



Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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Understanding the New Testament The Gospels: The Gospel of John

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. John 1:1-5 NRSV

³⁵ Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. John 6:35 NRSV

³⁰ The Father and I are one. John 10:30 NRSV

¹⁷ Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' " ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her. John 20:17-18 NRSV

Matthew, Mark and Luke are the synoptic Gospels; the "seen together" Gospels. For the reasons discussed over the last few weeks most scholars believe that they were written using the same sources and that the entire Gospel of Mark was probably used as a template of sorts for the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. In contrast, the Gospel of John is quite different in writing style and content.

To begin with, unlike the synoptics, Jesus speaks about himself extensively in the Gospel of John. Some examples:

"Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." ⁵¹ And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." John 1:50-51

¹⁴ but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." John 4:14 NRSV

³⁰ *“I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me. John 5:30 NRSV*

⁶ *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6 NRSV*

There are many more examples. For the most part, the Synoptics only hint at the declarations made in John.

Another distinguishing feature of the Gospel of John is the lack of parables. Jesus offers many teachings such as those cited above. But Jesus never tells parables in the Gospel of John. The Gospel does, however, contain many stories not included in the other Gospels. Among these are the wedding at Cana, the encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, the raising of Lazarus and the washing of the disciples’ feet.

Like Mark, there is no birth narrative and no genealogy. In fact, the name Mary is never associated with the Mother of Jesus. Jesus’ mother is an unnamed women who appears in a few verses. However, unlike the Synoptics that refer to Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God, in John there are direct claims for the divinity of Christ. This begins in the very first verse of the Gospel where Jesus is identified as the very Word of God that brought all creation into being and asserting that He “was with God” and “was God.” Likewise in 10:30 Jesus states “the Father and I are one.” See also 14:9.

Another theme in the Gospel of John is that of Christ descending from God and ascending to God. Once again, this is a much more direct claim for the divinity of Christ than is usually found in the Synoptics. There is also a great deal of talk about the Holy Spirit in John. We are to be “born of the Spirit” (3:6), God “gives the Spirit without measure,” (3:34) “God is Spirit,” (4:24) and “the Spirit gives life.” (6:63). There are more, including the giving of the Spirit to the Disciples by Christ (20:22). In several places, John contrasts the Spirit with the flesh. See e.g. John 3:6. This differentiation between the Spirit and flesh was a characteristic of the beliefs of the Gnostic Christian church. The Gnostics believed that all flesh was corrupt and that salvation was to be found in obtaining the *gnosis* (knowledge) that would enable the person to shed the flesh and become pure spirit. For the Gnostics, becoming pure spirit was salvation. The Gnostics, however, rejected the idea that God could become flesh. The Gospel of John makes that claim very early: ¹⁴ *And the Word became flesh and lived among us... John 1:14 NRSV.*

As with the other Gospels, there are disputes about the authorship of the Gospel and when to date it. Church tradition from the second century held that the author was John, son of Zebedee. Most scholars date the Gospel of John as being written no earlier than 90 CE and possibly as late as the early second century. A minority believe that it may have been the first of the Gospels. Whenever it is dated, however, it is probably the most beloved and well known of the Gospels.

Pray for the Divisions in Our Nation

The most divisive election in my memory and, I suspect, many of yours is now concluded. As of this morning, with votes still being counted, the popular vote is almost dead even. It seems unlikely that that will change much. A great deal of anger has spilled out over this election and we have seen racism raise its head in our nation in ways not seen for many years. It’s difficult to see how we can put this behind us and work for the welfare of all our people.

As people of faith we accept that there are powers in this world greater than our own. That, even when we fail to love one another and live in peace with one another, there is a power that can bring healing to our nation. For God, all things are possible. It is time to lift up President Trump and all those others who won their elections last night, as well as all those who remain in office, and ask God's help for them in knitting this nation together again. Unless we stop hating one another, unless we stop striking out at one another, we can never heal the rifts that divides us.

Children's Church/Nursery

Sunday School and Nursery care is available every Sunday during the Sunday school hour. Children from birth through the 6th grade are welcome. Children's Church and Nursery care are available for Children from birth through pre-k after the Children's Time in worship. We encourage parents to keep their children of Kindergarten age and up in the sanctuary during worship. It's important that our children experience the worship of the Church community from an early age.

Lesson plans are currently available that volunteers can use to lead Children's Church during worship. These lesson plans (almost 100 separate plans) do not require any preparation or pre-planning. Each lesson includes a short Bible Story to be read to the children as well as a corresponding craft project. All supplies for the crafts are on hand in the Nursery.

We need two volunteers each Sunday to provide Children's Church during worship. With enough volunteers it shouldn't be necessary for any adult to miss worship more than one Sunday every two months. If you would be willing to volunteer to help with the Children's Church ministry please see Jeanne Rybolt, Julia Moore, Dawn Stevens or Dana Bauguess to learn more.

Preacher, What Does the Bible Say about ...?

From the time I came to Trinity I have stated on numerous occasions that I am willing to consider a sermon, or sermon series, on any subject that is of concern. If there is a subject upon which you would like me to preach I will consider it. If I do not think it appropriate for a sermon I will explain why. It might also be appropriate to address some issues as part of a Newsletter article or series or as part of the Sunday School curriculum. But, if at all possible, I will seek to speak to these issues that are of interest on Sunday morning. One purpose of worship is to contemplate our relationship with God and if something is bothering you it is likely bothering others as well.

Thursday Morning Bible Study

The Thursday Morning Bible Study Group meets weekly on Thursdays from 10:00 to 11:30 AM. This week we will continue a study of the Book of Revelation.

Prayer Ministry

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

Elva Beard	Rachel Newman	Sam Richardson
Larry Eastwood	Kenneth Stevens	Judy Richardson
Leslie Eastwood	Patricia Stevens	Charles Wilson

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

November 13th: Sermon: God of the Living. Too often Christians think about eternal life as something that is to come after we die. But the Christian understanding of Eternal Life is that it starts in the here and now. My Texts are Psalms 139:1-18 and Luke 20:27-38.

November 20th: Sermon: Do We Know What We Are doing Yet? From the cross Christ asked for forgiveness on our behalf. ³⁴ *Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."* Luke 23:24 NRSV Have we worked it out yet? My texts are Jeremiah 23:1-6 and Luke 23:33-43.

Worship Leaders

November 13

Erin McKibben, **Liturgist**

Maurice and Joyce Edwards, **Greeters**

Joann Harper and Linda Robinson, **Ushers**

November 20

Rachel Newman, **Liturgist**

Ken and Jan Strait, **Greeters**

Mike and Elaine Rohrig, **Ushers**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

GraceWorks has a shortage on many items in our food pantry, and we need your help restocking it! Here is a list of some very critical items needed in our food pantry: **Critical Needs:** Canned green vegetables (not green beans), Canned beans, Canned meat (not tuna), Cereal, Hamburger Helper type boxed meals, Soup. Please support this important ministry with your regular donations. The box is located beside the side door.

Bishop Paul Mbithi, who, with his wife, are leaders of an African mission for children. He will be visiting our church **November 13** and will speak during the Sunday School hour. All members are encouraged to attend this special time. Our church has been supporting this mission for the past several years. Love offerings will be greatly appreciated.

Hosts and Hostesses for First Sunday Lunch: Please see the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board. Please add your name to host this occasion for the coming months.

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 November

Cheryl Wilson, Greg Locke, Betty Haynes, Ken Strait, Brooks Crowell, Ross Crutcher

Happy Birthday to each of you!