



Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter

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God Gave

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. John 3:16 (NRSV)

Genesis 1:26-27, tells us that we are made in the image of God. God intended that we would share some of the attributes of God. Clearly we can be “God like” in the sense of our ability to create, to think, and to love. Too often, though, it’s certain that we fall far short of the expectations that God had for us when God made us in God’s image.

In your own search to seek the mind of God, and to live your life in accordance with the example God has set, consider God’s nature as a giver. God gave us life. God gave us dominion over a magnificent and complex world. God gave us dominion over every living thing on the Earth. God gave us minds capable of perceiving the subtleties of the world around us. God gave us a living spirit capable of extraordinary love, compassion and sacrifice.

God gave us Christ.

As a people made in the image of God, we have a giving nature. As much as we may try to deny it, it remains a part of our existence. Our giving nature is a part of God’s plan for us as surely as the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat. Our giving nature permits us to be instruments of God’s love on Earth. By giving from the blessings we have received from God, we fulfill that part of our nature that most exemplifies God. As disciples we are called to give of our prayers, our presence, our witness, our gifts and our service.

What is God calling on you to give?



Boston Tragedy by William T. McAlilly

I will lift my eyes unto the hills, from whence does my help come. My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth. Psalm 121:1

Our prayers this day are for those who were in harm's way Monday in Boston at the sight of the finish line of the Boston Marathon. We pray for those families who have lost loved ones. We join our hearts in prayer for all who are responding to this tragedy, seeking to help those injured, and we pray for strength.

We stand in shock and fear creeps in. As we seek to make sense out of this tragic moment in Boston, may the peace of Christ be in us. Let this be a reminder to us that the call of Christ is ever before us to live faithful lives and that we continue to live in a world that is broken.

To that end our task is unending as we pray "thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven."

I invite each congregation in the Nashville Area of the United Methodist Church to offer prayers on Sunday, April 21, 2013 for all victims of this tragedy as well as for those who caused this tragic event. May we pray for the spirit of Christ to transform our World.

Bishop William T. McAlilly

Defeat of the Welfare Bill in the State Legislature

On Sunday April 7th I did something I do not usually do from the pulpit. I described a bill in the State Legislature dealing with cutting Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) as being contrary to the Gospel. I was also part of a protest at the State Legislature building on April 11th when that Bill came before the State Senate. The Bill was withdrawn because of opposition from both parties. I know that some of you also contacted politicians you know to speak against this legislation for which I give my thanks. I wanted to take a few moments to discuss why I believed that speaking out against this bill was important.

I make every effort to avoid delving into the world of politics when I preach. Some might disagree since I often speak of the need to help those in need and to care for the sick. However, those are Gospel issues. What I try to avoid doing is endorsing, from the pulpit, particular political solutions. While I do believe that all persons should have access to healthcare under conditions that does not leave them destitute, and while I do have opinions on such things as "Obamacare," I do not intentionally mix those opinions with the Gospel from the pulpit. For me, addressing the problem is the important thing. How it is addressed is a political issue.

The bill before the State Legislature was a different situation from my perspective. The bill supposedly would have induced parents to participate in their children's education by penalizing the parents with a cut in state financial assistance if their child was failing in school and the parents did not take particular steps to correct the problem. The sponsor believed this was necessary to stem the "cycle of poverty" brought about, in his judgment, by poor education. Although the sponsor claimed that this approach had been used in a number of nations there was no study supporting his claims nor any request from any department for this measure. At

least one of the countries that the sponsor claimed used this device actually paid families **additional** money for proven participation in the child's education, not denying benefits already being paid.

I said from the pulpit that the bill was contrary to the Gospel because its primary purpose was to demean and humiliate the poor. I based this statement on the following:

- While some poverty is certainly “generational,” many people in this nation have incomes below the poverty line because of loss of jobs through no fault of their own, disability, crushing medical bills, single mothers fleeing abusive domestic situations and other causes having nothing to do with family educational background. In fact, the single largest growing segment of those living under the poverty line is formerly middle and upper middle class families who have lost their sources of income. (If you look on the internet you will find a short documentary called “*The Line*” that provides a more realistic picture of poverty in this nation. It is about 30 minutes long.)
- The TANF payments, which can reach a maximum of around \$185 a month, are temporary payments that are only paid for a lifetime maximum of 60 months. Those receiving these payments have to be working, looking for work or in job training. If their children do not go to school their payments may be cut. A detailed description of the TANF plan can be found online.
- Poverty does not equate to being a poor parent. Poor parenting is a problem that crosses all social and economic lines. This bill did nothing to encourage other parents to participate in their children's education.
- A child can be failing in school for any number of reasons not directly related to poverty including an undiagnosed learning disability, depression, ill health, bullying, a problematic teacher etc. The measures described in the bill would not have impacted these situations. The legislation in question would have punished a family if two of three children were doing well but the third was not.
- Adding new burdens to those receiving these payments was unrealistic in light of the working realities of these parents. Many are working multiple part-time jobs and simply could not meet the burdens that the legislation sought to impose. Parents in poorer counties would not have had access to many of the educational assistance programs that the legislation assumed existed everywhere.
- No efforts were directed at others receiving state aid. The only class targeted for this special treatment was the poor.
- The bill would have put an unconscionable burden on children already under incredible stress. As pointed out by several legislators, if the child happened to be in an abusive situation this bill could endanger the child even more.

The Gospel calls on us to demand that people with dealt with justly. The bible directs us to take special care to defend the poor because, even in biblical times, the poor often had little voice in society. The Bible calls on us to speak to those in power. The bible reminds us that when we oppress the poor we are oppressing Christ. For all these reasons I believed it necessary to speak up about this legislation. If you would like to discuss these issues further, either individually or in a class, I would be glad to meet with you.

Rev. Dennis Meaker

THE BISHOP'S CEDAR CREST SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Bishop McAlilly has challenged the Churches of the Tennessee Conference to help children attend summer camp who otherwise would be unable to go. The program is outlined below.

GOAL: To raise a minimum of 63 (Bishop McAlilly's football number) scholarships for 63 children to attend summer camp at Cedar Crest this summer (2013).

CHILDREN: New partnerships will be developed from varied churches and programs for children. Key camp recruitment groups are:

- Project Transformation
- Bethlehem Center
- Small Membership Churches
- Churches Serving Diverse and Ethnic Communities
- Children of Deployed Military Families

HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS:

- The Board of Camp and Retreat Ministries is leading the way in partnership with the Bishop to furnish scholarships. To date 11 scholarships have been raised or pledged from the Bishop and the Board.
- Each District Superintendent has agreed to provide one scholarship from their district funds. This represents 7 scholarships.
- Each DS will be identifying small membership and ethnic churches who might partner with Camp and Retreat Ministries (CRM) by recruiting children for camp and/or raising money for scholarships.
- Each DS and Board member will be contacting individuals and larger churches who would be willing to furnish matching scholarships for the children in their district.
- The total Goal will be to raise a minimum of \$18,900 for 63 scholarships for children within the Tennessee Conference who otherwise would not be able to attend camp.

HOW YOU CAN PARTICIPATE:

Everyone in the Tennessee Conference is invited to partner with the Bishop and The Board of Camp and Retreat Ministry by:

- Recruiting at least one child from your church for a faith forming summer camp experience at Cedar Crest this summer.
- Raising or providing a scholarship of \$300 for a child who otherwise would or could not attend camp.
- Celebrating Camp and Retreat Sunday in your church by sharing your camp experience with your congregation and encouraging them to be involved in recruiting children for a great summer camp experience at Cedar Crest.
- Please visit www.tnumcamps.org for the 2013 Summer Camp Schedule and online registration.

Please send all scholarship funds to:

The Bishop's Cedar Crest Scholarship Fund
Reverend Dickie Hinton
P.O. Box 414
Monterey, Tennessee 38574

The Problem of Personal Information

At one time it was not unusual to distribute lists of birthdays and other personal information within the Church. Such lists can still be created today if people wish to add their names to them. However, despite many requests to the contrary, I have chosen not to put information about birth dates, other than birth month, or other personal information, in the newsletter. Once this information has been posted in an online newsletter it is

available to everyone. Our birth dates are an important piece of personal information that can be used as part of an effort to steal someone's identity. For much the same reason we do not post addresses and telephone numbers of members and we do not publish information about who is in the hospital. If a thief knew that someone was in the hospital they might take the opportunity to target that person's home for a break-in. The potential misuse of online information is something that we all need to be careful about.

7 Things That Hold A Church Back (Based on a presentation by Rev. Matthew Hartsfield, pastor Van Dyke Church)

The opening session of the Real ideas Conference set the tone for the rest of the workshops. What holds us back from offering the gospel is most often internal and not external. Using Ephesians 2:14-21, Rev. Mark Hartsfield talked about seven things that hold a church back; i.e. that keeps it from offering the Gospel throughout its community.

Ephesians 2:14-21 says:

*¹⁴ When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, *¹⁵ the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. *¹⁶ I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. ¹⁷ Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. ¹⁸ And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. ¹⁹ May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.*

²⁰ Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. ²¹ Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen. NLT

The 7 Things Holding us Back

1. **Staying on our feet.** *When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father.* We fail because we fail to pray. The beginning and ending point for any activity in the church should be prayer. Rev. Hartsfield went on to suggest we think of prayer in "4D", four dimensions. We pray in recognition of our total dependence upon God. We pray because we are desperate for God's grace in our lives. We pray out of a desire to live as a people of God, the Body of Christ. And we pray because we delight in God. Prayer for our daily ministries is as important as prayer for those who are suffering hardships.
2. **Forgetting who made us and our church.** *The Creator of everything in heaven and on earth.* Our church was not established by a group of people in the middle of the 19th century. Trinity UMC was established by God. Just as we are all God's creation, so is the church, and all its many congregations, God's creation. We should cultivate the mindset that Trinity UMC is God's Church and not our Church.
3. **Living With a Scarcity Mentality.** *I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit.* We might ask, "Do we have the resources to offer the Gospel effectively in this community?" That's essentially what the disciples asked when Christ told them to feed the five thousand with a few loaves and fishes. Living with a scarcity mentality can also turn us into hoarders, afraid to use the resources we do have for fear that they will be dissipated. Instead we

should begin every ministry prayerfully, with whatever we have, trusting that God's blessings can provide us with all that we will need to carry through on the ministry.

4. **Keeping Christ from feeling at home in the church.** *Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong.* Are we doing things that keep Christ from feeling at home in the Church? Remember every invitation we extend is an invitation extended to Christ. Every time we welcome someone into our Church we welcome Christ. I was leading the Conference training on inclusiveness this past weekend. A participant was asking about the concept of welcoming all people in the name of Christ when that person was not of the same social class as the rest of the members. She pointed out that the people attending her Church dressed very formally for worship services, and it was embarrassing when people who "did not know how to dress appropriately" came into their Church. As gently as I could I suggested that Christ was probably comfortable with their dress so perhaps the church members could be as well. Trinity UMC has always been, in my experience, a very welcoming church. But we must constantly be aware of those things we might be doing that communicates to a visitor that they are not welcome
5. **Forgetting how much God loves us and our Church.** ¹⁸ *And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is.* ¹⁹ *May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.* I have heard many of our members say that they love Trinity UMC. Some of our members have spent their whole lives here, attending Sunday School and worship, growing in faith and love, being married here, baptizing their children here and being eulogized here. People who have spent much less time here nevertheless love this Church. But have we forgotten that God loves this church and its people as much as we love the church and its people? God has been present for every profession of Faith, every Baptism, every wedding every funeral. God is present with us when we worship and when we gather for fellowship. Because God loves the church, God desires to see it vital and thriving just as we desire to see it vital and thriving.
6. **Growing a Self-Powered Church.** *Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.* We become tired. We have so many demands upon our time that we can become overwhelmed at the thought of the church making demands as well. And, we can start to see some people as indispensable to the ministries of the Church. We must always remember that the ministries of the Church are God's ministries and not our ministries. Whatever tomorrow holds for us, regardless of the presence or absence of specific people, we must seek God's help to empower our ministries and to keep offering ministry. No one person can do all the work, or even most of the work. But, with God's help and working together there is much that we can accomplish.
7. **Thinking Small.** ²⁰ *Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.* ²¹ *Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.* God wants us to succeed BIG. As often as not, rather than our plans being too grandiose they are too small. Too limited. When we began a feeding ministry at West Nashville UMC we thought it might be an evening meal of soup and sandwiches for 20 or thirty people. Five years later it was an evening meal for over one hundred people and a dispersal point for thousands of pounds of groceries for the poor in the neighborhood. The theological concept is that God wants to bless us with more than we even dare ask. Rev. Hartsfield suggested that we practice "adding a zero" to requests. If we want a Vacation Bible School for 20 kids, plan for 200. If we set a goal of attracting 10 new families to the church, instead plan for 100.

As I was listening to this presentation, I was reflecting on my own experience in ministry with six churches. I have never served a church that had to overcome all of these attitudes, but I have seen examples of all of them between the six churches. I think that the key thing we must keep in mind is that we are called to offer the gospel in this community. There are around 10,000 people living within a three mile radius of Trinity UMC. Many are people who of fallen away from the church and thousands are people who have never heard the Gospel in any meaningful way. Bishop McAlilly is calling us to look at our communities as mission fields, and they surely are. As a church, let us rededicate ourselves to offering the Gospel of Jesus Christ to this community.

Prayer Ministry

The following persons have agreed to be part of the prayer ministry at Trinity UMC:

Elva Beard	Sarah Jordan	Kenneth Stevens	Judy Richardson
Larry Eastwood	Mac McAfee	Patricia Stevens	Charles Wilson
Leslie Eastwood	Rachel Newman	Sam 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

April 21: The Lord Is My Shepherd. Perhaps the best known passage out of the Old Testament is psalm 23. Let us pray through this Psalm as a congregation, considering its meaning for our lives. My texts are John 10:22–30 and psalm 23.

April 28: What God has Made Is Not Profane. We hear the words, but when we look around us do we believe them? My texts are Revelation 21:1–6 and Acts 11:1–18.

Worship Leaders Schedule

April 21

Marty Bauguess, *Liturgist*
Rodger & Cherry Klein, *Ushers*
Maurice & Joyce Edwards, *Greeters*
Counter

April 28

Charles Wilson, *Liturgist*
Mike & Elaine Rohrig, *Ushers*
Sam Richardson & Marty Bauguess, *Greeters*
Counter

Announcements

Sundays at 10:00: The topic for discussion this Sunday (April 21) will be, “**Why is There So Much Suffering In the World?**” This group meets in the Sunday School Classroom. All are welcome to enjoy fellowship with your church family and deepen your spiritual connection with God. **Nanette Crowell** leads this study and will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Sunday school starts at 9:45am in the Fellowship Hall.

Tuesday, April 23 at 6:30 PM. UMW meeting in Fellowship Hall. Come and enjoy a meal, wonderful fellowship and an opportunity to plan upcoming events.

Wednesday, April 24, 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal

The **61st UMC** is in need of men’s clothing. When you clean your closets, please consider donating men’s items of clothing to a worthy cause. Bring clothes to the church and they will be taken to 61st UMC.

The dates for our church to prepare and serve dinner at **61st Street** are as follows: **May 18, August 17, November 16.**

We will also be participating at the Christmas Toy Store, dates TBD.

April Birthdays

Mary Coleman, Houston Hartsock, Colette Keyser, Jo Oliphant, Betty Whitefield