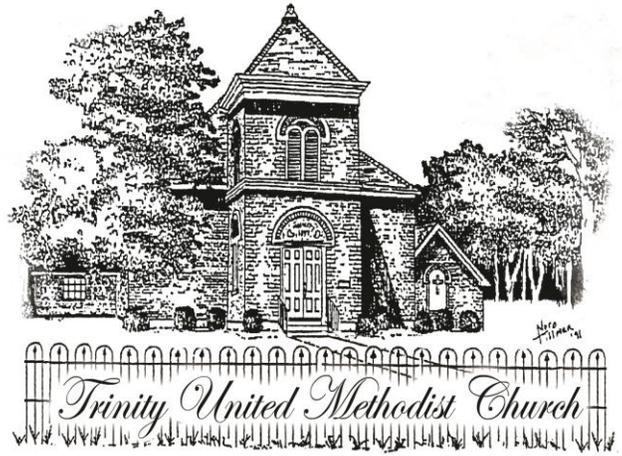




Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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The Risk of Helping

*⁸ Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, **think** about these things. ⁹ Keep on **doing** the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you. Philippians 4:8-9 NRSV*

“No good deed goes unpunished.” My internet search offered several views as to the origin of this statement including several playwrights. One article even suggested that it was a paraphrasing of scripture, which is certainly possible. Like most such sayings of ‘common wisdom’ it also contains an element of truth based upon experience. Sometimes the good we do leads to poor outcomes. Such, it would seem, was the case with some refugees admitted by France who turned out to be ISIS terrorists. The not unexpected response in many quarters is to demand that the refugees be turned away to avoid the possibility that one or two or more, out of tens of thousands, might turn out to be terrorists. Very few politicians (Nashville’s new Mayor being an exception) are willing to go on record in support of admitting refugees because of the prospect of facing their constituents following another attack. (As this is about to be distributed, the President of France announced that France would admit another 30,000 refugees.)

I could quote the many passages of scripture, including the words of Jesus, which admonish us to welcome the stranger and comfort the oppressed. However, I’ve done that many times and you all know them or could easily find them. I believe that the choice presented is more fundamental than simply referring to a command from scripture. The question presented involves how we choose to face evil; how we choose to live as the Body of Christ in this world.

If you were baptized or confirmed in the United Methodist, Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian or Catholic traditions (and likely some others) part of your vows included a vow to stand against evil in whatever forms it presents itself. You see there has always been, and will probably always be, evil forces in this world. As Christians we must choose to either cower before that evil or affirm that God calls us to a higher standard of conduct. That is one of the issues Paul is addressing in Philippians. Paul is writing from prison and is facing either execution or exoneration. The decision could go either way. Nevertheless, he is using his time in prison to proclaim the Gospel by what he says and by how he lives. He also knows that the Philippians have faced,

and are facing, threats and trials of their own. Among the advice he gives them is to imitate Christ in all that they do:

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ² make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus... Philippians 2:1-5 NRSV

He follows that statement with what was probably an early Christian hymn speaking of the sacrifice of Christ, something that certainly involved confronting evil. In his closing lines he makes the statement quoted at the start of this article. Our lives as followers of Christ should always reflect what is true, honorable, just, pure, commendable and pleasing to God.

Helping others has always involved risk but Christians have, in many times and places, accepted those risks. For centuries some Christians, at risk of persecution themselves, protected their Jewish neighbors from persecution by the State and the Church. In World War II some of those Christians died in Hitler's death factories for helping their Jewish neighbors hide or escape. From the early 1800s on, Christians were heavily involved with protecting run-away slaves, again at risk of violence, loss of property, imprisonment and death. Christians stood against segregation. Some paid for that with their lives and many suffered personal injury and imprisonment for their stand. Standing against evil always involves risk. Yet, it is what we are called to do if we are to live as the Body of Christ.

What happened in France was terrible. Yet ISIS is killing hundreds of people every day in areas they control, most of them fellow Muslims. That is why these people are fleeing. Are there ISIS infiltrators among the refugees? Obviously there are. The government is doing their best to weed them out but there are no guarantees. There never are. Opposing evil by helping its victims has always involved risk. As a people we can choose to act with compassion for people in desperate need, or we can give in to our fear and close our borders. Both involve risks. But turning these people away involves giving up something of what is good in our lives. I ask that you pray about this issue and dare to speak up for helping the refugees.

The President of the United Methodist Council of Bishops issued the following statement about the November 13 terrorist attacks in Paris:

John 11:35

Jesus wept.

This week, we weep for those in Paris. We weep for the senseless violence. We weep for the innocents whose lives were cut short. We weep for those who are grieving, who are frightened, who are hurting. We weep for those whose hearts are breaking, in France and all over the world. As several world leaders have stated, this is an attack on all humanity.

Even as we weep, we know that God is with us, that he sustains us with hope and that he will dry our tears. Once again, the forces of evil have tried to dominate; but, as disciples of Jesus, we must make our witness that the darkness will not overcome our light.

Let us be in prayer for Paris and the people of France. These events have impacted them in the way September 11, 2001, grieved the U.S. Also, please pray for communities around our world that will not make the news, but cringe under the threat of violence. May the Holy Spirit guide us in ways that will break this cycle of violence.

Bishop Warner H. Brown, Jr.
President, Council of Bishops

This Man

We are excited to announce that we will be presenting the original musical "This Man, A Musical Fable" at Trinity on Palm Sunday evening, March 20, 2016. There will be an initial meeting for those interested in participating on Sunday, Nov. 22nd at 4 p.m. with regular rehearsals to begin in January. All are welcome and needed!

Thursday Morning Bible Study

Our Thursday morning Bible Study meets on Thursday mornings between 10:00 and 11:30. Everyone is welcome to attend. It has been my practice to allow the group to decide what parts of the bible they wish to study. We have concluded our study of Mark and have begun a study of Matthew.

The Poverty and Justice Bible

*⁸The LORD God has told us
what is right
and what he demands:
"See that justice is done,
let mercy be your first concern,
and humbly obey your God." Micah 6.8 CEV*

God has told us what is right. Seek to serve justice in everything. Seek always to act with mercy. Walk humbly with God. Now the problem is living up to that standard?

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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.

Prayer Ministry

The following persons are part of the prayer ministry at Trinity UMC:

Elva Beard

Larry Eastwood

Leslie Eastwood

Mac McAfee

Rachel Newman

Kenneth Stevens

Patricia Stevens

Sam Richardson

Judy Richardson

Charles Wilson

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 22, 2015: Sermon: Is Christ Our King? Since 1776 We Americans have never been very comfortable with the idea of Kings. How comfortable are we with Christ as King? It is Christ the King Sunday, the last Sunday in the liturgical year. My texts are Revelation 1:4b–8 and John 18:33–37.

November 29, 2015: Sermon: The Days Are Surely Coming: A Reason to Hope. We begin an Advent series as we start the new Christian year. The First Sunday of Advent focuses on our hope for the future. My texts are Jeremiah 33:14–16 and Luke 21:25–36.

Worship Leader's Schedule

November 22

Julia Moore, **Liturgist**

Hal & Rachel Newman, **Greeters**

Larry Eastwood & Linda Robinson, **Ushers**

November 29

Ken Strait, **Liturgist**

Linda Robinson & Pat Moran, **Greeters**

Marty Bauguess & Tommy Cotton, **Ushers**

Announcements

The following is a listing of up-coming events:

Saturday, November 28, Hanging of the Greens at 9:00 AM.

Sunday, November 29 (First Sunday in Advent), the Nanette Crowell Sunday School class will begin a study written by our Pastor, Dennis Meaker. The Study is, **"The Days are Surely Coming."** All are welcome at 9:45 in the Sunday School room.

Sunday, December 13, the Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant and Chili Supper sponsored by the men's group.

Friday, December 18, we will be serving food to the workers at the 61st United Methodist Church.

Sunday, December 20, Choir Concert.

Birthdays

Cheryl Wilson, Ensley Mason, Betty Haynes, Ken Strait, Brooks Crowell, Ross Crutcher.

Happy Birthday to each of you!