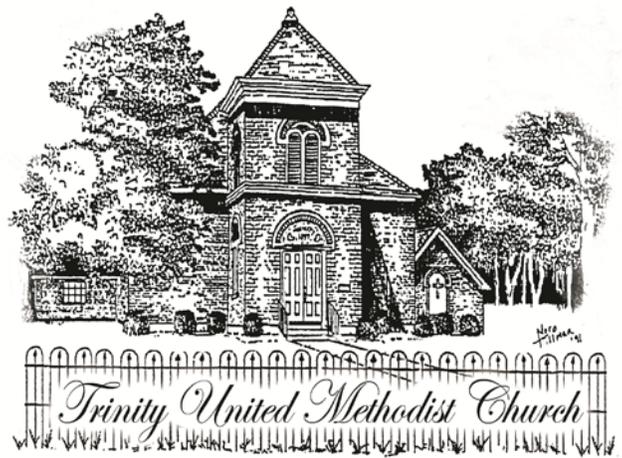




# Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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## Understanding the New Testament Galatians

*<sup>4</sup> Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant <sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup> it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. <sup>7</sup> It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. **Paul to the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7***

*You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? **Paul to the Galatians, Galatians 3:1***

We have seen that the early Church was not a place of harmony populated by especially virtuous people. It was pretty much what it is today: a very human organization that, at its best and most faithful, can be an extraordinary instrument for good but can also be very dysfunctional. In the letters to the Corinthians Paul is dealing with problems arising primarily within the congregation at Corinth. In Galatians, Paul is addressing the effects of outside evangelists who are challenging the Gospel as taught by Paul.

The exact nature of the message being taught by these outside evangelists isn't known, but it's possible to infer much of the message from Paul's letter. They are making a two pronged attack. In the first instance, they are attacking Paul's credentials as an evangelist, possibly emphasizing his early history of persecuting the Church. They may also be challenging his faithfulness to Judaism. The second part of their attack is against the proposition that one can be Christian if they have not first converted to Judaism. They are likely emphasizing that, since Jesus was a Jew and his Disciples were Jews, conversion to Judaism is essential to becoming a Christian. For men, this would mean submitting to circumcision, a practice that was contrary to Greek and Roman culture.

Paul opens by proclaiming that he is an Apostle chosen by Christ every bit as much as any of the other Disciples/Apostles.

*Paul an apostle—sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—<sup>2</sup> and all the members of God's family who are with me,  
Gal 1:1-2.*

He goes on to emphasize that his first human based instruction came from the Church in Damascus and then from Peter (Cephas) himself. Moreover, after preaching for fourteen years, Peter, James and John each approved the Gospel that he preached to the Gentiles thereby affirming his Apostleship. (Galatians 2).

However, Paul goes on to emphasize that the Gospel is the same for Jew and Greek. It is appropriate for a Jew to be circumcised, but that circumcision does not affect his salvation. It is through faith that Jews and Gentiles receive salvation:

*<sup>15</sup> We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; <sup>16</sup> yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. Galatians 2:15-16*

The Jerusalem Council with Peter, James and John, approving the Gospel as Paul preached it to the Gentiles, is referenced in Acts. Acts 21:17 et.seq. There is no mention in Acts of the rebuke Paul says he had to make to Peter for refusing to share in the Lord's Supper with Gentiles. (Galatians 2:11 et.seq.)

Much of the rest of Galatians deals with Paul's explanation of the nature of the Law of Moses and its inadequacy. In many respects it is unfortunate that Paul spoke as negatively about the Law as he does. This letter, more than any other scripture in the New Testament, is responsible for the lack of understanding among Christians about the Law of Moses. The Law was never described in the Old Testament as a means of salvation as that term is used in the New Testament. The People of Israel were commanded to follow the Law so they could be a "Light to the World" showing how God desired people to live together. Following the Law was not then, and is not seen by Jews today, as an impossible burden. Rather it was, and is viewed as a blessing; a privilege.

*<sup>5</sup> See, just as the LORD my God has charged me, I now teach you statutes and ordinances for you to observe in the land that you are about to enter and occupy. <sup>6</sup> You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!" <sup>7</sup> For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is whenever we call to him? <sup>8</sup> And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire* A Jew then, and today, would agree that it is through faith in God and the grace of God that we receive salvation. The primary distinction between Judaism and Christianity is the Christian belief that God became flesh and died for our sins. Jews, and Christians, are meant to be guided by the law and the prophets:

*<sup>17</sup> "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill.*

*<sup>18</sup> For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. <sup>19</sup> Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:17-20. (Emphasis added.*

Many scholars believe that those opposed to Paul used his statements about the Law in Galatians to undermine his ministry. It is likely that the purpose of the letter to the Romans was written, in part, to allow Paul to clarify his view of the Law.

Where is the Gospel for us in Galatians? Primarily, I think, in the warning to be true to the Gospel and not allow ourselves to be led astray. Each of us is responsible for testing the Gospel as it is preached and proclaimed around us, always seeking to insure that the message of Christ is not being misused. Any one person can intentionally stray from the Gospel or just lose their way. Together it is more likely that we can help one another stay on the path of discipleship.

*Next week: Ephesians*

## **What Is the Significance of the Colors?**

United Methodists, along with Roman Catholics, Episcopalians and most Presbyterians and Lutherans follow the Christian Year. As the seasons of the year progress the colors displayed in the sanctuary change as well. The Christian year begins in late November or early December with Advent. There are four Sundays in Advent. The traditional colors for the Advent season are dark blue, light blue and purple. Pink or rose is sometimes used on the third Sunday in Advent as we remember the Annunciation; the declaration of the Angel to Mary that her child would be the Son of God. Blue and purple are traditionally colors of royalty.

Beginning Christmas Eve, and continuing through Epiphany, the Colors change to white and gold. White and gold are symbols of life and purity.

After Epiphany, and right up to the beginning of Lent, the traditional color is green, except for Transfiguration Sunday when the preferred color is again white.

The Lenten colors are purple, gray and black. The purple reminds us of the sacrifice of Christ, and the gray and black are symbols of mourning, sorrow, repentance and death.

The Easter Colors are again white and gold as we celebrate the new life in Christ through the resurrection.

Red and gold are the colors for Pentecost, representing the fire of the Holy Spirit. The strict practice is to change to green following Pentecost Sunday but I prefer to keep using red during the first month following Pentecost. Then we will change to Green until Christ the King Sunday, the last Sunday of the liturgical year, when we change to White.

Do we have to honor the liturgical year? No. But it is a way of reminding ourselves of the Gospel Story. Each year we celebrate the Grace that God brought into the world through Jesus Christ.

## **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 received two new members of the Group when we started up again after the Christmas holidays but there is room for more. We are currently studying Genesis.

## 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

**January 22. Sermon: Sermon: Shredding the Church.** From the earliest days of the Church there has been dissension within the Church. It has always been true that the true enemies of the Church are ourselves. My texts are Matthew 4:12–23 and 1 Corinthians 1:10–18.

**January 29. Sermon: These Are blessings?** You be the judge. My texts are Micah 6:6-8 and Matthew 5:1–12.

## Worship Leaders Schedule

### January 22

Stacy Bell, **Liturgist**

Maurice and Joyce Edwards, **Greeters**

Mike and Elaine Rohrig, **Ushers**

**January 29**

Hal Newman, **Liturgist**

Gina and Brandon Stewart, **Greeters**

Maurice and Joyce Edwards, **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.

**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 January**

**Renee Fetting, Dawn Stevens, Dennis Meaker, Judy Richardson, Linda McGill, Jessica Moore,  
Laura Otto**

**Happy Birthday to each of you!**