



Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



2084 Wilson Pike · Franklin, TN 37067 · 615.794.2665
Pastor Dennis Meaker: 615.794.2665 · djmeaker@gmail.com

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The Prophets: Isaiah

*On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines,
of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear.*

⁷ *And he will destroy on this mountain
the shroud that is cast over all peoples,
the sheet that is spread over all nations;*

⁸ *he will swallow up death forever.*

*Then the Lord GOD will wipe away the tears from all faces,
and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken. Isaiah 25:6-8*

The Prophet we call Isaiah is actually at least two different writers and probably three or more. There are three distinct books of Isaiah from three historical periods. First Isaiah goes from Chapters 1 through 39. During this period the Assyrians conquered Israel, the Northern Kingdom in 722 BCE. The Assyrians invaded Judah in 701 BCE. However, their siege of Jerusalem failed. At the close of Chapter 39, the Assyrians have been defeated and Jerusalem is safe for the moment. However, the Babylonians are coming onstage. First Isaiah predicts the conquest of Judah by Babylon in the closing verses of Chapter 39.

Jerusalem did fall to the Babylonians a hundred years later in 598 BCE. The People of Israel went into exile in Babylon for seventy years. Second Isaiah is comprised of chapters 40-55. These were written at the close of the Babylonian Exile, around 530 BCE, when the Babylonians were defeated by Cyrus of Persia. Cyrus is described as *messiah*, God's anointed (*Isaiah 45:1*), appointed by God to free the People of Israel. Cyrus allows the Israelites, still vassals of Persia, to return to Jerusalem, still a possession of Persia, to rebuild the Temple.

Isaiah 56-66 comprises Third Isaiah and focuses upon the community that returned to rebuild the Temple. The people of Israel were filled with hope when they returned from exile, but they found life in Israel difficult. They had a great deal of trouble rebuilding the Temple and the Temple they did build was a pale imitation of Solomon's Temple. Third Isaiah calls the people back to righteousness; i.e. right relationship, with God.

Consistent with all the prophets, the Books of Isaiah call the people to lives of righteousness. God tells them that God is tired of empty religious ritual when righteous living has ceased.

¹¹ *What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices?
says the LORD;
I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams
and the fat of fed beasts;
I do not delight in the blood of bulls,
or of lambs, or of goats. Isaiah 1:11*

...

¹⁶ *Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your doings
from before my eyes;
cease to do evil,
¹⁷ learn to do good;
seek justice,
rescue the oppressed,
defend the orphan,
plead for the widow. Isaiah 1:16-17*

First Isaiah contains one of the most moving descriptions of the end of time in Chapter 25, quoted at the beginning of this article. God will gather the people together on God's mountain. There shall be a great feast of the finest food. God will dry the tears of the people and put an end to death. When we celebrate communion we proclaim that we will live as the Body of Christ until "Christ returns and we feast at his heavenly table."

Second Isaiah opens with this well known scripture:

*Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins. Isaiah 40:1-2*

The prophet, speaking for God, is telling the people that the time has come to return to Israel and begin again. But this generation was born and raised in Babylon. Much like the People in slavery in Egypt, they are reluctant to leave the land they know even though they were brought to the land as slaves. Second Isaiah contains the passages about the Suffering Servant. Many Christians hear these passages as prophesies of Christ. However, the People of Israel understood that God was speaking of them. God is calling them back to their role of being a light for the nations; their role of teaching the world about God's righteousness and justice.

*Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him;*

he will bring forth justice to the nations.
² *He will not cry or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street;*
³ *a bruised reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.*
⁴ *He will not grow faint or be crushed
until he has established justice in the earth;
and the coastlands wait for his teaching. Isaiah 42:1-4*

After the people returned, they found a land much changed from the one their ancestors knew. It was now a province of Persia. Many of the people left behind had drifted away from the worship of God to the worship of the Canaanite Gods. The rulers who came back with the Exiles became corrupted and led the people astray. Third Isaiah again focused on bringing the people back to righteousness living. One of the most challenging passages in Third Isaiah is found in Chapter 58. After again declaring that God is not moved by the worship of people who are living unrighteous lives God describes what God considers ‘true’ worship:

*Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?*
⁷ *Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?*
⁸ *Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator^a shall go before you,
the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.*
⁹ *Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. Isaiah 58:6-9*

The Books of Isaiah give us much to contemplate.

Commitment Campaign

When we join the church we commit to support the church with our *prayers, our presence, our witness, our gifts and our service*. The Administrative Council has approved a Commitment Campaign for the Church. Beginning on October 5th and continuing through November 2nd we will, as a church, contemplate those commitments and how they are a part of our lives as Disciples. You should have received a study guide of devotional passages for the whole month as well as a card listing the ways that you can make a commitment of your prayers, presence, witness, gifts and service to the church. On November 2nd we will celebrate Commitment Sunday with a return of commitment cards in each of these areas.

^a Or *vindication*

Service Commitment

Charge Conference will be held November 5th. We are updating our rosters for work on committees. If you desire to continue to serve on a committee, or to be removed from a committee, please let Rev. Meaker know as soon as possible.

Don Dicie In Concert

Don Dicie is retiring as the organist for St. Paul's Episcopal Church. He was the organist here at Trinity UMC from 1999 until 2004. He will perform an All Saint's Concert at 4:00 PM on November 2nd at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 510 West Main Street, Franklin. The Public is cordially invited. Included in the concert will be "Dance of Eternal Spring", composed by Dicie and performed for the first time that day.

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

Jeanne and I would like you to join us this February on a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land. We will leave on February 16 for nine days of Biblical discovery, returning on February 25th. We will be part of a larger group of primarily United Methodists from all over Middle and West Tennessee. This is a special tour organized by Bishop William McAlilly, the Bishop for the Tennessee and Memphis Conferences.

I first visited the Holy Land in 2000. Jeanne and I went back in 2005 and again in 2012. Before I went the first time I was somewhat cynical about the upcoming experience. I didn't think that it would have much of an effect on me. But, when you stand on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, or travel to the Synagogue at Capernaum, you suddenly realize that you are likely walking ground that Christ walked. When you pray among the Olive trees in Gethsemane, stand in the prison cell contained in the House of Caiaphas, or see the name of Pilate inscribed on a monument in Caesarea, the events surrounding the imprisonment, trial and passion of Christ take on new meaning; a new reality.

Brochures for the trip, including exact costs and travel itineraries, are available in my office. I hope you will prayerfully consider participating in this faith building experience.

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.

*⁸ But you must defend
those who are helpless
and have no hope.*

*⁹ Be fair and give justice
to the poor and homeless.
Proverbs 31:8-9 CEV*

In Proverbs 31:8-9 we find an answer to the question Cain asks God in Genesis 4:9. “Am I my Brother’s keeper?” This Proverb, and much that has gone before, says “Yes. We are our brother’s keeper.” That is not a popular idea in today’s culture but it is the predominate theme in scripture. Added to this text is the admonition to give people a reason to hope. There seems to be little interest in this country today to giving the poor and homeless a reason to hope for something better.

When you give a dinner or a banquet, don’t invite your friends and family and relatives and rich neighbors. If you do, they will invite you in return, and you will be paid back. ¹³ When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴ They cannot pay you back. But God will bless you and reward you when his people rise from death. Luke 14:12-14

Jesus affirms the teaching from Proverbs. There is nothing wrong with celebrating with your friends, but Jesus challenges the people to see themselves in relationship with their whole community. He especially challenges them to reach out to those who are at the margins of society.

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. Also, because four of those people will be out of the country for the next three weeks we will not meet again until November 6th. There is time to catch up with the first couple of lessons and then join in with the whole 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

October 19th: Sermon: Commitment of Presence: Sometimes a commitment of presence is the only ministry we can offer. My texts are 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 and Psalm 139:1-18.

October 26th: Sermon: Commitment of Witness: What does it mean to witness to our faith? My texts are Acts 1:6-8 and Acts 8:26-35.

Worship Leaders Schedule

October 19

Rachel Newman, **Liturgist**

Betty & Herb Haynes, **Greeters**

Maurice & Joyce Edwards, **Ushers**

October 26

Nancy Conway, **Liturgist**

Tommy & Jo Cotton, **Greeters**

Jeanne Rybolt & Linda Robinson, **Ushers**

Announcements

The ladies of the church are excited about "**That's My Pan**" fundraiser. The link describing the products has been set up for us: <http://www.thatsmypan.biz/frtn10177/>. This is a new technology since we last did this fundraiser in 2005, almost 10 years ago. A variety of products will be available, some of which are located in Fellowship Hall. You will notice several new products and lots of new pan lids. As you're able, please take a look at the website. Ordering as well as payment opportunity is available on line. Dana will have answers to any questions you may have in this regard.

The Men of the Church are planning a **BarBQ Saturday, November 8** from **noon til three** or so. Pork Butts as well as pulled pork by the pound and plates will be served. The cooking will be done at Marty's barn. Mark your calendars for **November 8** for this fund-raising event.

As the time nears for the event, more details will be provided

October Birthdays

Elaine Rohrig, Kieran McKernan, Caitlyn McKernan, Julia Moore, Reba Collier

Happy Birthday to each of you!