



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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I Believe that, In the Name of Jesus Christ, You Are Forgiven

*⁷ Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. ⁸ But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.
Romans 5:7-8 NRSV*

Liturgy literally means what is said in public worship. For our worship services it encompasses the call to worship, the passing of the peace, hymns and anthems, the sermon, prayers and even the joys and concerns offered up from the congregation. However, there are some liturgies that do not change from week to week and I want to focus for a bit on two of those: the Apostles Creed and the granting of pardon following the prayer of confession.

The Historic Creeds of the Christian Church, the Nicene Creed and the Apostles Creed, were originally formulated to encompass what the church leaders of the day believed to be the essentials of the faith. Because we are so far removed from the forces that encouraged the articulation of these creeds we have forgotten what they were meant to express. Yet I believe that there is benefit in understanding why these particular formulations were composed.

Apostles Creed:

I believe in God the Father, maker of heaven and earth... Along with Judaism and Islam, Christians confess that there is but one God who created the universe.

And in Jesus Christ, his only son our Lord... Jesus Christ is the one and only son of God who is also our Lord by Confession and in fact.

Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; One of the most powerful early heresies of the church was Gnosticism. Gnosticism proclaimed that spirit was good and that flesh was corrupt; that our spirits were trapped in corrupted flesh and Christ came to earth to impart the secret knowledge, *Gnosis*, to allow us to free our spirits from their fleshly prisons. Since flesh was corrupt, Gnosticism taught that there was no incarnation. Gnosticism proclaimed that Christ only appeared human because God would never submit to being corrupt flesh. Since Jesus was never alive he could not be killed and was never really subjected to earthly powers. The “resurrection” was asserted

to be nothing more than the manifestation of God's spirit from the shell created to make him appear human. In one Gnostic text Christ is featured sitting on a nearby hillside and mocking the crucifixion of his "shell."

The Apostles and Nicene Creeds deal with the heresy of Gnosticism. They proclaim that Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit of God but was born of the human woman, Mary. Thus, Christ was both Human and Divine. As a human, he was subjected to the authority of Rome in the personage of Pontius Pilate. He was sentenced to death through crucifixion, a common form of Roman punishment, did indeed die and was, in fact, buried. In this brief sentence the Church Fathers proclaimed the incarnation, the human and divine nature of Christ and denied every claim of Gnosticism.

On the third day he arose from the dead, ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; and thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. Having been a human being who died a human death, Christ was resurrected and ascended into heaven, returning to the God Head. In the fullness of time, Christ will return and judge the world and its people. The "quick" refers to living persons.

*I believe in the Holy Spirit,
The Holy Catholic Church,
The Communion of Saints,
The forgiveness of sins,
The resurrection of the body, and
The life everlasting.*

With the first statement, the Church has completed affirming the Trinity: God, the Son and Holy Spirit. The Nicene Creed goes on to describe the relationship of the Son to God and the Holy Spirit to God and Christ, matters that involved the split between the Eastern and Western church.

The Holy Catholic Church is understood, by Protestants, to be all persons who confess Christ as Lord and Savior, sometimes referred to as the Church Universal, although it originally referred to the Catholic Church.

The Communion of Saints refers to the Christian belief, preserved in Psalm 139 and elsewhere, that we are never outside of the presence of God in life or death. We continue to share our lives not only with our living brothers and sisters, but with those who have gone before. These deceased members of the Body of Christ are believed to pray for us and to support us in our ministry.

The forgiveness of sins refers to the forgiveness available through the sacrifice of Christ. It is also a reaffirmation of our human nature. Flesh can exist without being corrupt through the power of God.

The resurrection of the body is not dependent upon having an unmarked body at the time we die, but is an affirmation that we remain ourselves, distinct persons, when resurrected. Paul's words from 1 Corinthians might be helpful in understanding what is meant by resurrection of the Body:

³⁵ But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" ³⁶ Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. ³⁷ And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. ³⁸ But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. ³⁹ Not all flesh is alike, but there is one flesh for human beings, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. ⁴⁰ There are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the

glory of the heavenly is one thing, and that of the earthly is another. ⁴¹ There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; indeed, star differs from star in glory.

⁴² So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. ⁴³ It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. ⁴⁴ It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body.

1 Corinthians 15:35-44 NRSV

Paul believed that it was a mistake to equate the resurrected body with the earthly body. We could not, as persons with physical bodies, understand what our resurrected bodies would be like.

The life everlasting is the eternal life in Christ that begins when we accept Christ as Lord and Savior and continues throughout our lives and ever after.

Each week when we use the Apostles Creed, we affirm all the essential beliefs of the Christian faith before God and one another. As I occasionally point out, speaking these words in public can lead to arrest and prosecution in a number of counties in the world. They should never be spoken without conscious thought about their meaning.

The Pardon

The Pardon is a concept that troubles some people. In form it seems that I am somehow, as an agent of the church, conveying God's pardon to you and then you to me. Indeed, based on scripture from the Gospel of John that is how the concept was understood for centuries:

²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."
John 20:23

The Catholic Church, at one time, did indeed presume to withhold God's pardon as a means of control. The Protestant Church finds the theology of the Romans passage cited at the beginning of this article to be more persuasive. Christ died for the sins of all persons while we were still sinners and that pardon is available to all who accept it through the sacrifice of Christ. The liturgy that we follow proclaiming the pardon might be more appropriately thought of as the headline of a newspaper than a judgment contained in a judicial decree. I declare to you, who have confessed your sin and your faith, that your sins are forgiven because of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. You make the same declaration to me. It is much like declaring that the sun rises in the morning and sets at night. It is not something that any of us controls, but simply a statement of fact or, more appropriately, of faith. Indeed, this declaration is a succinct statement of the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ: ***In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.***

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'll also schedule a time this summer to share photographs taken on my previous trips to Israel and answer questions about the trip. 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.

*¹⁵ A ruler who mistreats the poor
is like a roaring lion
or a bear hunting for food.
Proverbs 28:15 CEV*

Over the last year a number of politicians at the State and Federal level have taken legislative actions aimed at the poor. Benefits have been slashed for many, including many veterans who find themselves unable to work after being disabled in service to their country. A Tennessee politician proposed cutting welfare benefits for families whose children performed poorly in school. It is almost as if being poor and needing help was a crime. Proverbs likens such leaders to predators preying on the defenseless.

² Suppose a rich person wearing fancy clothes and a gold ring comes to one of your meetings. And suppose a poor person dressed in worn-out clothes also comes. ³ You must not give the best seat to the one in fancy clothes and tell the one who is poor to stand at the side or sit on the floor. ⁴ That is the same as saying that some people are better than others, and you would be acting like a crooked judge. James 2:2-4 CEV

Using wealth to determine the worth of individuals is not something invented in modern Western society. It is a problem that has been with us since the beginnings of human society. However, scripture demands that we challenge that model and base our judgments upon righteousness, right relationship to God.

Disciple Bible Study Opportunity

Thursday Evenings 7:00- 9:00 Beginning September 18th

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 enough people to begin a Disciple Bible Study. We will begin on September 18th. There is room for additional people. If you have considered undertaking a study of the bible before, this is a wonderful opportunity. If you have taken the study before but would like to repeat it you are also welcome. If you are interested in being a part of this group, please contact Rev. Meaker.

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

September 21st: Sermon: Wages. Few parables challenge our world view as much as the parable of the workers in the field. My texts are Philippians 1:21–30 and Matthew 20:1–16.

September 28th: Doing the Will of the Father. “Do as I say, not as I do.” The old saying highlights a reality with which we are all familiar. Our actions speak louder than our words. It appears that Jesus had given the matter some thought as well. My texts are Philippians 2:1–13 and Matthew 21:23–32.

Worship Leaders Schedule

September 21

Elaine Rohrig, **Liturgist**

Pat Moran & Linda Robinson, **Greeters**

Rodger & Cherry Klein, **Ushers**

September 28

Rodger Klein, **Liturgist**

Mike & Elaine Rohrig, **Greeters**

Tommy & Herb Haynes, **Ushers**

Announcements

The **Administrative Council** meeting will meet this **Saturday, September 20 at 9:00 AM**. Everyone is invited to attend this meeting. Please plan to attend.

Please remember to return your rocket banks, spare change or any monetary donation. Your donations will be used for the '**Imagine No Malaria**' campaign. We will be sending all of these funds through UMCOR to fight this treatable disease. Special boxes will be at the front of the church and in fellowship hall to accept both your donations and your rocket bank. Thank you for your support of this ministry.

The “Companions in Christ” Sunday school class is studying a series, “**Dare to Dream.**” This study will help us discern God's dream for us and how we live it out prayerfully and spiritually. We are creating a “God-Sized” mission for ourselves. Please join us. You will be enriched spiritually and you will enjoy the fellowship and commitment of others.

A brand new sign-up sheet is posted on the bulletin board so that you can sign up to help with **Sunday School**. This activity is so important to the children of our church and is so very rewarding.

September Birthdays

Millie Fly, Elva Beard, Joann Harper, Jessica Bauguess, Wanda Folds, GL Jones, Bill LeCates

Happy Birthday to each of you!