



# Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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

---

January 6, 2016

## “...but, I Am Baptized.”

*<sup>9</sup> In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Mark 1:6 NRSV*

It is said that Martin Luther, the great reformer, took great comfort in his baptism. It is said that, when things were at their worst, he would tell himself, “But I am Baptized.” Rev. Lawrence Stooky taught the sacraments at Wesleyan Seminary in Washington DC for decades. When he saw students caught in the rain on their way to class he would shout out, “Remember your baptism, and be thankful.”

This Sunday we celebrate the Baptism of Christ with a reaffirmation of our own Baptismal vows. What does it mean to be among the baptized? What does it mean to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior? Scripture offers us many images to understand baptism. Consider these:

Isaiah 42 describes what God means to do through the Messiah; how God plans to change the world. The poetry of these texts can put us off because it describes the person known as the “suffering servant.” Who, after all, wants to be the suffering servant? Still, they are important to understand the meaning of baptism.

*<sup>1</sup> Here is my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen, in whom my soul delights; Isaiah 42:1 NRSV*

We start here. God said of Jesus at his baptism, “*You are my son, the beloved, with you I am well pleased.*” Mark 1:11. Christians understand Isaiah as referring to Jesus. But, it also refers to the people of Israel, and it also refers to the Church; the body of Christ. At our baptisms, we celebrate that God has chosen us and that God delights in us. That God adopts us as part of God’s family. In Baptism, we claim that God has claimed us just as He claimed Jesus. But, as we will see, being Chosen carries responsibilities.

*I have put my spirit upon him; Isaiah 42:1*

At Jesus’ baptism, the spirit descended on Jesus. We profess that, at our baptism, God is at work in our lives. Baptism doesn’t confer the spirit but it is a celebration of God’s spirit work in our lives. God’s spirit is everywhere at all times. To be among the baptized is to celebrate that God’s Spirit is at work in your life. To acknowledge that God has a say in your life.

*he will bring forth justice to the nations. Isaiah 42:1*

YBaptism and justice. You don't often hear those words together but they belong together. The servant of God, the Church, will bring forth Justice to the nations. People often speak of baptism in terms of being born again. And that is, indeed, one of the meanings of Baptism that we celebrate; our rebirth as members of the Body of Christ. But you rarely hear Baptism described as imposing a responsibility to stand up for justice. Yet one part of our Baptismal vows is to resist injustice and oppression in this world.

*He will not cry or lift up his voice,  
or make it heard in the street; Isaiah 42:2*

This passage can be a little confusing. After all, aren't we to make ourselves heard? Yes. But what we do isn't just for show. In his translation, *The Message*, Eugene Peterson translates the verse this way:

*"<sup>2</sup>He won't call attention to what he does with loud speeches or gaudy parades."*

In other words, the servants of God, the Baptized of God, live their faith. People "hear" the Gospel through what they see the Church do. As the old saying goes, talk is cheap. We are called to walk the walk, not just talk the talk. Our lives are to proclaim the Gospel, not just our mouths.

*a bruised reed he will not break,  
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; Isaiah 42:3a*

A bruised reed? A candle wick? Remember, this is poetry. These are images that represent other things. A bruised reed? Something easily broken, like a person who has been beaten down. A dimly burning candle wick? The weak and powerless. Someone with little or no faith. The baptized will not hurt the weak and broken. The baptized will not smother the hope or faith of others.

*he will faithfully bring forth justice.  
<sup>4</sup> He will not grow faint or be crushed  
until he has established justice in the earth;  
and the coastlands wait for his teaching. Isaiah 42:3b -4.*

We won't give up seeking justice in the world, no matter what. Is it hard to speak about justice in the world today as we deal with terrorism? As we deal with crime? Yes. Is it hard to stand up for justice when so many, including people in positions of leadership, are crying out for revenge? Yes. Nevertheless, if you are among the baptized, the born again of this world, Justice is supposed to be central to your life; to your beliefs.

Is that being political? Yes and no. Mostly, it's being Christian. Too often we turn our faith into something that is just about us feeling good; or about us feeling spiritual. Yet Christ calls us to much more. If you read scripture, you will find that well over 90% of it deals with how we live our lives in this world. The bible talks about our relationship to God by focusing on how we relate to the world around us and by focusing on how we use the Blessings we have received from God. Comparatively very little of the bible speaks of what will happen when we die; and even less speaks of what happens at the end of time. Moreover, even the little that speaks of the end of time does so as a call to be faithful in our discipleship today!

And, in case you have any doubts, who gives us this commission? Look at the remaining verses of this chapter:

<sup>5</sup> *Thus says God, the LORD,  
who created the heavens and stretched them out,  
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,  
who gives breath to the people upon it  
and spirit to those who walk in it:*

In many Christian traditions, and in the minds of many Christians, Baptism is very personal and mostly about personal commitment. But understand that the full meaning of Baptism is that we are answering the call of God; committing ourselves to the purposes of God.

During worship this Sunday you will be invited to remember your baptism. To celebrate God's claim on your life. The claim that makes you part of the Body of Christ. Understand what that claim is. The Church is to be a light to the nations. You are to be a light to the nations. You are to stand with the weak and helpless. Stand up for those who are oppressed. You are to say that above all God calls the people of the world, including our own nation, to act with justice. Look closely at the words of your baptismal vows. That is what we are. That is who we are as we proclaim that Jesus Christ is our Lord.

## **Administrative Council Meeting on January 10<sup>th</sup>**

There will be a brief Administrative Council meeting immediately following worship on January 10<sup>th</sup> to approve the budget for 2016.

## **January 24<sup>th</sup> Ebenezer Dinner**

In the Old Testament an Ebenezer is a monument to the work of God in our lives. Everyone is cordially invited to attend an Ebenezer Dinner on January 24<sup>th</sup>, at 5:00 PM to celebrate all that God has done, and is doing, at Trinity UMC. We will look in detail at our financial results for 2015 and will also look ahead to 2016 and beyond. The meal will be catered. There is no charge for the meal but it would be helpful to know how many of you will be able to come. Please let Dana Bauguess know if you will be able to attend.

## **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 Matthew and have begun a study of Luke.

## The Poverty and Justice Bible

*<sup>4</sup> Very old people with walking sticks will once again sit around in Jerusalem, <sup>5</sup> while boys and girls play in the streets. <sup>6</sup> This may seem impossible for my people who are left, but it isn't impossible for me, the LORD All-Powerful. <sup>7</sup> I will save those who were taken to lands in the east and the west, <sup>8</sup> and I will bring them to live in Jerusalem. They will be my people, and I will be their God, faithful to bring about justice.  
Zechariah 8:4-8 CEV*

What is God's covenant with humanity? It is found here in Zechariah as well in many other places in scripture. "I will be their God and they will be my people." God pledges faithfulness to humanity, even when humanity turns away from God. But, if we are to be the faithful people of God we must seek justice in the ways we live.

*<sup>31</sup> Don't worry and ask yourselves, "Will we have anything to eat? Will we have anything to drink? Will we have any clothes to wear?" <sup>32</sup> Only people who don't know God are always worrying about such things. Your Father in heaven knows that you need all of these. <sup>33</sup> But more than anything else, put God's work first and do what he wants. Then the other things will be yours as well. Mark 6:31-33 CEV*

Jesus assures the people that God is there. God has not abandoned them. They need to focus on being the people of God today and not worrying about what will happen tomorrow.

=====

***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](http://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		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

**January 10<sup>th</sup>: Sermon: Burning the Chaff.** Too often we think in terms of extremes. Something is all good or all bad. But, intellectually we know that we all are a mixture of positive and negative traits. There are things in our lives that need changing. Perhaps, there is chaff in our lives that needs to be burned away. My texts are Isaiah 43:1-7 and Luke 3:15-17, 21-22.

**January 17<sup>th</sup>: Sermon: A Life Remembered.** This will be a special service. We all knew and loved Nanette Noffsinger Crowell. But Nanette's life and ministry reached far beyond Trinity UMC. On January 17<sup>th</sup> Stephanie Nelson, a long-time friend of Nanette's, will offer her witness of what Nanette's life and ministry meant to her. She will also bring a special gift honoring Nanette. Our texts are Philippians 4:8-9 and 1 Corinthians 13.

## Worship Leader's Schedule

### January 10

Julia Moore, **Liturgist**

Betty & Herb Haynes, **Greeters**

Larry Eastwood & Sam Richardson, **Ushers**

### January 17

Rachel Newman, **Liturgist**

Tommy & Jo Cotton, **Greeters**

Maurice & Joyce Edwards, **Ushers**

## Announcements

**Give the gift of music and give to Trinity!** Mystisa Records has just announced the re-release of two of Brooks Crowell's previous albums, "**Christmas at Burke Hollow**" originally released in 2009 and "**Love Ye The Lord**" released in 2011. Digitally re-mastered to enhance the quality of the recordings, these CD's make a great inspirational gift. The CD's are available in Fellowship Hall for \$12 each and the proceeds for this re-release go to Trinity UMC general fund.

The **Nanette Crowell Companions in Christ Sunday School class** is beginning a new study this Sunday, January 10. We will be studying, **“Jesus: Understanding His Death and Resurrection.”** This is a study of Mark 14-16 which we will continue for six weeks. This study was created by Kay and David Arthur who are well known for founding “Precept Ministries.” Please consider being a part of this inspiring and interesting study. We enjoy fellowship as well as our Study. All are welcome to join us in Sunday School. Our fellowship begins at 9:45, the study begins at 10:00 AM.

The first rehearsal of **“This Man”** will take place **Sunday, January 24<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM.** As you know, this musical event was performed previously and was a breathtaking performance. Everyone with an interest in singing is cordially invited to be a part of this adventure. Hal and Rachel will be leading the musical which will be performed Palm Sunday.

### **Birthdays in January**

**Cherry Klein, Dawn Stevens, Dennis Meaker, Ensley Mason, Renee Fetting, Judy Richardson,  
Linda McGill, Jessica Moore, Laura Otto**

**Happy Birthday of each of you!**