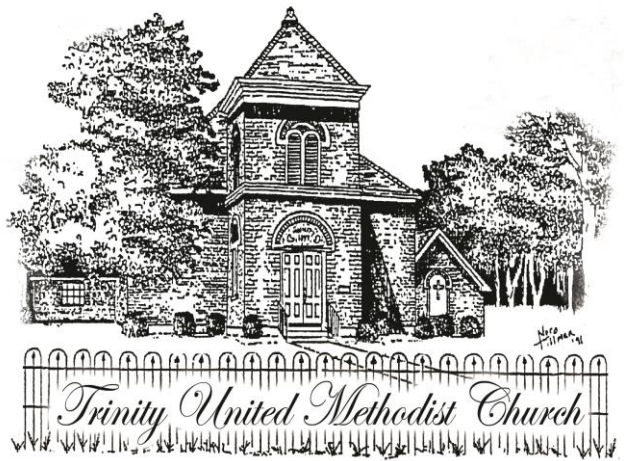




Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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Why Confess?

¹⁶ Therefore *confess* your sins to one another, and *pray* for one another, so that you may be healed.
James 5:16 NRSV

What we do in worship each week is intentional and has a purpose. The Prayer of Confession is an important element of worship for the reasons discussed later in this article. Last Sunday I stopped for a ‘teaching moment’ during worship. As we were about to begin the prayer of Confession I told of a recent experience I had in another Church where the Prayer of Confession actually didn’t confess much of anything. I wish I had remembered to keep the text but it was in a form that I have seen before in other Churches. It was probably written by the Liturgist or possibly by one of the staff. The ‘confession’ was along the lines of, “we’ve tried to be good Christians but we’ve made some mistakes. We’ll keep trying.” It didn’t actually tell God to ‘lighten up’ but that was sort of the subtext. There was no real disclosure of an admission to actual sin and no acknowledgment that we are dependent upon God to enable us to live as Disciples of Christ.

I almost always use the same Prayer of Confession during worship. If you look in the back of the Hymnal you’ll find four alternative Prayers of Confession that are similar. I have heard these prayers criticized as being too harsh or not really describing the lives of the congregants. However, these prayers serve an important purpose in worship. Here is the text of the prayer and liturgy we generally use:

CONFESSION AND PARDON

**Merciful God,
We confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have failed to be an obedient church.
We have not done your will,
We have broken your law,
We have rebelled against your love,
We have not loved our neighbors,
And we have not heard the cry of the needy.
Forgive us, we pray.
Free us for joyful obedience,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

All pray in silence.

Leader to people:

Hear the good news:

Christ died for us while we were yet sinners;

That proves God's love toward us.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

People to leader:

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

Leader and people:

Glory to God. Amen.

We'll consider the elements of this prayer and the declaration of pardon separately.

First of all, why confess? After all, God knows all about sins whether we say anything about them or not. The answer is found in the text from James above. Confession is necessary for healing. God knows about our sin but it's possible, or even likely, that we have not acknowledged our sin to ourselves. By confessing our sins aloud, and before one another, we must acknowledge that we are sinners. See also, Mark 1:5 where John required confession of sins prior to baptism.

We confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.

See Matthew 22:37-40. Whenever we have placed ourselves at the center of our lives instead of God, we have failed to love God with all our heart. I suggest that most of us fail to keep God at the center of our lives so this is a sin that must be acknowledged by all of us every week.

We have failed to be an obedient church.

The church is all the Christians now living. There are whole congregations that foster hate toward others and ignore the obligation to spread the Gospel. Even if we limit ourselves to just the United Methodist Church, we have that problem. So long as members of the church are refusing to follow the law and will of God then we have failed to be an obedient church on Earth.

We have not done your will,

We have broken your law,

What is God's will for us? Consider Micah 6:8

⁸ *He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God? NRSV*

Or breaking God's law? Just consider the Ten Commandments. Have you placed your trust in wealth, power or politics instead of God? Have you coveted what belongs to another? Have you lied, misused God's name or

failed to keep the Sabbath? Any of the Ten would be a basis for making this confession let alone numerous other passages from scripture.

**We have rebelled against your love,
We have not loved our neighbors,
And we have not heard the cry of the needy.**

Jesus says 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. ” NRSV

See also 1 Corinthians 13. Whenever we fail to show love for one another, real concern for each other's welfare, we are rebelling against God's love. Whenever we strike out at one another we are rebelling against the love of God. We also routinely fail to love and care for our neighbors and that failure often occurs with regard to those most in need.

**Forgive us, we pray.
Free us for joyful obedience,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Acknowledging our sin and our failure to live as Disciples of Christ, we ask for the forgiveness of God. We also acknowledge our need for God to enable us to live as Disciples of Christ. It is not something that we can do on our own as evidenced by our failures.

The forgiveness that we proclaim every week is the Gospel we are called to share with the world:

*Hear the good news:
Christ died for us while we were yet sinners;
That proves God's love toward us.
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!*

As I've pointed out before, this is not me purporting to grant forgiveness to you, the worshipers. It is a proclamation of the Gospel. Think of it as a newspaper banner headline: **IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN.** This is the Gospel, the Good News. It is God who forgives those sins we acknowledge. God has already done this through the sacrifice of Christ.

The purpose of worship is to remind ourselves that we are the Body of Christ and that we belong to God. It is also a declaration of our dependence upon God. The Prayer of Confession affirms that relationship each and every week.

New Disciple Bible Study

Disciple Bible Study is a powerful experience that can open the bible up for the participants. I would be willing to begin a new class this September if at least seven people desired to undertake the 34 week study. I could do this study on Monday or Tuesday nights between 7 and 9. If participants would prefer to meet on a

week day that could also be arranged. In years past I have also taught Disciple Bible Study between 7 and 9 AM Sunday mornings. If you are interested please contact me at the Church. If you desire additional information for yourself or to give to a friend I have some explanatory booklets available.

Note on the Administrative Council Meeting From Donnie Hartsock, Chairman

The ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL is a body that is made up of all our Church Members. Its function is to oversee the business and programs of the Church. We try to meet quarterly to discuss and review our status on the various issues under our charge. Sometimes, if an important issue needs immediate attention, we will meet briefly after services on Sunday. If you are a member of the Church, you are a member of the Administrative Council. On the bulletin board at the side entrance to the Church is a list that names the various Committees and those who currently serve on them.

On Saturday April 9th, the Administrative Council met in Fellowship Hall. What follows are not the official minutes of the meeting. They are simply some of the highlights taken from my notes which I pass on for your information.

- Meeting was called to order at 9am.
- Pastor Meaker opened meeting with a prayer.
- Last Meetings Minutes were reviewed and approved.
- Committee Reports:
- Finance- Chair Jason Aldred reported that our finances are in order. However, we recently moved our accounts to another bank where we expect to get much better service. Jason is also looking into insurance requirements regarding our playground. (Fence around playground will be installed soon, Men's Group will provide labor to install mulch after fence is in)

Trustees- Chair Sam Richardson reported that an exterminator had set a "Bug Bomb" in the ceiling of the sanctuary to combat the wasp community.

SANCTUARY CARPET- Last summer a Memorial Donation was made to Trinity on behalf of a former Member. Since those funds were not designated for a specific purpose, a family member may come forward with suggestions.

- Tommy Cotton is a cousin. He and Jo, on behalf of the family, would like to designate said funds for replacement of the carpet in the Sanctuary. Any leftover funds would be earmarked for replacement of our HVAC when that need arises.
- A VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE headed by Cheryl Wilson will be formed to investigate cost,color,installation etc. and report back to the Administrative Council with a bid for final vote and approval. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE ON THAT COMMITTEE contact Cheryl.

Staff Parish Relations- Chair Nancy Conway reported that her committee had been busy with the annual business of review and evaluation of our Pastor. She didn't let it slip here, but the next day during Church, she announced that the Conference had reassigned Dennis to Trinity for the coming year. There was much rejoicing!

Program Council- It was noted that the Chair of this committee is vacant. Dennis informed us that the Nominations Committee is to make that recommendation.

- Family Ministry- Renita Hartsock reported on the Adult and Kids Sunday School classes. The Adults are helping to fund meals at 61st Ave.
- Please continue to bring food items EVERY SUNDAY for Graceworks.
- VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL- Dawn Stevens has embraced the leadership for this summer! Mark your calendars for July 18-21(M-TH) and listen for opportunities to participate!
- Mission/Outreach- Charles Wilson informed us of what's happening with the school in Africa we support with a portion of our Fish Fry proceeds.
- He also reminded us that we were feeding the needy at 61st Ave that day.
- Worship- Brooks Crowell gave us insight on the work and preparation that goes into coordinating what we do in Sunday morning worship. Thanks to Dennis, Lynn, Brooks, Laura, Judy and all who contribute to making our Sunday Worship meaningful and special.
- Congregational Care- Cheryl Wilson reported on this committee. They coordinate flowers and food on behalf of the Church when the need arises. They also send cards. We really appreciate the work they do.
- Special Events- There are no large scale events (ie: Fish Fry, BBQ) scheduled for this year. At least not at this point. Jason suggested we come up with a signature event that will continue to allow us to fund missions and attract new members. All agreed.

We will be celebrating Trinity's 151st Anniversary later this summer with a cake. Probably at a First Sunday Lunch.

-New Business- Dawn Stevens has agreed to be our Church Web Master! That will allow us to keep our site up to date with the hope of informing others about what's happening at Trinity.

- Brooks informed us of the meeting he is having after church April 10th re: Mother's Day Out Program he has been researching for us. This is very exciting and we can all pledge our prayers and support.
- Dennis moved that, when completed, the new playground be Dedicated in Memory of Sarah Jordan. All were in favor. -Meeting Adjourned

Submitted by: Donnie Hartsock
Administrative Council Chair

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 completed our study of the Gospels, including the Book of Acts and are beginning a study of Paul's Epistles. We have begun with 1st Corinthians.

Prayer Ministry

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

Elva Beard

Larry Eastwood

Leslie Eastwood

Mac McAfee

Rachel Newman

Kenneth Stevens

Sam Richardson

Charles Wilson

Patricia Stevens

Judy 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

May 15th: Sermon: Adopted By God. We often speak of God as Father as did the People of Israel. Paul understood that this was not a mere metaphor for the nature of God's love. God has actually claimed us as God's children. My texts are Acts 2:1–21 and Romans 8:14–17.

May 22nd: Sermon: Can We Bear the Truth? Sometimes the truth is hard to hear. Sometimes it is hard to believe. For instance, do you believe that you need salvation? My texts are Psalm 8 and John 16:12–15

Worship Leader's Schedule

May 15

Mike Fetting, **Liturgist**

Pat Moran and Maurice Edwards, **Greeters**

Elaine Rohrig and Linda Robinson, **Ushers**

May 22

Joann Harper, **Liturgist**

Mike and Elaine Rohrig, **Greeters**

Sam Richardson and Tommy Cotton, **Ushers**

Announcements

Mother's Day Out: The group formed to develop a plan for a Mother's Day Out program will meet this Sunday, May 15 immediately after church. Please plan to be present for discussion related to this important ministry of our church.

Volunteers are needed to help with this year's VBS. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board by the side door. If you have questions, please contact Dawn Stevens at (615)-638-8827 or dawnstevens1961@gmail.com. A meeting will be scheduled soon to discuss the theme and all the activity details. VBS is an exciting, fun time for all, come join in!

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 May

Tommy Cotton, Sam Richardson, Jim Winton

Happy Birthday to each of you!