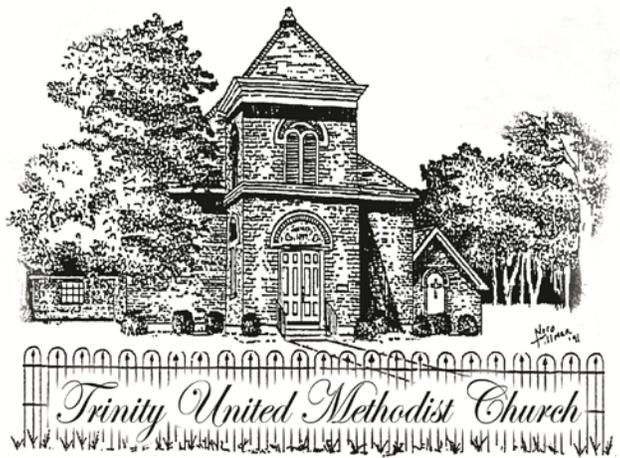




Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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Understanding the New Testament The letters of 1&2 Peter

⁴ Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and ⁵ like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:4-5

⁵ For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, ⁶ and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, ⁷ and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love. ⁸ For if these things are yours and are increasing among you, they keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For anyone who lacks these things is nearsighted and blind, and is forgetful of the cleansing of past sins. ¹⁰ Therefore, brothers and sisters, be all the more eager to confirm your call and election, for if you do this, you will never stumble. ¹¹ For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you. 2 Peter 1:5-11

The 1st and 2nd Letters of Peter were almost certainly not written by Peter nor were they both written by the same person. According to all the Gospel accounts, Peter was a largely illiterate peasant fisherman who spoke Aramaic. Both of these letters were written in literate Greek and reflect knowledge of Greek rhetorical devices. Additionally, they are distinctively different in style indicating that they were written by different people. Finally, 2 Peter is not referenced in any other Christian literature until the late Third century (around 200 years after the crucifixion). Additionally, as discussed below, it references the circulation of Paul's Epistles as a body of scriptures, something that could only happen long after those epistles were written. These two letters were written long after Paul's, and his contemporary Peter's, deaths.

First Peter is principally concerned with remaining faithful in the face of persecution and, as much as possible, avoiding antagonizing the authorities and the surrounding community. As has been discussed in regard to previous letters, Christian persecution by the Roman Empire was very haphazard until the middle to late third century. Nor was it illegal to practice Christianity. The general Roman attitude toward religion was to allow most any religion to be practiced. What was offensive to the Romans was the refusal to also worship Roman Gods. Judaism, being an ancient and respected religion that pre-dated Rome, was generally spared persecution on this account. However, once Christianity emerged as a religion in its own right it was viewed as a "new" religion and not accorded any respect by the authorities.

The writer of 1 Peter focuses the people's attention upon their baptism into Christ. This has made them a "Holy people:"

⁹ *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

¹⁰ *Once you were not a people,
but now you are God's people;
once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy. 1 Peter 2:9-10*

As a Holy People they are to conduct themselves honorably in all things so that even those who malign them as Christians will have to acknowledge their good deeds. Consistent with their faith, they should accept the authority of all "human institutions." Wives should comport themselves consistent with the practice of the surrounding community and slaves must not revolt even if there are subjected to cruelty by their masters. 1 Peter 2:18. It was passages like this last, taken out of context, that were used to justify slavery. The purpose of these passages was to avoid giving the authorities an excuse to persecute Christians. In essence, the people were told to maintain a low profile; to avoid 'rocking the boat.' Above all, a Christian should expect to suffer for his faith just as Christ suffered.

⁹ *Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing.* ¹⁰ *For*

*"Those who desire life
and desire to see good days,
let them keep their tongues from evil
and their lips from speaking deceit;
¹¹ let them turn away from evil and do good;
let them seek peace and pursue it.
¹² For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous,
and his ears are open to their prayer.*

But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." 1 Peter 3:9-12

Second Peter is primarily focused upon the problem of false teaching and "false prophets," probably Gnostics. The author rejects the idea that "cleverly devised myths" (2 Peter 1:16) are necessary to reveal the Gospel when the straight forward accounts of eyewitnesses (the Gospels) provides all the information necessary. One of the most intriguing references in the letter comes at the end:

¹⁴ *Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish;* ¹⁵ *and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation. So also our beloved brother Paul wrote to you according to the wisdom given him,* ¹⁶ *speaking of this as he does in all his letters. **There are some things in them hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other scriptures.*** ¹⁷ *You therefore, beloved, since you are forewarned, beware that you are not carried away with the error of the lawless and lose your own stability.* ¹⁸ *But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. 2 Peter 3:14-18.*

By the time this letter is written, the letters of Paul are circulating as scripture; i.e. being treated as scripture by the Churches. But, as happens today, there are problems interpreting those letters and some people twist them to their own ends. The writer cautions the Churches, and us, to be careful in our reading of these letters.

Both letters have relevance to our lives as Christians. First Peter reminds us that we are called to live as the Body of Christ, to be the presence of Christ, in this world. Indeed, that is our vow at Baptism. Even when we are criticized for our faith, we must remain faithful to that call. Second Peter emphasizes the importance of sound teaching and warns against efforts to subvert our faith into a religion for a few who can learn the “secret.” Christianity is not about secrets. It is about sharing the Gospel that Christ came for the salvation of the whole earth and all its people. We share that good news when we live lives that exemplify the life of Christ.

Next week: 1,2,&3 John and Jude

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 7th. If you are interested, or know of a young woman who would be, applications for the scholarship are available in the pastor’s office.

The Journey to Easter

The first five Sundays in Lent I am offering a sermon series titled, “The Journey to Easter.” The series, based upon the Lectionary readings for those Sundays, focuses on our life journey as Disciples of Christ. I have also written a Lenten Study Guide for this series. The Adult Sunday School class is using this study for the first five Sundays in Lent. For those not attending Sunday School, but who wish to use the guide, I have made it available on our web site in the Newsletter section.

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 Exodus.

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

March 26th. Sermon: The Journey to Easter: *Sometimes It's Hard to See The Road.* When travelling a road in an automobile we can become distracted by the weather, traffic, or something in our lives that has us worried. Many factors affect how we see the world around us. So it is in our faith life.

April 2nd. Sermon: The Journey to Easter: *God Opens New Roads.* We come to a dead end. We can't see a way forward. But suddenly God shows us a road we didn't know existed.

Worship Leaders Schedule

March 26

Jason Aldred, **Liturgist**

Greg and Sherry Locke, **Greeters**

Ken and Jan Strait, **Ushers**

April 2

Houston Hartsock, **Liturgist**

Tommy and Jo Cotton, **Greeters**

Julia Moore and Linda Robinson, **Ushers**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Men's group will meet Saturday, April 1. A Pancake breakfast will be served at 9:00 A.M. All men are encouraged to participate.

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 March

Pat Moran, Marty Bauguess, Sherry Locke, Lilly Otto, Herb Haynes, Ava Fetting, Isabella Stafford

Happy Birthday to each of you!