



Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



2084 Wilson Pike · Franklin, TN 37067 · 615.794.2665
Pastor Dennis Meaker: 615.794.2665 · djmeaker@gmail.com

September 15, 2015

Are You Now, or Have You Ever Been, A Member of the Christian Church?

“Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name... Matthew 6:9 NRSV

“Are you now, or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party?” Those words struck terror into the hearts of Americans during the 1950s as the Committee on Un-American Activities held their hearings. They were, on the surface, searching for people who intended harm to the United States; people who sought the violent overthrow of the United States Government. And, in fact, they discovered some such conspiracies. When all was said and done they almost certainly did more harm than good. They destroyed many lives of decent people through innuendo and baseless accusations.

What you may not have considered before is that Senator McCarthy and his fellows could just as well have asked this question. “Are you now, or have you ever been, a member of the so called Christian Church?” For you see, we Christians ask for the start of a new world order every time we pray the Lord’s Prayer.

Few prayers or litanies are more familiar to Christians than the Lord’s Prayer. I’ve been with Alzheimer patients who couldn’t remember their children’s names, but who recognized and joined in with the familiar rhythms of the Lord’s Prayer. But, have you ever really listened to what you are praying?

The first thing you should notice about this prayer is that it’s about all of us. Nowhere does it use the word MY, or ME or I. It’s Our Father...

Give Us
Forgive Us
Save Us

Christ is telling us that, when you go to pray, remember that God is the God of all creation and pray accordingly.

“Our Father who art in heaven,”

We pray to our Father in Heaven. In the first century, Father was a term that could be used to refer to the emperor. Good Roman citizens prayed to the living “God,” Caesar, who was also called Father. By starting the prayer this way, Jesus makes it clear that this prayer was to the one true God.

“hallowed be Your name.”

Names have power in scripture. In scripture, praising the name is the same as praising the person. Names often describe something about the individual: Jacob, the heel grabber, Abraham, Ancestor of the multitudes, Bar Abbas, Son of the Father.

The most powerful name in scripture is that of God. The Jews wouldn’t even write it out. The word we often translate as Lord or Jehovah is, in Hebrew, an unpronounceable string of letters. We start out this prayer by expressing our hope that God’s name will be revered. It is our prayer that God will be revered in all creation.

“Thy kingdom come. They will be done.”

Here is the part that the Un-American activities committee might have objected to. We ask that God’s Kingdom rule here on earth. We are already members of that Kingdom and we ask that all creation be made part of that Kingdom of God.

In the movie the Longest Day, two Generals, one German, one American, both make the same statement when things aren’t going their way. “Sometimes, I wonder whose side God is on.” That’s us. We want God to be on our side in our conflicts, large and small. We haven’t really taken to heart that God is on the side of humanity.

God did not intend to establish a new, Holy Nation on Earth. That was part of the problem many Jews had with Jesus. They wanted Jesus to be a General. To ride a white horse and lead men in battle. To throw the Romans out and establish a new nation of the type that David ruled. Instead, Jesus came to establish God’s Kingdom. A Kingdom for all the earth. As Christians we are called to seek what God would want us to do. We are called to live as God would have us live. That commandment can put us in conflict with secular society. God’s agenda might not be an American agenda. God is not just the God of the United States. It is arrogance to assume that we are always on the side of God. God’s Kingdom seeks what is best for creation, for the world, for all God’s people.

More significantly, the prayer is not a prayer that we be given the power to forge that Kingdom for God. We are not called to be soldiers for Christianity, despite some old hymns to the contrary. We are not praying for the death of “God’s foes.” We are not called to impose God’s Kingdom on the country or the world. We pray that God’s Kingdom be established by God’s will. Not by our will.

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

Give us, all people that which we need to get along today. The prayer for “our daily bread” includes all we need to get along, including food, shelter, clothing, food for the spirit. All we have are blessings from the hand of God. Those blessings come from God through many avenues, including the ability to work for these things ourselves and to share what we have received with others. God confers those blessings on others through our sharing of blessings. Our prayer then is a prayer that we will have each day what we need to live, and that God help us see where others need our help in receiving the blessings God has shared with us.

“Forgive us our trespasses ...”

All have sinned. All have fallen short. To paraphrase Paul, *We do those things we shouldn't do. We don't do those things we should do. Why? We don't know. We just give in to the sin. Romans 7:15-20.* All have sinned. We need to remind ourselves of that every day. We need God's forgiveness.

"... as we forgive ..."

We must be willing to forgive as well. That is hard for us. Like a kid clutching our favorite toy, we hold onto our anger. When we've been hurt, we want to hurt back. "Don't get mad, get even" is the saying you most often hear. When we pray the Lord's Prayer we promise God we will forgive, and we also pray for the help of God to forgive. God helps us by making us realize that forgiving someone is something we do for ourselves, not for them. We let go of the anger that is eating at our lives, distorting our view of the world. Forgiveness is a gift we give to ourselves. Forgive us God, as we forgive. Forgive us God and help us forgive.

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

We pray to God for help walking the path of Discipleship. Lord, keep us away from those things that tempt us to go against your will. We might be praying for help staying away from people who tend to lead us into places we don't need to be. We might be praying for help fighting off the demons that possess our lives, things like materialism, prejudice, hate, drugs, and alcohol. We ask God's help in keeping us away from those things that can lead us away from God.

"Deliver us from evil."

There are many evils that can harm us; Illness, Accident, Anger, Prejudice, Violence. We ask God to deliver us from all those things that can harm us, to deliver all people from those things.

"For thine is the Kingdom and the power and the Glory, forever."

The prayer, as we most often share it, closes with a benediction affirming that God's Kingdom is the only kingdom we recognize; that God is the only power and that God's Glory is the only true Glory we see. If only that were true. God's is not the only Kingdom we recognize. We recognize and walk in many kingdoms every day. The kingdoms of our native lands, the kingdoms of our culture, even, God help us, the kingdoms created by our prejudices and hate.

We not only recognize other powers, but we seek power for ourselves. We seek glory for ourselves. The prayer invites us to consider that God's is the Kingdom we are called to walk in. That God's power is the true power and that the only true Glory belongs to God.

The next time you recite the Lord's Prayer, allow the meaning of its words to fill your mind. Realize that when you pray this prayer, you pray with all Christians the world over for the whole of creation. More than that, you pray with all the saints; all those who have gone before and all who will come after us. Jesus says these are all the words we truly need.

Charge Conference

It's that time of the year again. For those of you new to the United Methodist Church, a 'Charge' is a Church or group of Churches under the leadership of an appointed pastor. All members of a Charge are responsible for its governance. To appreciate how deeply the concept touches Methodist polity and practice, turn to UMH 413, *A Charge to Keep I Have*. This hymn was written by Charles Wesley in 1762. The Charge Conference, made up of the pastor, lay leadership and members, is to meet at least once a year in a meeting

chaired by the District Superintendent. It is at this meeting that the Pastor's compensation is set and the leadership for the coming year is approved.

In years past the District Superintendent has come to each Charge to hold this conference. This year the Columbia District will be meeting in clusters. Our cluster is made up of ten Charges. There will be separate sessions for each Church and a joint worship service for all the churches in the cluster. The cluster that includes Trinity will meet at Epworth UMC on October 4th. Our business meeting is scheduled from 5:15 to 5:30. There will be a joint worship service from 4:00 to 5:00. I encourage everyone who is available to attend the worship service and the separate business meeting.

Thursday Morning Bible Study

We have begun our Thursday morning Bible Study on Thursday mornings between 10:00 and 11:30. 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 have begun a study of the Gospel of Mark.

The Poverty and Justice Bible

⁷ The LORD showed me a vision of himself standing beside a wall and holding a string with a weight tied to the end of it. The string and weight had been used to measure the straightness of the wall. ⁸ Then he asked,

“Amos, what do you see?”

“A measuring line,” I answered.

The LORD said, “I’m using this measuring line to show that my people Israel don’t measure up, and I won’t forgive them any more. ⁹ Their sacred places will be destroyed, and I will send war against the nation of King Jeroboam.” Amos 7:7 CEV

Building metaphors are used several places in scripture to speak of our faith lives. This reference may be one of the most striking. Amos sees the faithfulness of the people of Israel being measured by God just as a brick mason might check a wall that he built. The “plumb line” shows how far the people have strayed from the law that calls for them to be concerned about the welfare of all the people.

²⁴ Anyone who hears and obeys these teachings of mine is like a wise person who built a house on solid rock. ²⁵ Rain poured down, rivers flooded, and winds beat against that house. But it did not fall, because it was built on solid rock.

²⁶ Anyone who hears my teachings and doesn’t obey them is like a foolish person who built a house on sand. ²⁷ The rain poured down, the rivers flooded, and the winds blew and beat against that house. Finally, it fell with a crash. Matthew 7:24-27 CEV

Jesus uses a similar metaphor when speaking of our faith lives. If we base our lives on the teachings of the Law and the Prophets as Jesus instructed, then our lives will be as solid as a house built on bedrock. If not, our lives will be as fragile as a house built on sand.

=====

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

September 20th: Sermon: Greatest At Being Last. What parent would want their child to confide that the child's ambition was to be the greatest at being last? Yet, that seems to be exactly what Christ is calling for from his Disciples. My texts are James 3:13-4:3, 4:7-8a and Mark 9:30-37.

September 26th: Sermon: A Very Disturbing Scripture. A scripture that seems to call for the self-mutilation and dismemberment is very disturbing. What can it mean? My texts are James 5:13-20 and Mark 9:38-50.

Worship Leader's Schedule

September 20

Rachel Newman, **Liturgist**

Mike & Elaine Rohrig, **Greeters**

Sam Richardson & Tommy Cotton, **Ushers**

September 27

Jason Aldred, **Liturgist**

Linda Robinson & Pat Moran, **Greeters**

Donnie & Renita Hartsock, **Ushers**

Announcements

The "**Nanette Crowell Companions in Christ**" Sunday School class is studying, "**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.

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

September Birthdays

Elva Beard, Joann Harper, Jessica Bauguess, Wanda Folds, G.L. Jones, Bill LeCates

Happy Birthday to each of you!