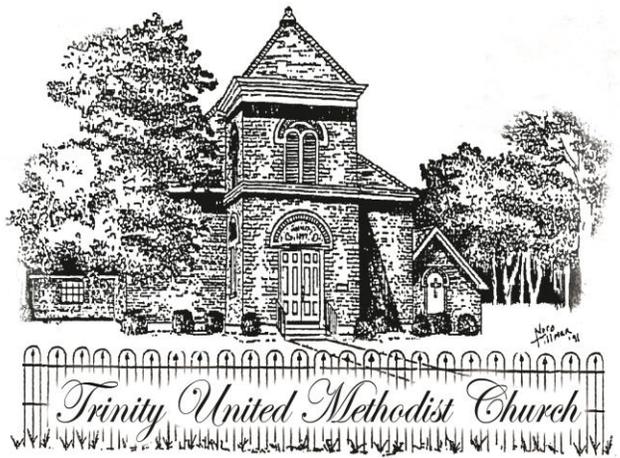




# Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter

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## The Prophets: **Jeremiah, and the Exile**

*<sup>16</sup> And I will utter my judgments against them, for all their wickedness in forsaking me; they have made offerings to other gods, and worshiped the works of their own hands. Jeremiah 1:16 NRSV*

A persistent problem shared by many of the Old Testament prophets was that no one wanted to listen to what they had to say. Sometimes this was because the news from God was not so good. Take, for instance, King Ahab of Israel and his prophet Micaiah:

*<sup>8</sup> The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "There is still one other by whom we may inquire of the LORD, Micaiah son of Imlah; but I hate him, for he never prophesies anything favorable about me, but only disaster." 1 Kings 22:8*

Sometimes the words of the prophets seemed so out of sync with popular expectations that they were dismissed out of hand. That was the experience of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah was called as a prophet as a young man. The account of his call can be found Jeremiah 1:1-10. It's believed that Jeremiah was a member of a politically prominent, and probably relatively wealthy family. He lived in Jerusalem when King Josiah attempted to reform the land. Josiah reinstated temple worship and fought against the apostasy that plagued the Kingdom of Judah. However, Josiah was killed in battle with the Egyptians and his successors did not follow his reforms.

In 722 B.C.E. Assyria conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Its capital, Samaria, fell in that year and the majority of its people were carried into exile. The Assyrian armies then swept south and laid siege to Jerusalem in Judah. It seemed that Jerusalem would fall as well. But, the prophet Isaiah proclaimed that God would deliver the City. And indeed the besieging armies of Assyria were struck with sickness and died by the thousands. The armies retreated to Assyria and Jerusalem knew over 100 years of relative peace. (See Isaiah 37:36-38). Jeremiah would have preached in Jerusalem around 610 to 598.

According to Jeremiah, the people of Jerusalem took the wrong message from the deliverance from the Assyrians. Instead of repenting and returning to the rule of God's Law, they decided that God would never allow Jerusalem to be destroyed because of the Temple. So 100 years later when Jeremiah warned the city that it must repent, he wasn't believed:

<sup>3</sup> Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your doings, and let me dwell with you in this place. <sup>4</sup> Do not trust in these deceptive words: “This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.”

<sup>5</sup> For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly act justly one with another, <sup>6</sup> if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt, <sup>7</sup> then I will dwell with you in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your ancestors forever and ever. Jeremiah 7:2-7 (Emphasis added)

Jeremiah warned the people not to listen to those saying that the Lord would not destroy the Temple. Finally, Jeremiah was left with the message that Jerusalem would fall and the people would be taken into exile.

*Thus said the LORD: Go and buy a potter’s earthenware jug. Take with you some of the elders of the people and some of the senior priests, <sup>2</sup> and go out to the valley of the son of Hinnom at the entry of the Potsherd Gate, and proclaim there the words that I tell you...*

*<sup>10</sup> Then you shall break the jug in the sight of those who go with you, <sup>11</sup> and shall say to them: Thus says the LORD of hosts: So will I break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter’s vessel, so that it can never be mended. Jeremiah 19:1-2; 10-11 NRSV.*

Yet, God did assure Jeremiah that the people would return one day and that the people would accept a new Covenant:

*<sup>31</sup> The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>32</sup> It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. <sup>33</sup> But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. <sup>34</sup> No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more. Jeremiah 31:31-34 NRSV*

The armies of Babylon did lay siege to Jerusalem and Jerusalem was eventually destroyed. The Temple was also destroyed and the priests and scribes, the educated, the royalty and the artisans were taken into exile. The only people left in Judah were the farmers. The exiles would be in Babylon for seventy years. Jeremiah escaped exile to Babylon, only to be taken captive by other Jews and taken as a refugee to Egypt.

Jeremiah did see a time when the people would return to Israel. As part of those writings, we are given one of the most well know of Messianic prophesies:

*<sup>14</sup> The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>15</sup> In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. <sup>16</sup> In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness.” Jeremiah 33:14-16*

The Exile was the most influential event in the life of Israel after the Exodus. During the Exile the Old Testament was edited into the form we have today. Much of the history of Israel as contained in the Old

Testament was written during the Exile and is meant to explain why the people had suffered this terrible calamity; to explain where they had gone wrong. The Exile also posed a Theological dilemma of sorts. With the Temple destroyed, where would God reside? It was during the Exile that the people concluded that God inhabits the whole world. Also, with the temple destroyed, Synagogue worship became important to the spiritual life of the people. In Babylon, and when the people returned, they brought the Synagogue tradition with them.

## **Commitment Campaign**

***Please remember to fill out your commitment cards for the disciplines of Prayers, Presence, Witness, Gifts and Service and bring them with you to worship on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.***

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 5<sup>th</sup> and continuing through November 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> we will celebrate Commitment Sunday with a return of commitment cards in each of these areas.

## **Service Commitment**

Charge Conference will be held November 5<sup>th</sup>. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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](http://www.Justicebible.org).

*<sup>13</sup> Once I saw what people really think of wisdom. <sup>14</sup> It happened when a powerful ruler surrounded and attacked a small city where only a few people lived. The enemy army was getting ready to break through the city walls. <sup>15</sup> But the city was saved by the wisdom of a poor person who was soon forgotten. <sup>16</sup> So I decided that wisdom is better than strength. Yet if you are poor, no one pays any attention to you, no matter how smart you are.*

*Ecclesiastes 9:13-16 CEV*

Ecclesiastes is a curious book. It spends much time speaking of the contrasts between what God would want for the world and what exists in the world. Here the writer describes a town that owed its survival to the wisdom of a poor man. But, since he was poor, he was soon forgotten. The stereotype of poor people in this nation today portrays them as undereducated and possibly not very intelligent. Yet the numbers of those living below the poverty line are swelling with well-educated people who, for one reason or another, have lost their jobs, their homes and their livelihood. We simply aren't paying much attention to them.

*<sup>26</sup> Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup> But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup> God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup> so that no one might boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup> He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, <sup>31</sup> in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."*

*1 Corinthians 1:26-31*

Paul contrasts the wise and foolish and the weak and powerful in his first letter to the Corinthians. By many standards Christianity is foolish. It proclaims that we must care about the lives of people who are strangers. It proclaims that we are to share our blessings with others and even love our enemies. Still, it is hard to know what is happening in the lives of the poor if we treat them as if they were invisible.

## 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 6<sup>th</sup>. 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 26<sup>th</sup>: 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.

**November 2<sup>nd</sup>: Sermon: Commitment of Gifts and Service:** Commitment to live as the Body of Christ means that we support our Discipleship by sharing our blessings and giving ourselves in service. My texts are Luke 12:13-21 and James 2:14-26.

## Worship Leaders Schedule

### October 26

Nancy Conway, **Liturgist**

Tommy & Jo Cotton, **Greeters**

Jeanne Rybolt & Linda Robinson, **Ushers**

### November 2

Roger Klein, **Liturgist**

Sam Richardson & Pat Moran, **Greeters**

Mike & Elaine Rohrig, **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. Order forms are on the table where the pans are located.

The **Finance committee** will meet **Saturday, October 25<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 AM**. All members of this committee are encouraged to attend.

The **SPRC committee** will also meet **Saturday, October 25 at 9:00 AM**. All members of this committee are encouraged to attend.

## October Birthdays

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

**Happy Birthday to each of you!**