



Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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The Yoke of Christ

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28 NRSV

Few scripture passages are as powerful as this one. Have you ever been weary? Have you ever felt as if the weight you were carrying was going to push you into the ground? That the weight of the burden was pushing you down to the point that you were unable to move? I have. I suspect most of us have at one time or another.

When those feelings strike in your life it starts to feel like you are all alone, that everything that happens is happening to you that any change is dependent upon you. In a massive crowd, you are alone. Even in a loving family, you feel alone, isolated, cut off. When we feel weighed down, burdened, little by little we push our way into the center of our universe focusing all our attention on our needs and responsibilities. Everything has to be done by us. We are the ones everyone is counting on. We are the ones hurting. At the time in our life when we most need the help and support of other people we can't bring ourselves to seek it because our universe has shrunk to the little bit we are responsible for.

What sorts of things us push into these places? Almost anything. Loss of a job, loss of a loved one, our sickness or the sickness of one for whom we are responsible. The reason doesn't matter. We are weary and heavy burdened, and we cry out for rest.

Jesus says, “come to me, you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.” The rest comes says Jesus, when you place my yoke upon you. Right away the warning lights go off in our minds, flashing bright red. Thanks Jesus. I'm weary and burdened, and you want to put a yoke on me?

We don't see yokes much anymore. We have pictures in books and we see them in movies and television. And the image they invoke is not all that favorable. A yoke, we say, is something put on cattle pulling a wagon, or maybe on a mule pulling a plow or a horse pulling a carriage. Our first response is, thanks Jesus, but no thanks.

But there is a slightly different picture of a yoke. The yoke Jesus describes is best symbolized by the table; the Lord's Table, holding the bread and the cup. You see, the purpose of a yoke for a team of oxen, or

horses, is to help them pull together. To make their combined work one; to make their combined work focused. The Yoke of Christ works in much the same way. The Yoke of Christ is the Holy Spirit that makes us the Body of Christ. The Yoke of Christ is best symbolized by the Table of the Lord, with the members of the Body gathered around.

When we gather at the table, we remember the mystery of our faith. Christ died for us while we were yet sinners; murdered by our sin. Christ was raised as evidence that God is more powerful than the sin of humankind and that through Christ there can be salvation; and the sure and certain belief that Christ will come again and reconcile the whole world around this table. At this table, we celebrate that God, through the Spirit, can make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to the whole world. The table is a powerful symbol of the yoke of Christ; the yoke of the Holy Spirit that makes us the Body of Christ.

It is an easy yoke in that it is voluntary. None of us are compelled to gather at the table. We are not animals, harnessed against our wills. It is also an easy yoke in that it is shared with so many. Not just those of this community, but many millions of others the world over and the countless who have gone before. No one of us is called to carry any burden, ours or Christ's, alone. We are called to carry it together.

Putting on the Yoke of Christ pulls us away from our self-centered worlds. We begin to see the world through the eyes of Christ. We begin to see the world over the table. We look up and discover that there are people standing all around us. There are people who care about us and want to help, if we let them. Others cannot take on our burdens for us but we will find many who can help carry them. And, around the table, you may also find that, despite those burdens you carry, there are those that you can help as well.

Is there a burden to be assumed here? Yes. But it is a light burden, an easy burden. We are called to one another. To accept the invitation of Christ to put on Christ's Yoke is to accept an invitation to place God back at the center of our lives and to take our place within the gathered Body of Christ, the Church. And, the burden of the Church, of all of us gathered around the table, the burden of the Body of Christ, is to carry the love of God into this world.

Christ says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." Christ invites you to accept his yoke, to be the Body of Christ for one another and for this world. When we gather at the table it becomes a place to lay down our burdens. For the Yoke of Christ is easy and Christ's burden is light.

News from Nanette Crowell's Companions in Christ

By Rodger Klein

Our Sunday School Class has some things that we want to share with the congregation. First, we have changed the name of our class from Companions in Christ to *Nanette Crowell's Companions in Christ*. This name change was done so that we would always keep Nanette in the front of our minds and honor her memory as the founder and leader of our class. We will miss her leadership and contribution to our class and we believe that naming our class in her memory is an appropriate way for us to honor her. All adults are welcome to participate in our class. We meet at 9:45 am every Sunday morning.

Second, Pastor Meaker recently asked us to watch a video about poverty in our country and to consider how poverty affects our community. The video was very informative and after watching, we discussed ways for our class to help with this serious local and national problem. Because we are local, we were looking for

ways that we can help in our local community. After some discussion, we agreed that we will help in two ways now, but continue to look for additional ways in which we can help. Our first commitment is to sponsor one of the four meals that Trinity does each year at the 61st Avenue United Methodist Church. We will sponsor that event financially, and we will be there to participate in the serving of the meal and the worship service with that congregation. Our second commitment is that we will lead the effort at Trinity to collect food for the Graceworks food pantry. We will be setting up a collection station in the church where all members can bring non-perishable food items that will be given to Graceworks for use within our local community to help those in need. Food items can be brought in every week, but we will concentrate this effort on First Sundays. Please help us collect these food items to help those in need within our own local community.

Thursday Morning Bible Study

A group within the Church has expressed an interest in a Bible Study on Thursday mornings between 10:00 and 11:30. We will begin that study on August 20th. Anyone is welcome to attend. It has been my practice to allow the group to decide what parts of the bible they wish to study. Based upon the requests I have received we will begin with a study of the Gospel of Mark.

New Disciple Bible Study

Disciple Bible Study is a powerful experience that can open the bible up for the participants. I would be willing to begin a new class this fall if at least seven people desired to undertake the 34 week study. I could do this study on Monday or Tuesday nights between 7 and 9. If participants would prefer to meet on a week day that could also be arranged. If you are interested please contact me at the Church. If you desire additional information for yourself or to give to a friend I have some explanatory booklets available.

The Poverty and Justice Bible

*¹²When poor people or orphans
cried out for help,
I came to their rescue.*

*¹³And I was highly praised
for my generosity to widows
and others in poverty.*

*¹⁴Kindness and justice
were my coat and hat;*

*¹⁵I was good to the blind
and to the lame.*

*¹⁶I was a father to the needy,
and I defended them in court,
even if they were strangers.*

*¹⁷When criminals attacked,
I broke their teeth*

and set their victims free. Job 29:12-17 CEV

There is an old saying that no good deed goes unpunished, and that is the experience of Job. He has done everything that he ought to have done and yet he finds himself poor, sick and abandoned. Still, he understands that the “Gospel” contained throughout the Old Testament is a call to stand for justice and help and protect those who cannot help themselves. The concept of helping those in need is not some creation of the modern Church but the foundation of all our Christian beliefs about the nature and desire of God.

¹² “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets. Matt 7:12
CEV

If we are honest with ourselves, how many of us would prefer that those around us treat us with indifference and contempt if we were in need? Might we all not want at least a “hand-up” even if too proud to accept a “hand-out?” Yet that seems to be the attitude being fostered in many segments of our society. In a sense, poverty has become the modern day version of leprosy. We would prefer to isolate ourselves from those who are poor rather than be involved in their lives. Perhaps we fear catching their “disease” and becoming poor ourselves. But, as Christ notes, the “law and the prophets,” indeed all of scripture, calls us to be in relation with one another. We cannot love God unless we also love one another. And loving one another means seeking to insure the welfare of all, even our enemies and those we despise.

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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	Mac McAfee	Kenneth Stevens	Judy Richardson
Larry Eastwood	Rachel Newman	Patricia Stevens	Charles Wilson
Leslie Eastwood	Erin McKibben	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

August 23 sermon: Do You Wish to Go Away? Jesus asked this question of his disciples when many people began to abandon him. Jesus asks it of us. My texts are Ephesians 6:10–20 and John 6:56–69.

Worship Leader's Schedule

August 23

Jason Aldred, **Liturgist**

Maurice & Joyce Edwards, **Greeters**

Sam & Judy Richardson, **Ushers**

August 30

Stacy Bell, **Liturgist**

Rodger & Cherry Klein, **Greeters**

Tommy Cotton & Larry Eastwood, **Ushers**

Announcements

The "**Nanette Crowell Companions in Christ**" Sunday School class has begun the sequel to "Knowing God." **This study is, "Loving God."** We have extra books and extra chairs if you would care to join our class. **The class begins promptly at 9:45.** All are welcome to this time of learning and fellowship.

Ladies: Please plan to stay after church this Sunday to enjoy the **baby shower for Lindsey and Jason Aldred.** Their baby girl is arriving soon! You will enjoy the fun and fellowship.

As you read earlier, the **Nanette Crowell Companions in Christ Sunday School** class is collecting non-perishable food items for Grace Works. The following is a listing of the items that they are most in need of. This collection is a ministry of our church that each person can participate in and is a meaningful way to serve God as we serve others in our community. Thank you for your contributions.

Pantry Items

Canned Ham or Chicken

Crackers, Spaghetti Sauce (in plastic jars or cans)

Canned Beef Stew

Jelly

Boxed Meals (like Hamburger Helper)
Boxed Mashed Potatoes
Rice
Canned Fruit
Pasta

Fuel Bags

All individual sizes please.
Juice Boxes
Shelf stable liquid milk boxes
Canned/Package Meat with crackers
Cereal
Microwaveable Meat Meals
Easy Mack
Pudding Cups
Cheese or Peanut Butter Crackers

August Birthdays

Mike Rohrig, Chuck McKibben, Stacy Bell, Jan Bell, Charles Wilson, Dana Bauguess

Happy Birthday to each of you!