



Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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

March 16, 2016

Wesleyan (United Methodist) Theology The Hymns of Charles Wesley

*¹ Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty firmament! ² Praise him for his mighty deeds;
praise him according to his surpassing greatness!*

*³ Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!⁴ Praise him with tambourine and dance;
praise him with strings and pipe!⁵ Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud clashing
cymbals! ⁶Let everything that breathes praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD! Psalm 150 NRSV*

John Wesley was the relentless evangelist of the Methodist movement, traveling through-out England, Scotland and Ireland. He trained preachers, proclaimed the Gospel in mining camps and in open fields and opened his arms to the poorest people in England who had, by and large, been ignored by the Anglican Church. He faced down mobs and dared to preach to and about Bishops, priests, mayors, members of parliament and the King. He had a very unhappy marriage with a wife who often joined forces with John Wesley's foes to condemn him. John Wesley had no children.

Charles Wesley, John's younger brother, was also a committed Methodist and suffered his fair share of attacks. In his early years he often travelled with his brother. Unlike John, Charles was happily married and, after 1753, traveled very little preferring to stay close to home. He had eight children. He did not always see eye to eye with his brother John and especially disagreed with John's decision to create the Methodist Episcopal Church in the newly formed United States.

Charles Wesley's principal legacy to the Methodist movement was hymns. He wrote hundreds of hymns praising God and also proclaiming Methodist theology. Fifty-one are included in the United Methodist Hymnal and two in The Faith We Sing. Charles Wesley's hymns are also sung in many other faith traditions. Among his best known are:

*O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing UMH 57
Christ The Lord Is Risen Today and UMH 302
Hark! The Herald Angel Sings. UMH 240*

Hymns are intended to be both prayers of praise and proclamation of our beliefs. Charles Wesley's hymns were important as teaching tools for people with little education and little experience in the church. For instance, a keystone of the Methodist Societies was Holy Living. The Methodist Societies believed that it was essential to spiritual growth to commit yourself to God in all that you do. At the beginning of each year the Methodists celebrated a Covenant Service where each member renewed his or her covenant to serve God in all that they did. Central to that commitment was the concept that God enabled Holy Living through God's Grace. Charles Wesley wrote *Come, Let Us use the Grace Divine* (UMH 606) to be sung at the yearly Covenant Service:

1. *Come, let us use the grace divine, and all with one accord, in a perpetual covenant join ourselves to Christ the Lord; give up ourselves, thru Jesus' power, his name to glorify; and promise, in this sacred hour, for God to live and die.*
2. *The covenant we this moment make be ever kept in mind; we will no more our God forsake, or cast these words behind. We never will throw off the fear of God who hears our vow; and if thou art well pleased to hear, come down and meet us now.*
3. *Thee, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, let all our hearts receive, present with thy celestial host the peaceful answer give; to each covenant the blood apply which takes our sins away, and register our names on high and keep us to that day!*

Holy Living was part of the process of "going onward to perfection" as discussed a few weeks ago. A hymn that emphasized that commitment was *A Charge to Keep I Have* (UMH 413):

1. *A charge to keep I have, a God to glorify, a never-dying soul to save, and fit it for the sky.*
2. *To serve the present age, my calling to fulfill; O may it all my powers engage to do my Master's will!*
3. *Arm me with jealous care, as in thy sight to live, and oh, thy servant, Lord, prepare a strict account to give!*
4. *Help me to watch and pray, and on thyself rely, assured, if I my trust betray, I shall forever die.*

Sacramental understanding has always been difficult in the Church. One of Charles Wesley's best known hymns outlining our basic sacramental beliefs is *Come Sinners to the Gospel Feast* (UMH 339):

1. *Come, sinners, to the gospel feast, let every soul be Jesus' guest. Ye need not one be left behind, for God hath bid all humankind.*
2. *Do not begin to make excuse; ah! do not you his grace refuse; your worldly cares and pleasures leave, and take what Jesus hath to give.*
3. *Come and partake the gospel feast, be saved from sin, in Jesus rest; O taste the goodness of our God, and eat his flesh and drink his blood.*
4. *See him set forth before your eyes; behold the bleeding sacrifice; his offered love make haste to embrace, and freely now be saved by grace.*
5. *Ye who believe his record true shall sup with him and he with you; come to the feast, be saved from sin, for Jesus waits to take you in.*

I've underlined some of the phrases that are particularly meaningful for me. In the Methodist tradition we emphasize an open table and proclaim that God's goal is the salvation of all humankind. We also believe in the "real presence" of Christ in the sacrament. As I say when we celebrate the Lord's Supper, "Christ is the Host of the feast and would turn no one away."

At that time, one of the on-going disputes between Catholics and Protestants and among the Protestant traditions was the manner that God's grace is conveyed in the sacrament of communion. The Anglicans and

Methodists, along with the Presbyterians, considered these disputes meaningless. It was a mystery. How can humans fully understand the working of God? Charles Wesley wrote *O the Depth of Love Divine* (UMH 627) to encourage the Methodists not to become involved in what he viewed were meaningless theological disputes and instead, embrace the mystery of God:

1. *O the depth of love divine, the unfathomable grace! **Who shall say** how bread and wine God into us conveys! How the bread his flesh imparts, how the wine transmits his blood, fills his faithful people's hearts with all the life of God!*

2. ***Let the wisest mortals show** how we the grace receive; feeble elements bestow a power not theirs to give. **Who explains the wondrous way,** how through these the virtue came? These the virtue did convey, yet still remain the same.*

3. *How can spirits heavenward rise, by earthly matter fed, drink herewith divine supplies and eat immortal bread? Ask the Father's wisdom how: Christ who did the means ordain; **angels round our altars bow to search it out, in vain.***

4. ***Sure and real is the grace, the manner be unknown;** only meet us in thy ways and perfect us in one. Let us taste the heavenly powers, Lord, we ask for nothing more. Thine to bless, 'tis only ours to wonder and adore.*

See also, *O Thou Who This Mysterious Bread* (UMH 613).

A final hymn that every Methodist should know is *And Are we yet Alive?* (UMH 553) Early in the Methodist movement Wesley began bringing his circuit riding pastors together once a year to discuss what should be preached and taught in the Church. This was called 'conferencing' by Wesley. But, the life of a Methodist circuit rider was too often short and brutal. Many died young, victims of accidents, violence from highway men and from disease. In the early years of the Methodist movement a number of Methodist pastors were killed by mobs who believed that the Methodist movement, with its emphasis on holy living and care for the poor, was too radical and would lead to religious unrest. Wesley recorded the following edict that came from the Justices of the Peace in and around Bristol, England:

Several disorderly persons, styling themselves Methodist Preachers, go about raising routs and riots, to the great damage of his Majesty's liege people and against our Sovereign Lord the King: [We command you] to make diligent search after the said Methodist preachers, and to bring him or them before some of us... to be examined concerning their unlawful doings. Heitzenrater, Wesley and the People Called Methodists (Abington Press, Nashville 1995) 133.

John Wesley was set upon by one such mob and was being dragged by his hair through a field when a mob of Methodists came to his rescue. Caught between the two mobs, Wesley later spoke of the hand of God keeping him from coming to harm despite the efforts of many to land deadly blows. Charles Wesley commented that John's short stature probably had more to do with avoiding harm than the hand of God. *And Are We Yet Alive?* was written to be sung when the Methodist pastors came together for Conference. These are the lyrics of *And Are We Yet Alive?*

1. *And are we yet alive, and see each other's face? Glory and thanks to Jesus give for his almighty grace!*

2. *Preserved by power divine to full salvation here, again in Jesus' praise we join, and in his sight appear.*

3. *What troubles have we seen, what mighty conflicts past, fightings without, and fears within, since we assembled last!*

4. *Yet out of all the Lord hath brought us by his love; and still he doth his help afford, and hides our life above.*

5. *Then let us make our boast of his redeeming power, which saves us to the uttermost, till we can sin no more.*

6. *Let us take up the cross till we the crown obtain, and gladly reckon all things loss so we may Jesus gain.*

This hymn is still sung at the opening of every United Methodist Annual Conference.

Keep an eye out for the hymns of Charles Wesley. They are often a part of our worship. Taken together, they provide a guide to Wesleyan Theology.

Holy Week Services

The last week of Lent is called Holy Week. It will begin on Palm Sunday as we commemorated Jesus' entry into Jerusalem when the crowds greeted Jesus by laying palm branches in his path.

On Thursday we will have a combined **Maundy Thursday and Tenebrae Service** at 7:00 PM. Maundy Thursday gets its name from the Latin phrase *mandatum novum* meaning 'New Commandment.' Jesus gave his Disciples a new commandment on that night as recorded in John 13:34-35:

³⁴ *I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.* ³⁵ *By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*"

Maundy Thursday also marks the institution of the Lord's Supper.

The Tenebrae Service is sometimes called a Service of Shadows. It is a meditation on the passion of Christ. Just before the service begins the church will be "stripped." The symbols of the faith will be removed (the Cross on the altar, the altar cloth, etc). The sanctuary will be lit by candles and the passion story will then be read as the candles are extinguished.

On **Good Friday** at noon we will hold a short service recalling the crucifixion. Scripture tells us that the crucifixion took place between noon and 3 o'clock. The Scripture will be read from the lectern instead of the pulpit. The pulpit represents the proclaimed Word of God and Good Friday is the day that we sought to remove the Word of God from the world. The church will remain open until 3:00 PM for those who wish to stop, meditate and pray.

Wesley's Advice on Voting

The English Parliamentary election in the Fall of 1773 was one of the most significant in British history. Among the candidates was the eminent Edmund Burke who was running in his first election and who would become one of the most famous legislators in British history. Another of the candidates was an American born Englishman named Henry Cruger. Among the issues being debated was how best to deal with the unrest in the American Colonies. Wesley told his Methodists to approach the exercise of their sovereign franchise thoughtfully and without rancor.

Thur. October 6, 1773.—I met those of our society who had votes in the ensuing election, and advised them (1) to vote, without fee or reward, for the person they judged most worthy; (2) to speak no evil of the person they voted against; and (3) to take care their spirits were not sharpened against those that voted on the other side.

Although not explicitly biblical advice, Wesley is speaking about how Christians should approach any duty and how they should deal with those with whom they disagree. It is advice that we should take seriously today, especially point (3).

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 have concluded our study of Mark and Matthew and have begun a study of Acts.

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

March 20th: Palm Sunday. It's our tradition to recall the events of Holy Week on Palm Sunday, beginning with the entry into Jerusalem and ending with the Crucifixion and burial of Christ. We cannot fully enter into Easter morning without first experiencing the Passion of Christ. Join us for this service of scripture, hymns, music and Holy Communion.

March 27th: Easter. Sermon: Whom Will You Follow? We are invited to follow Christ. But it is our choice. My texts are 1 Corinthians 15:19-26 and Luke 24:13-35.

Worship Leader's Schedule

March 20

Renita Hartsock, **Liturgist**

, **Greeters**

Mike & Renee Fetting, **Ushers**

March 27

Mike Fetting, **Liturgist**

Mike & Elaine Rohrig, **Greeters**

Jan & Stacy Bell, **Ushers**

Announcements

Upcoming activities for the children's ministry:

Easter Egg Hunt

This year's event will take place Saturday, March 26 at 10:00 AM. We'll have a few activities indoors as the children are gathering prior to releasing them to the hunt.

Needs: 1. Individually wrapped candies with which to stuff the eggs. (No chocolate please).
2. A bounce house.

Want to help?

1. Join the fun this Sunday, March 20 after church for fellowship and to stuff the eggs.
2. Come on Easter Egg Hunt day at 8:30 AM to do a little decorating and a little egg hiding.
3. Invite your friends, neighbors, relatives to join us for this great day.

Vacation Bible School

Dawn Stevens will be the leader for VBS this year. This promises to be an exciting and wonderful experience for the children. Dawn will need all of us to help in preparation for this great event.

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."

Easter Lilies: It is our tradition at TUMC to have beautiful Easter Lilies to adorn our sanctuary on Easter Sunday in honor of or in memory of our loved ones. Join us in helping make our sanctuary beautiful and reflect

the meaning of Easter. Order your lilies today! The order forms are located on the bookshelves in the hallway just outside Rev. Meaker's office. Please place your order form and check marked "Lilies" in the offering plate. The cost is **\$8.00** for each lily ordered. All orders must be in by **Palm Sunday, March 20th**.

The **Nanette Crowell Companions in Christ Sunday School class is currently studying**, "Fire On The Mountain" by Ray Vander Laan.

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 March

Pat Moran, Marty Bauguess, Tom Moore, Lilly Otto, Herb Haynes, Ava Fetting

Happy Birthday to each of you!