



Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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Understanding the New Testament The Gospels: The Gospel Accounts of the Last Days of Christ and the “Secret Gospels.”

*⁹ The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,
“Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!” Matthew 21:9*

⁵⁹ Then about an hour later still another kept insisting, “Surely this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean.” ⁶⁰ But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about!” At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. ⁶¹ The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times.” ⁶² And he went out and wept bitterly. Luke 22:59-62

⁷ Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. ⁸ So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. ⁹ Then he answered them, “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” ¹⁰ For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. ¹¹ But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Mark 15:7-11 NRSV

³⁸ After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. John 19:38-39

Over recent weeks we have been comparing the Gospel accounts with one another. There are significant differences among the Gospels with regard to some events but the accounts of Jesus’ last days are very similar. All the accounts state that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of either a donkey or a colt (Matthew, in a somewhat silly error, says he rode both at once.) All accounts describe the people leading Jesus and spreading branches in front of him while proclaiming Hosanna. “Hosanna” is the translation of a Hebrew expression meaning “Save, we pray.” All accounts state that the crowd considered him a King and Mark and Matthew declared him a King in the line of David.

Matthew, Mark and Luke state that Jesus ‘cleansed’ the temple by expelling the moneylenders and merchants shortly after his entry. Interestingly, John places this event at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. In all four Gospels Jesus then spends some time teaching in the Temple.

Matthew, Mark and Luke all have accounts of the institution of the Lord’s Supper. These accounts are very similar to the teaching that Paul states he received when he was being taught the essentials of the faith. See 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. John describes the Disciples coming together for a Passover meal but instead of the institution of the Lord’s Supper John describes the washing of the feet of the Disciples. However, the Gospel of John contains references to the theology of the Lord’s Supper. For example:

“... but it is my Father who gives you the **true bread** from heaven. ³³ For **the bread of God** is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” ³⁴ They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

³⁵ Jesus said to them, “**I am the bread of life**. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. John 6:32-37 NRSV.

⁵³ So Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, **unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood**, you have no life in you. ⁵⁴ **Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life**, and I will raise them up on the last day; ⁵⁵ for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. ⁵⁶ **Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.** ⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸ This is the **bread that came down from heaven**, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. **But the one who eats this bread will live forever.**” ⁵⁹ He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. John 6:52-59 (NRSV)

All of the Gospel accounts state that Jesus told his Disciples that one of them would betray him and all the accounts describe the prediction that Peter would deny him.

Matthew Mark and Luke state that Jesus went from the meal to the Mount of Olives with his disciples to pray. They also state that Jesus prayed to be spared. In John, Jesus spends several chapters teaching his disciples before going to the Mount of Olives. Also, consistent with the theology expressed in John, Jesus does not ask to be spared from crucifixion.

In all the Gospels Judas arrives with the contingent to arrest Jesus. In Matthew, Mark and Luke Judas identifies Jesus to the others with a kiss.

All the Gospels describe Jesus being taken before the High Priest or the High Priest and the Council. They also agree that he was then sent to Pilate. Also all the Gospels agree that Peter denied knowing Jesus three times after his arrest. Luke states that Pilate also sent Jesus to Herod to be judged but that Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate. All the Gospels indicate that Pilate offered to free Jesus but that the crowd instead demanded that Barabbas (literally, “son of the father”) be freed instead. All the Gospels indicate that Jesus was flogged and then given over to be crucified.

All the Gospels agree that Jesus was crucified with two other men and Mark, Luke and John state that there was a sign over Jesus’ head declaring him the King of the Jews. All of the Gospels agree that Jesus’ body was taken away by Joseph of Arimathea.

All the Gospels agree that it was the women, and specifically Mary Magdalene, who came to the tomb on the third day. After that the accounts vary widely in the different resurrection accounts, each placing emphasis on different events.

Before leaving a discussion of the Gospels it is appropriate to mention the so-called “Secret Gospels.” Most often you will see these referenced while you are buying groceries. One of the tabloids for sale at the check-out aisle will declare that included within its pages are the Gospels “hidden away for centuries by the Church. The Gospels the Church does not want you to see!” In point of the fact these Gospels are hidden. One of the clever hiding places the Church has chosen is a book, available on Amazon, called “The Complete Gospels,” edited by Robert J. Miller. In it you will find the canonical Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. You will also find around fifteen additional “Gospels,” some only fragments. All purport to describe Jesus and his teachings and most were written hundreds of years after his death. Most are also from the Gnostic tradition. As mentioned previously, the Gnostic tradition held that flesh was evil and the Spirit was good. The goal of salvation for the Gnostics was to escape the flesh and become a being of pure spirit. The Gnostics claimed to have the secret knowledge, *Gnosis*, to make this possible. The Gnostics denied the incarnation because it was unthinkable to them that God would choose to become flesh. They held that Jesus only seemed to be a human but was actually a spirit.

If you are interested I encourage you to read these Gospels but be prepared for some bizarre stories. In the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, for instance, Jesus is portrayed as the toddler from Hell indiscriminately killing those around him when they annoy him. In general, the Gnostic Gospels provide a picture of Jesus that is focused upon turning away from involvement in the world. As we shall see, the remainder of Christian scriptures focuses the church on spreading the Gospels in the world.

The Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant

Try not to panic, parents, but Christmas is fast approaching. And so is the next iteration of the Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant.

Every Church Christmas pageant shares these characteristics: there is a rush of preparation over three to four weeks, high levels of anxiety to get the performance organized, the effort to get young children to learn a few lines of dialogue and deliver them on cue and the effort to put the performance on with a minimum of mistakes. There is one more characteristic of Church Christmas Pageants. Despite the best efforts of the organizers the result is a somewhat chaotic presentation of the Christmas Story. However, no one really minds that because their children are part of that chaotic presentation.

The Unrehearsed Christmas pageant also produces a somewhat chaotic presentation of the Christmas story but it substitutes a lot of fun for the anxiety and stress usually accompanying a pageant. Instead of weeks of preparation, everyone arrives the night of the performance. They select a costume as a shepherd or sheep, a star or an angel, a wise person, a cow, a donkey, or an innkeeper and spouse. A narrator reads the Christmas story while the costumed participants act out this old and wonderful story. Christmas songs are sung and the story is retold to a new generation. ‘Kids’ of all ages are invited to get dressed and participate. Refreshments are then shared in the fellowship hall.

The **Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant and Chili Supper** will be held **Sunday, December 11th at 4:00 PM** at Trinity United Methodist Church. Please come and be a part of this joyful event and bring a friend or two to join in the fun. A Chili Supper will follow in Fellowship Hall.

Chili Supper Participants

Do you have a recipe for Chili superior to all others? Of course you do! Now is the time to prove it. As noted above, immediately following the Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant we have once again have a Chili

Supper. We will need a lot of chili. Please let the Church know that you plan on bringing some chili and then be here, pot in hand, for the Chili Supper immediately following the pageant.

Pray for the Divisions in Our Nation

The most divisive election in my memory and, I suspect, many of yours is now concluded. A great deal of anger has spilled out over this election and we have seen racism raise its head in our nation in ways not seen for many years. It's difficult to see how we can put this behind us and work for the welfare of all our people.

As people of faith we accept that there are powers in this world greater than our own. That, even when we fail to love one another and live in peace with one another, there is a power that can bring healing to our nation. For God, all things are possible. It is time to lift up President Trump and all those others who won their elections, as well as all those who remain in office, and ask God's help for them in knitting this nation together again. Unless we stop hating one another, unless we stop striking out at one another, we can never heal the rifts that divides us.

Children's Church/Nursery

Sunday School and Nursery care is available every Sunday during the Sunday school hour. Children from birth through the 6th grade are welcome. Children's Church and Nursery care are available for Children from birth through pre-k after the Children's Time in worship. We encourage parents to keep their children of Kindergarten age and up in the sanctuary during worship. It's important that our children experience the worship of the Church community from an early age.

Lesson plans are currently available that volunteers can use to lead Children's Church during worship. These lesson plans (almost 100 separate plans) do not require any preparation or pre-planning. Each lesson includes a short Bible Story to be read to the children as well as a corresponding craft project. All supplies for the crafts are on hand in the Nursery.

We need two volunteers each Sunday to provide Children's Church during worship. With enough volunteers it shouldn't be necessary for any adult to miss worship more than one Sunday every two months. If you would be willing to volunteer to help with the Children's Church ministry please see Jeanne Rybolt, Julia Moore, Dawn Stevens or Dana Bauguess to learn more.

Preacher, What Does the Bible Say about ...?

From the time I came to Trinity I have stated on numerous occasions that I am willing to consider a sermon, or sermon series, on any subject that is of concern. If there is a subject upon which you would like me to preach I will consider it. If I do not think it appropriate for a sermon I will explain why. It might also be appropriate to address some issues as part of a Newsletter article or series or as part of the Sunday School curriculum. But, if at all possible, I will seek to speak to these issues that are of interest on Sunday morning. One purpose of worship is to contemplate our relationship with God and if something is bothering you it is likely bothering others as well.

Thursday Morning Bible Study

The Thursday Morning Bible Study Group meets weekly on Thursdays from 10:00 to 11:30 AM. This week we will continue a study of the Book of Revelation.

Prayer Ministry

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

Elva Beard	Rachel Newman	Sam Richardson
Larry Eastwood	Kenneth Stevens	Judy Richardson
Leslie Eastwood	Patricia Stevens	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 20th: Sermon: Do We Know What We Are doing Yet? From the cross Christ asked for forgiveness on our behalf. ³⁴ *Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."* Luke 23:24 NRSV Have we worked it out yet? My texts are Jeremiah 23:1–6 and Luke 23:33–43.

November 27th: The Day and the Hour. Advent begins today. The First Sunday in Advent scriptures all deal with the end of time. When will it arrive? What will it be like? No one knows. Christians are called to live each day as if the end of time might arrive... now. My texts are Isaiah 2:1–5 and Matthew 24:36–44.

Worship Leaders

November 20

Rachel Newman, **Liturgist**

Ken and Jan Strait, **Greeters**

Mike and Elaine Rohrig, **Ushers**

November 27

Jason Aldred, **Liturgist**

Mike and Renee Fetting, **Greeters**

Ken and Jan Strait, **Ushers**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GraceWorks has a shortage on many items in our food pantry, and we need your help restocking it! Here is a list of some very critical items needed in our food pantry: **Critical Needs:** Canned green vegetables (not green beans), Canned beans, Canned meat (not tuna), Cereal, Hamburger Helper type boxed meals, Soup. Please support this important ministry with your regular donations. The box is located beside the side door.

Bishop Paul Mbithi, who, with his wife, are leaders of an African mission for children. He will be visiting our church **November 13** and will speak during the Sunday School hour. All members are encouraged to attend this special time. Our church has been supporting this mission for the past several years. Love offerings will be greatly appreciated.

Hosts and Hostesses for First Sunday Lunch: Please see the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. Please add your name to host this occasion for the coming months.

The Nanette Crowell Companions in Christ Sunday School Class is both learning and enjoying a series of videos, narrated by Ray Vanderlann. The videos as well as the narration take place in ancient lands described in the Old Testament. We enjoy discussion about what we are learning and the application of the lessons to our lives. We enjoy fellowship beginning at 9:45 with our study beginning at 10:00. All are welcome to join us as we pursue Biblical truths and the application for our lives.

Birthdays in November

Cheryl Wilson, Greg Locke, Betty Haynes, Ken Strait, Brooks Crowell, Ross Crutcher

Happy Birthday to each of you!