy canes and oranges through this program.

If you can help out with this ministry, please contact Sixty-First Avenue UMC at 292-7184 or e-mail 61avenueumc@bellsouth.net. Information is also available at www.lastminutetoystore.com.

[Trinity UMC will provide lunch for volunteers at the Toy Store on December 19th. If you would like to help with that please contact Charles Wilson or Rev. Meaker.]

Commitment of Service

We had a great response to our Commitment Campaign. If you have not yet returned your commitment cards there is still time. You can drop them into the collection plate on Sunday morning or simply turn them in to the church office.

The nominations committee is reviewing the commitment to service pledges from everyone who returned a card and you should hear from a nominations committee member soon giving you information about the areas in which you are interested. If you do not hear from someone by December 7th please speak to a member of the nominating committee. They are: Rev. Dennis Meaker, Nancy Conway, Cheryl Wilson, Jo Cotton, G.L. Jones, Houston Hartsock, Bill LeCates, Rachel Newman, Nanette Crowell and Wanda Folds.

Many of you expressed a desire to commit to the daily reading of scripture. You may already have a book for devotional reading but I wanted to make sure that you were aware of some other resources. One of the best resources for daily devotional reading is the *Upper Room* devotional guide published by the Upper Room and available directly from the church. These come in regular and large print editions. The Upper room also provides its devotional online at www.upperroom.org.

The Upper Room also publishes *The Upper Room Disciplines*. This is a lectionary based guide that provides daily readings based upon that week’s lectionary readings. My preaching often follows the lectionary so this particular guide would provide a basis for contemplating that week’s scripture readings before coming to worship. The *Upper Room Disciplines for 2015* is available through www.Cokesbury.com and through Amazon.

Another approach to daily scripture reading is *lectio divina* (literally, divine reading). In this practice you read a section of scripture in a prayerful attitude until a particular passage catches your attention. You then

spend a period of time contemplating and praying about that passage and what the Spirit may be saying to you through that passage. If there is interest, I would be glad to lead a short course on the practice of *lectio divina*.

Some people wish to use their devotional time to read through the bible in a year. There are a number of guides to help with such a plan. Several can be found at <http://www.ewordtoday.com/year/>. I will also provide a reading plan for those who wish to begin on January 1, 2015. It will be available at the Church and on the website.

One of the most important practices for a Christian is the prayerful daily reading of scripture. I am pleased that so many of you expressed a desire to follow that discipline.

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.

¹³The LORD is ready to accuse and judge all nations.

¹⁴He will even judge you rulers and leaders of his own nation.

You destroyed his vineyard [the nation of Israel] and filled your houses by robbing the poor. ¹⁵ The LORD All-Powerful says, "You have crushed my people and rubbed in the dirt the faces of the poor." Isaiah 3:13-15

Scripture is not indifferent to the plight of the poor. Isaiah promises judgment for nations and their leaders who allow the poor to be exploited or oppressed.

¹⁹ There was once a rich man who wore expensive clothes and every day ate the best food. ²⁰ But a poor beggar named Lazarus was brought to the gate of the rich man's house. ²¹ He was happy just to eat the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. His body was covered with sores, and dogs kept coming up to lick them... Luke 16:19-31

The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus in the Gospel of Luke addresses an issue that is still part of the discussion about poverty today. Who are the "deserving poor?" The bible tells us nothing about the character of Lazarus except that he is poor and living in wretched conditions right outside the gate of the Rich Man. Nor are we told anything about the character of the Rich Man other than his apparent indifference to the plight of Lazarus. It could be that Lazarus is largely the author of his fate. It could be that the Rich Man leads an exemplary life except for his indifference to the poverty around him. Yet the parable is harsh. Lazarus is honored and well received by God, the Rich Man is not. It is hard to know how best to help those in need (the old "fish" verses "fishing hook" parable) but scripture is clear that we must not be indifferent to the poverty in our midst.

Disciple Bible Study Opportunity

Thursday Evenings 7:00- 9:00

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.

We have begun our study and currently have seven people in the class. If you have been postponing a serious study of scripture now is a great opportunity to jump in. We can accept new students for the next couple of weeks.

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

November 30th: Sermon: “When God Tore Open the Heavens: Our Desperate Need.” We know we need God in our lives but we still struggle to live the lives we know God wants. The Good News is that we have been given all we really need for our lives as Disciples. My texts are Isaiah 64:1-9 and 1 Corinthians 1:3-9.

December 7th: Sermon: “When God Tore Open the Heavens: God’s Patient Salvation.” “Christ has died, Christ is Risen, Christ will come again.” So we proclaim when we celebrate the Lord’s Supper. But when will it happen and why the delay? The writer of 2 Peter has an intriguing answer. My texts are Mark 1:1-8 and 2 Peter 3:8-14a.

Worship Leaders Schedule

November 30

Linda Robinson, **Liturgist**

Maurice & Joyce Edwards, **Greeters**

Rodger & Cherry Klein, **Ushers**

December 7

Rachel Newman, **Liturgist**

Tommy & Jo Cotton, **Greeters**

Mike & Elaine Rohrig, **Ushers**

Announcements

It’s not too late to order gifts for yourself or others and at the same time, participate in our fund raiser. You can order online if you want at <http://www.thatsmypan.biz/frtn10177>. Once you click on Begin Shopping, you are taken to a page that shows all that is in the catalog PLUS more. They have lots of new products that aren't in the catalog.

If you need to send it, click on the link at the top of the page that says "not local" - this will enable you to ship the products to an address that's not going to church.

You can click on pay by check (give money to Dana) or you can pay by Credit Card.

So, enjoy your shopping, and know that all proceeds will go to the missions of the Trinity Women's Group.

November Birthdays

Cheryl Wilson, Ensley Mason, Betty Haynes, Brooks Crowell, Ross Crutcher

Happy Birthday to each of you!