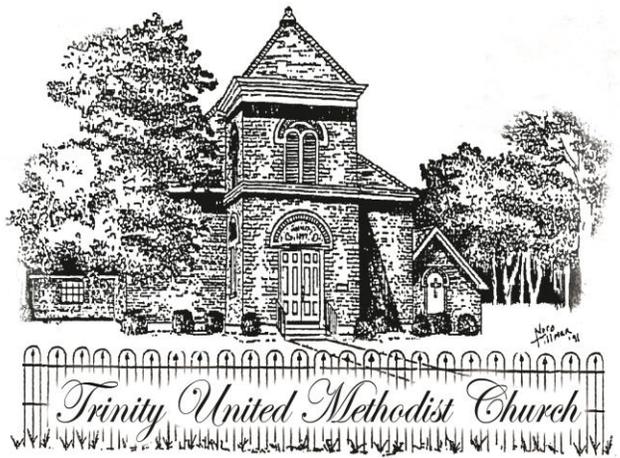




# Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter

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## The Prophets: Amos

*6 The Lord proclaims: For three crimes of Israel, and for four, I won't hold back the punishment, because they have sold the innocent for silver, and those in need for a pair of sandals.*

*7 They crush the head of the poor into the dust of the earth, and push the afflicted out of the way.*

*Amos 2:6-7 CEB*

Some of the most interesting figures in the bible are the prophets. The word prophet tends to mislead us because we most often associate prophesy with foretelling the future. However, the primary focus of the prophets was never foretelling the future. The prophets were God's spokesmen.

The Hebrew word we translate as prophet is *nabi* which can be also be translated as 'one who calls' or 'one who is called.' The most common understanding of *nabi* in scripture is a person who has been called by God to speak the words of God. It might be helpful if you thought of the words of the prophets as the judgments, or Supreme Court decisions of the Divine Court. Like our governmental system, Torah contained the Law of Israel and the rulers and priests of the People of Israel provided the executive function. The prophets passed judgment on what the law meant and how well the rulers, priests and people followed the law. Over the next several weeks we'll look at the writings and stories of a number of the Old Testament prophets beginning with Amos.

Amos lived after the splitting of Solomon's Kingdom into two separate kingdoms. Judah was the Southern Kingdom with Jerusalem as its capital. Israel was the Northern Kingdom and Samaria was its capital. Amos is described as a shepherd and a 'dresser' of sycamore trees from Tekoa, a town in Judah. Amos 1.1; 7:14-15. The sycamore referred to is not the North American tree but a type of fig tree. A "dresser of sycamore trees" was probably one who either tended the fruit of the tree or possibly collected the fallen figs and branches from the orchards. Although he may have been a farmer and ranch owner, scholars believe that it's most likely that he was a sort of migrant farm worker.

When reading Amos, it will probably help you to see him as a street preacher in the town center of Samaria. His audience is made up of all those gathered in the market place or going about their daily business. He begins his preaching by first describing the punishment of God that is descending upon nations to the North and East of the Kingdom of Israel, all traditional enemies of Israel. He uses the same formula for each pronouncement of God's punishment:

<sup>3</sup> *The LORD proclaims:  
For three crimes of Damascus,  
and for four,  
I won't hold back the punishment...*

Amos 1:3. The “three and four” pattern probably means ‘for the repeated transgressions’ or the ‘countless transgressions.’ In this way Amos pronounces God’s punishment on Damascus, Gaza and Ashdod, Tyre, Edom, Ammon and Moab. Doubtless many in the market place would have stopped and listened with approval as these ancient enemies of Israel were promised punishment.

Amos then delivers a pronouncement a little closer to home. The Southern Kingdom, Judah, will also be punished for its crimes. That probably wasn’t received as good news to many because, despite the political split, Judah was still the site of Solomon’s Temple and doubtless many people in Israel had family in Judah. Still, it was Judah, not Israel.

Finally, Amos makes clear why he has come to Samaria. He is here to pronounce God’s judgment on Israel:

<sup>6</sup> *The LORD proclaims:  
For three crimes of Israel,  
and for four,  
I won't hold back the punishment,  
because they have sold the innocent  
for silver, and those in need  
for a pair of sandals.  
<sup>7</sup> They crush the head of the poor into the dust of the earth,  
and push the afflicted out of the way.*

Amos 2:6-7 CEB. Amos has the attention of everyone now and he proceeds to lay out all that the people of Israel have gone to rebel against God’s law. Most of the transgressions cited, as in the ones listed above, involve crimes against the poor. Based upon historical and archeological evidence, Israel was a prosperous but very stratified society. People were either wealthy or very poor. There wasn’t a significant middle class.

Next week we’ll examine the preaching of Amos to the Kingdom of Israel.

## **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 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 will soon receive a study guide of devotional passages for the whole month as well as a card listing the ways that you can make 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.

## Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

***Jeanne and I will host an information meeting on October 12<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 in Fellowship Hall for anyone interested in going on this trip or simply interested in the Holy land. We'll show pictures of past trips and answer questions about Israel and the tour. Light refreshments will also be available.***

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>8</sup> Without guidance from God  
law and order disappear,  
but God blesses everyone  
who obeys his Law.  
Proverbs 29:18 CEV*

It is not uncommon for people to point out that there are places in scripture that admonish us to follow the law and the orders of our governments. The implication is that to go against the civil law is to oppose the will of God. But Proverbs offers a slightly different emphasis on that concept. The civil law that Proverbs envisions will be law that is already informed by guidance from God. And, the true path is adherence to the law of God.

*Obey the rulers who have authority over you. Only God can give authority to anyone, and he puts these rulers in their places of power. <sup>2</sup> People who oppose the authorities are opposing what God has done, and they will be punished. <sup>3</sup> Rulers are a threat to evil people, not to good people. There is no need to be afraid of the*

*authorities. Just do right, and they will praise you for it. <sup>4</sup> After all, they are God's servants, and it is their duty to help you. Romans 13:1-4 CEV*

This is a curious passage in Romans given Paul's experience with the authorities. He, and the infant Church, had certainly experienced persecution at the hands of the authorities. Elsewhere he warns about the dangers represented by the "powers and principalities" of this world, and he certainly would not have abandoned his profession of faith in Christ to worship of the Emperor or the many others Gods of the time. In the 1950s and 60s many Christians, including Martin Luther King, were admonished not to oppose the segregation laws because they were the duly enacted laws of the State. Yet, to follow those laws was to abandon concepts of justice. Given all of Paul's writings, a more nuanced reading of this passage might be that God desires order in society and that laws that don't call for disobedience to the law of God should be followed. As indicated in the passage from Proverbs, obedience to God's law is the ultimate requirement.

## **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. However, there is room for additional people. 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**

**September 28<sup>th</sup>: 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.

**October 2<sup>nd</sup>: Commitment.** The decision to follow God is never treated in scripture as an intellectual exercise. It always involves commitment, even if that commitment is reluctant. My texts are Gen 12:1-4a and Jonah 1-4.

## **Worship Leaders Schedule**

### **September 28**

Rodger Klein, **Liturgist**  
 Mike & Elaine Rohrig, **Greeters**  
 Tommy & Herb Haynes, **Ushers**

### **October 5**

Linda Robinson, **Liturgist**  
 Dawn & Richard Stevens, **Greeters**  
 Jason & Lindsey Aldred, **Ushers**

## **Announcements**

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.

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.

## **September Birthdays**

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

**Happy Birthday to each of you!**