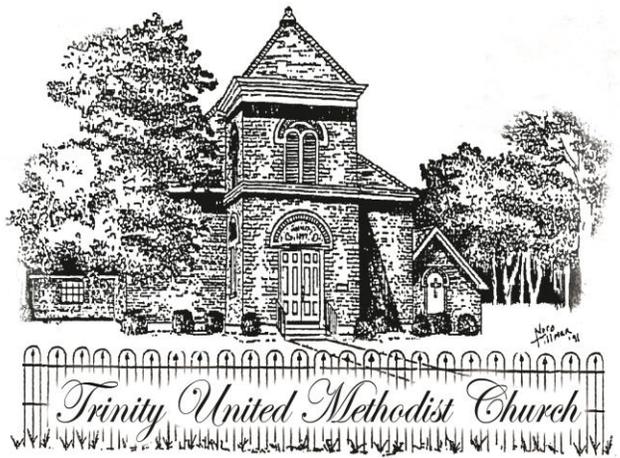




# Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter

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## What In the World is General Conference?

<sup>20</sup> *For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.* Matthew 18:20 NRSV

<sup>18</sup> *For, to begin with, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you; and to some extent I believe it. <sup>19</sup> Indeed, there have to be factions among you, for only so will it become clear who among you are genuine.* 1 Corinthians 11:18-19. NRSV

“You might be United Methodist if you know what ‘Quadrennium’ means (Microsoft is obviously not United Methodist since Quadrennium is not recognized as a word in its dictionary). A Quadrennium is the four year period between General Conferences in the United Methodist Church. The next General Conference of the United Methodist Church will take place in Portland, Oregon from May 10th thru 20th.

The primary business of the General Conference is to consider and pass the legislation that makes up the Discipline of the United Methodist Church. As pointed out in the Episcopal Greeting from the Council of Bishops that introduces every Discipline, the Discipline “*is the most current statement of how United Methodists agree to live their lives together.*” The United Methodist Church is a connectional Church meaning that all the various churches in the connection agree to govern themselves according to the same set of rules. The General Conference is made up of clergy and lay delegates from every Annual Conference in the world.

Conferencing is a part of the Methodist tradition. The Methodist Movement started as a movement within the Church of England in the 1740s. Methodist Societies, under the leadership of the Rev. John Wesley and others, sprang up through-out England. Many Methodist pastors were not ordained clergy. John Wesley trained lay persons to preach and appointed them to “ride circuits” containing several Methodist societies. As the organization grew Wesley found it necessary to bring his pastors together on a yearly basis to discuss what they would preach and teach. These gatherings were called Conferences.

Following the Revolution it was no longer feasible for the Methodists in America to remain as part of the Church of England. The Church of England in the United States became, over time, the Episcopal Church. However, Wesley appointed Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury as Bishops for the new Methodist Episcopal Church in America. The first Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was in December of 1784. Although it suffered turmoil and schism during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Methodist Church continued to grow and spread throughout the United States and the world. In 1968 the Methodist Church merged with the Evangelical United Brethren, a German based Wesleyan movement, to form the United

Methodist Church. The United Methodist Church has a Constitution and “laws” that are contained in the Discipline. It also has a Judicial Council that functions in much the same way as the Supreme Court by making constitutional rulings and interpreting the Discipline. The General Conference is made up of equal numbers of Clergy and Lay delegates.

The Annual Conference is the basic governing unit within the United Methodist Church, roughly analogous to a State within the United States. The United Methodist Church is international in scope with Annual Conferences in every part of the world. Trinity United Methodist Church is part of the Tennessee Annual Conference that covers middle Tennessee. Every Annual conference has a Bishop. Tennessee shares a Bishop with the Memphis Annual Conference that covers West Tennessee and parts of Southern Kentucky. Our Bishop is Bishop William McAlilly. The Tennessee and Memphis Conferences are known as the Nashville Episcopal Area.

Annual Conferences are also organized into Jurisdictions; geographic areas containing numerous Annual conferences. Jurisdictions are responsible for electing Bishops. Bishops are elected for life but generally serve only 8 to 12 years before retiring. Even though ‘retired,’ most Bishops continue to serve the Church in other capacities. The Tennessee Conference is part of the Southeastern Jurisdiction. The Jurisdictional Conference will meet late this summer to elect Bishops to fill vacancies in the Annual Conferences that make up the Southeastern Jurisdiction and to reappoint Bishops. It is expected that Bishop McAlilly will be reappointed to the Nashville Episcopal Area.

The proceedings of the General conference will be streamed live on the internet. The link for that stream is <http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/general-conference-2016-live-video-stream-english> . The General Council site also describes the legislation being considered. <http://www.umc.org/topics/general-conference-2016>.

Please be in prayer over the next month for our church. As with this nation, there are many disputes within the church right now. This Conference is liable to be the most contentious that the Church has seen since the period of the Civil Rights Era.

## **Rev. Meaker is Re-Appointed as Pastor of Trinity United Methodist Church**

As noted above, Wesley appointed his pastors to serve circuits of several societies. Each year he would move his pastors around. So began the practice of Itinerancy in the United Methodist Church. Pastors are appointed by the Bishop, with the advice of his Cabinet, a year at a time. The reality of life as a United Methodist pastor is that, in the Winter and Spring of each year, the pastor waits to see where he will be appointed for the next Conference year (July to June). I have been fortunate in that I have had longer pastorates than many of my colleagues. I served my first appointment, a four church Charge in Maury County, for three years. I was then at West Nashville UMC for nine years and in July I will begin my seventh year here at Trinity UMC. In contrast, a classmate of mine has served in eight separate appointments over the same period.

The Staff Parish Relations Committee asked that I be reappointed and Jeanne and I asked that I be reappointed. I am very pleased to remain as your pastor. It is an exciting time to be here at Trinity as we continue to grow in size and ministry here in Eastern Williamson County.

## Thursday Morning Bible Study

Our Thursday morning Bible Study meets 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 are studying the Gospel of John.

### 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		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

**April 17<sup>th</sup>: Sermon: The Lord Is My Shepherd.** We don't run into many shepherds. What does this mean? My texts are John 10:22–30 and Psalm 23.

**April 24<sup>th</sup>: Sermon: What God Has made is Not Profane.** This is a text for 21<sup>st</sup> Century America. We Christians need to remind ourselves that what God has made, that is everything we can perceive, is not profane. My texts are Revelation 21:1–6 and Acts 11:1–18.

## Worship Leader's Schedule

### April 17

Linda Robinson, **Liturgist**

Mike and Renee Fetting, **Greeters**

Ken & Jan Strait, **Ushers**

### April 24

Jason Aldred, **Liturgist**

Maurice and Joyce Edwards, **Greeters**

Sam and Judy Richardson, **Ushers**

## Announcements

**Church Carpet:** A committee is being formed to initiate a process for replacing the sanctuary carpet. Cheryl Wilson has volunteered to lead this committee. The Administrative Council has determined that any member wishing to serve on the Committee may do so. If you have an interest in being a part of this process, please make Cheryl aware.

### Children's Ministries

Our church is in a period of discernment with respect to our children's ministries. The Nelsons gave us such a fantastic gift in honor of our beloved Nanette. Please continue to pray for us as we determine how best to use it in her honor and to continue Trinity's legacy of "Living as, and leading others to become, Disciples of Jesus Christ."

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 April

**Betty Whitefield, Mary Coleman, Jo Oliphant, Jason Aldred, Houson Hartsock**

**Happy Birthday to each of you!**