



# Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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

---

March 23, 2016

## Life Begins On Opening Day

*He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said.*

*Matt 28:6 NRSV*

In my last appointment, I pastored a woman who had ALS. Kathy had lived with ALS for 15 years which, for those of you who aren't familiar with the disease, is quite extraordinary. For the seven years I knew her, she was unable to move anything except to blink her eyes and move the fingers on one hand. Thanks to a computer interface, however, that was sufficient because she was able to use a version of Morse Code to operate a computer. She would compose long e-mails and articles, one laborious letter at a time. Kathy's son was three when she was diagnosed and she was determined to see him graduate high school. She missed that by around three months, but she lived long enough to die knowing that he would graduate and was about to set off to college as a young adult. Complications from ALS ended her life, but it would be wrong to say that she lost her battle. ALS never defeated her.

Kathy was an ardent baseball and Chicago Cubs fan and never failed to remind us, in the dead of winter, of the number of days until the beginning of the baseball season. She once sent me an e-mail with that information, noting that "Everyone knows life begins on Opening Day." Life begins on Opening day. That sentiment stood out for me. In fact, it seemed to me to summarize the core of Christian belief. Life begins on Opening Day.

The Gospel accounts are all clear on one fact. The tomb was empty. But each account is subtly different on how the followers came to learn of the empty tomb. While all agree that Mary Magdalene was there and a principle witness, none of the other accounts creates a scene to rival Matthew's. If the resurrection was planned in Hollywood this is how it would be staged. Lights, sound, drama.

There is an angel from God who pushes the rock sealing the tomb aside with such force that the ground shakes. It seemed like an earthquake. This angel is a stunning figure, immediately recognized as an angel. "His appearance was like lightening." I take that to mean that looking at the angel was like looking at continuous flashes of lightening. His clothing was as white as snow.

The ground is shaking, the lights are flashing, the angel is speaking. Lights, sound, drama. Matthew wants you to know that it's Opening Day, and the world will never be the same again.

In the drama of this moment, it's easy to overlook some of the other witnesses to the event. Guards had been posted to prevent anyone from stealing the body. These may have been temple guards or Roman soldiers. The text is unclear. Most likely they were temple guards. Their job was to keep Jesus' body in the tomb. They blew it. Matthew tells us that these guards became like dead men at the sight of the angel, falling to the ground. I can believe that, can't you? If I had been there I might have played like I was dead too. This is a pretty scary event.

See those guards in your mind's eye. Imagine what they felt, there on the ground, on Opening Day. You see, in a lot of ways, we have much in common with these guards. At times, it seems we try to keep Jesus locked away in our churches.

Let's be honest. Most of us are not in a hurry to see the world that Jesus Christ sees. We do not want to live in a world where the 'last' are first; in a world where we are expected to shoulder the problems of other people whom we will never see or know; in a world where we are called to love those who hate us. We are not in a hurry to live in the Kingdom that Christ proclaimed. Jesus Christ would turn OUR world upside down. Because we fear the world that Jesus would create, we act like those guards at the tomb. We want to keep Jesus securely locked away in our Church buildings. It's safe to come to Church and talk about Jesus, to read the stories, to sing the songs. No one in Church will question what we do and Jesus can't do much to change our lives if we keep him securely locked up in Church.

But, as Matthew would tell us, it's Opening Day. In fact, it's been Opening Day every day since that first Easter morning, 2000 years ago. Just when we think we have Jesus all locked up, he bursts forth. As we celebrate Easter this week, think about it as Opening Day, the start of something extraordinary. Christ is Risen. Christ is Risen Indeed.

## Holy Week Services

The last week of Lent is called Holy Week. It began 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:

*<sup>34</sup> I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. <sup>35</sup> 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 are currently in a study of the Book 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 27<sup>th</sup>: 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.

**April 3<sup>rd</sup>: Sermon: Peace, Purpose and Power.** The Risen Christ gave the Disciples three gifts: Peace, Purpose and Power. They are ours as well. My texts are Acts 5:27–32 and John 20:19–31.

## Worship Leader's Schedule

### March 27

Mike Fetting, **Liturgist**

Mike & Elaine Rohrig, **Greeters**

Jan & Stacy Bell, **Ushers**

### April 3

Linda Robinson, **Liturgist**

Maurice & Joyce Edwards, **Greeters**

Sam & Judy Richardson, **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.

#### Want to help?

1. Come on Easter Egg Hunt day at 8:30 AM to do a little decorating and a little egg hiding.
2. 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."

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!**