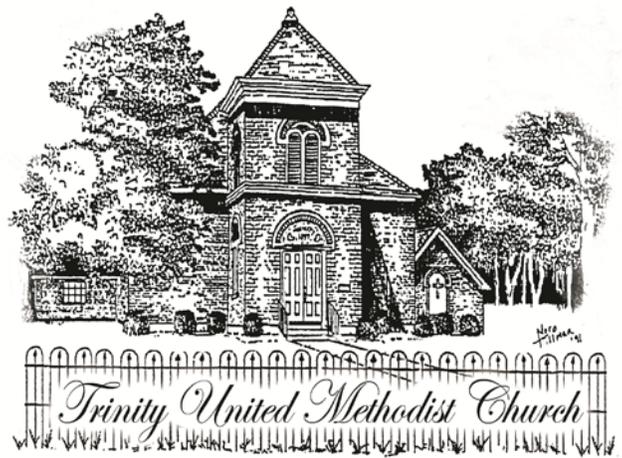




# Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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## Understanding the New Testament

1,2,&3 John and Jude

<sup>5</sup> *This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. 1 John 1:5 NRSV*

<sup>18</sup> *Children, it is the last hour! As you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. From this we know that it is the last hour. <sup>19</sup> They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us. But by going out they made it plain that none of them belongs to us. 1 John 2:18-19 NRSV*

<sup>20</sup> *Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. <sup>21</sup> The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also. 1 John 4:20-21 NRSV*

<sup>7</sup> *Many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh; any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist! 2 John 7 NRSV*

<sup>11</sup> *Beloved, do not imitate what is evil but imitate what is good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God. 3 John 11 NRSV*

<sup>24</sup> *Now to him who is able to keep you from falling, and to make you stand without blemish in the presence of his glory with rejoicing, <sup>25</sup> to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. Jude 24-25 NRSV*

The Gospel of John and 1, 2 and 3 John were likely written by the same person or at least persons from the same community. As you will recall from the earlier discussions of the Gospels, the Gospel of John is quite different from the other Gospels. It seems to draw on different sources for its portrayal of Christ and has a greater emphasis upon the divine and human nature of Christ than do the synoptics, Matthew Mark and Luke. This emphasis is most evident in the unique prologue to the Gospel of John:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has*

*come into being*<sup>4</sup> *in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.*<sup>5</sup> *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it...*

*<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.*

John 1:1-5, 14. The Gospel of John emphasizes that Christ was always part of God and involved with the world and that God became flesh. Likewise, 1 John opens with a declaration of Christ's existence from the beginning:

*We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—<sup>2</sup> this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—<sup>3</sup> we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 1 John 1:1-3*

Both passages highlight what was likely the basis for a division in this early Church community: was Christ truly human and divine or was he only divine taking on the appearance of being human? The Gospel of John and the Johannine epistles declare that Christ was both human and divine.

The writer of the three Johannine epistles is concerned with divisions and false teachings in the Church. It appears that people have broken away from this community on the basis of their belief that God could never become flesh. It is these people that the writer refers to as “antichrists;” i.e. people who deny the humanity of Christ and are thus, in the eyes of the writer, opposed to Christ. The references to “antichrists” in these epistles are unique. The term does not appear anywhere else in the New Testament. Contrary to the teachings of some Christian traditions, the bible does not describe a single “antichrist” to be born someday. Next week in Revelation we’ll deal with the conflation of scriptures that produces the teaching of the “Antichrist”. In the writer’s mind, everyone who rejects Christ is an antichrist or has the “spirit” of the antichrist. See 2 John 7.

As part of this focus on unity, 1 John especially focuses on the importance of loving one another. Thus, in addition to the 1 John 4:20-21 quoted above, you have statements such as these:

*<sup>9</sup> Whoever says, “I am in the light,” while hating a brother or sister, is still in the darkness. <sup>10</sup> Whoever loves a brother or sister lives in the light, and in such a person there is no cause for stumbling. <sup>11</sup> But whoever hates another believer is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and does not know the way to go, because the darkness has brought on blindness. 1 John 2:9-11*

*<sup>18</sup> Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. 1 John 3:18*

*<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 1 John 4:7*

*<sup>16</sup> So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. 1 John 4:16*

There are more. Love for one another is a drum that John keeps pounding, likely because of the acrimony following the splitting of the community. Second and Third John are very short letters that also deal with acrimony within the community.

Jude is a very short letter that purports to be written by Jude, the brother of James and Jesus. Some scholars believe that its purported authorship was the reason for its inclusion in the canon. As supported in the writings of Paul and in the Book of Acts, James, the brother of Jesus, was one of the leaders of the early church in Jerusalem. However, it's unlikely that either James or Jude were schooled in Greek or sufficiently educated to have written this letter. This is almost certainly another example of a person seeking to enhance his message by claiming the name of a prominent early church leader.

It is difficult for me to find the Gospel in this letter. It is largely a warning against false teaching and a promise that those who oppose the "true" teaching of the author will receive the punishment of God. Its' one contribution from my perspective is the benediction, quoted above, that has become a part of Christian liturgy.

*Next week: The Revelation to John*

## Holy Week Services

The last week of Lent is called Holy Week. It begins on Palm Sunday as we commemorate 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.

## Scholarship Opportunity

One of our members, Jean Robinson, is a member of Alpha Delta Kappa, an organization for Women Educators. The organization is offering a \$1000 scholarship to a deserving young woman who is currently pursuing an Education degree or to a High School Senior who intends to pursue an Education degree. The application deadline is April 7<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested, or know of a young woman who would be, applications for the scholarship are available in the pastor's office.

## **Volunteer Opportunities**

- Host for the Easter Egg Hunt. The hunt has been held the Saturday before Easter for the last couple of years. “Training” and some supplies are available for this event.....
- VBS director. It’s not too soon to start planning. The director will get to choose the VBS theme and date.
- Nursery level (pre-K) lesson plans coordinator. We have approximately 100 lessons and related crafts ready to use currently. Coordinator will need to refresh these periodically and be able to show others the set up.
- Wardrobe supervisor for the Christmas pageant. We have 70-80 costumes currently and have fabrics, patterns, etc. for several more. This role is about getting the costumes ready for the pageant as well as helping participants get “suited up”.

## **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. We have room for you! We are currently studying Joshua.

## **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

**April 9, 2017: Passion/Palm Sunday Remembrance.** We cannot come to Easter without first travelling to the foot of the cross. Sunday we will remember the events of Holy Week from the entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday through the crucifixion.

**April 16, 2017: Sermon: Essentials of Christianity: Belief in the Resurrection.** On Easter Sunday I will begin a series of sermons on the essentials of Christianity. The first sermon will, appropriately, deal with belief in the resurrection of Christ.

## Worship Leaders Schedule

### April 9

Linda McGill, **Liturgist**

Mike and Elaine Rohrig, **Greeters**

Jan and Stacy Bell, **Ushers**

### April 16

Ken Strait, **Liturgist**

Sam Richardson and Joann Harper, **Greeters**

Gina and Brandon Stewart, **Ushers**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Order forms for Easter Lilies will be available this Sunday.**

**Easter Lilies:** If you want to order a lily in honor of or in memory of loved ones, please complete the order form on Sunday. Cost of each lily is \$8.00

### Easter Egg Hunt

This year's event will take place Saturday, April 15 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. On Palm Sunday, after service, we will gather in the fellowship hall to stuff eggs for the hunt.
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.
4. Bring grandchildren, nieces, nephews and neighborhood children to the Hunt.

Families are encouraged to **bring diapers** of various sizes as we collect them as part of the “No child wet behind.” A collection box will be in Fellowship Hall for your donations.

**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.

**The Nanette Crowell Companions in Christ Sunday School Class:** We are currently enjoying our lenten study, “The Journey to Easter.” We enjoy discussion about what we are reading and the questions at the end of each chapter generate interesting discussion as well as thoughtfulness. 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 April**

**Betty Whitefield, Mary Coleman, Jo Oliphant, Jason Aldred, Houston Hartsock, Erin McKibben**

**Happy Birthday to each of you!**