



# Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter

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## Understanding the New Testament The Gospels: The Gospel of Mark

*The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Mark 1:1 NRSV*

<sup>23</sup> Jesus said to him [in response to the question asking if Jesus could cast out the spirit possessing his son], “If you are able!—All things can be done for the one who believes.” <sup>24</sup> Immediately the father of the child cried out, “I believe; help my unbelief!” Mark 9:23-24 NRSV

<sup>6</sup> But he said to them, “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. <sup>7</sup> But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you.” <sup>8</sup> So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

*Mark 16:6-8 NRSV*

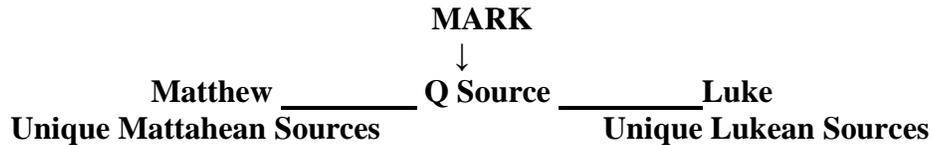
Although the Gospel of Mark is placed after Matthew in the New Testament, most scholars believe that it was written before the other three Gospels. It is dated between 65 and 75 CE during the persecutions of the Emperor Nero, probably before 70 CE. Many scholars believe that it was written in Rome but others argue that it might have been written in Northern Palestine. Church tradition suggests that the Gospel account itself was provided by the Apostle Peter and written after his death in Rome. As with the Gospel of Matthew, the identity of the author is not known. Church tradition also suggests that it was a disciple of Peter named Mark and some have argued that it was the “failed missionary” John Mark who had a falling out with Paul. Acts 13:13-15:38. One final tradition holds that the author was the otherwise unidentified young man who escaped when Jesus was arrested:

<sup>51</sup> A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth. They caught hold of him, <sup>52</sup> but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked. Mark 14:51-52. NRSV

### The Synoptic Gospels Mathew, Mark and Luke

The word “synoptic” is composed of the Latin roots meaning together (syn) and vision (opti). The Synoptic Gospels then are the Gospels that should be “seen together.” A cursory examination of these three Gospels shows that much of the material in them is similar and some parts are reproduced word for word in at least two of the three Gospels.

One of the primary reasons that scholars believe Mark was written first is that it seems to provide the outline used in Matthew and Luke and those Gospels each contain most of what is written in Mark. There also seems to be some material that only appears in Matthew and Luke and both Matthew and Luke contain material that appears nowhere else. Accordingly, scholars believe that Matthew and Luke drew heavily on the Gospel of Mark, an unknown source of teachings of Jesus usually referred to as the “Q Source” and then other sources containing the material unique to their narratives. The relationship between the Gospels can be shown graphically as follows:



### The “Hard Hitting” Gospel

Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels and its writing style is very terse. It is the only Gospel that calls itself a Gospel, declaring so in the very first verse: *The beginning of the good news [Gospel] of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.* Unlike Matthew and Luke it does not concern itself with the birth of Jesus or stories of his youth. Instead it jumps right into the story of John the Baptist and Jesus’ Baptism. Jesus, like John the Baptist, spreads a Gospel focused on repentance and preparation for the coming Kingdom of God.

There are a couple of literary devices used in Mark that deserve mention. One is the use of the word “immediately.” The word “immediately” is used almost 30 times to mark transitions and keep the events in the story moving along to their climax. For instance:

<sup>12</sup> *And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. Mark 1:12 NRSV*

<sup>45</sup> *Immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. Mark 6:45 NRSV*

<sup>52</sup> *Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way. Mark 10:52 NRSV*

The other device is Jesus portrayed as the “Hidden Messiah.” In several places Jesus instructs his Disciples and those he helps not to tell others about him or their belief that he is the Messiah. For instance, in Mark 3:11 Jesus orders the “unclean spirits” cast out of individuals not to tell people that he is the Son of God. When he raised the daughter of Jarius he ordered the family not to speak of it. Mark 5:43. Following the transfiguration he orders his disciples not to tell what they have seen until after his resurrection. Mark 9:9. Many Christians have wondered why Jesus seemingly tries to hide his identity.

Although several explanations have been offered, the most persuasive one for me is that Jesus did not want people to make assumptions about the nature of his Messiahship. Many in Israel believed that the Messiah would be a great military leader who would lead an army, possibly made up of angels as well as men, in battle against the Romans. The Romans would be thrown out and the Messiah would establish a new kingdom like that of King David. Jesus knew that his battle was with powers greater than the Romans and that his Kingdom would extend to the whole earth, not just Israel. He wanted to show people what his Messiahship was to be, not have them expect something else entirely.

Unlike the Gospel of Matthew, in Mark there is very little emphasis on Jesus' Jewish identity or of the law. In general Jesus does not extol the law as he does in Matthew but he does explain why it does not prevent helping those in need. For these reasons many scholars believe that Mark was probably written for a primarily gentile community.

Of all the Gospels, the Gospel of Mark is the least favorable in its portrayal of the Disciples. They are often portrayed as clueless concerning Jesus' ministry and seemly without faith. This portrayal reaches its culmination in Chapter 16. By this time all the male Disciples have deserted Jesus and only the women remain. The women encounter an angelic figure in the tomb who tells them that Jesus has risen and that they should go and tell Peter and the Disciples. Yet, even these women fail:

<sup>8</sup> *So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. Mark 16:8. NRSV*

Most scholars agree that 16:8a marks the end of the Gospel as originally written. In virtually all modern translations there is a note that verses 8b - 20 were almost certainly added by later scribes seeking to reconcile the Gospel of Mark with other gospel accounts. Yet it is consistent with the rest of the Gospel of Mark to have the Gospel end in the transitory failure of the Disciples. It is a reminder that the choice to share the Gospel of Christ is always before us. As with the women at the tomb, we may choose to share the Gospel or remain silent.

*Next Week: The Gospel of Luke*

## **The Poverty and Justice Bible**

*The Poverty & Justice Bible* is a bible that highlights each passage of scripture that deals with the issues of poverty and justice. There are more than 2000 references in scripture to poverty, as opposed to four or five on such controversial subjects as homosexual acts or marriage. Yet many Christians seem to think that helping the poor is a pointless and even harmful act. As an on-going part of this newsletter, I will be providing citations to passages from the Old and New Testaments each week that deal with what scripture tells us about poverty and justice. If you are interested in learning more about *The Poverty & Justice Bible* you can check on Amazon.com or go to [www.Justicebible.org](http://www.Justicebible.org).

<sup>19</sup> *When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the alien, the orphan, and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all your undertakings.* <sup>20</sup> *When you beat your olive trees, do not strip what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow.*

<sup>21</sup> *When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean what is left; it shall be for the alien, the orphan, and the widow.* <sup>22</sup> *Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this. Deut. 24:19-20*

Most farms, indeed virtually all businesses, emphasize efficiency. Minimizing waste is essential to maintaining maximum efficiency. Yet the people of Israel were commanded to seek something less than maximum efficiency when it came to harvesting crops. In addition to the many commands to help the poor directly, it was recognized that the poor depended upon the leavings of the field. The poor would glean the fields for what the harvesters left behind. Through gleaning they could provide some food for their families. Modern charities like [Feed America First](http://www.FeedAmerica.org) seek to make use of good food that supermarkets discard to feed the hungry.

<sup>20</sup> *When you come together, it is not really to eat the Lord's supper.* <sup>21</sup> *For when the time comes to eat, each of you goes ahead with your own supper, and one goes hungry and another becomes drunk.* <sup>22</sup> *What! Do you not have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you show contempt for the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What should I say to you? Should I commend you? In this matter I do not commend you.* 1 Cor 11:20-22 NRSV

Concern for the poor versus the avarice of the wealthy is also a common theme in the New Testament. In 1 Corinthians Paul is angry at the wealthy members of the Corinthian Church because they have no concern for the poorer members of the Church. Rather than wait until the poor can arrive for food and fellowship, the wealthy were consuming all the food brought to the communal meal.

## **Mid-Year Budget Report**

### **From Rodger Klein, Chairperson of Finance**

As we reach the middle of the year and enter the third quarter, it is an appropriate time for us to take a look at our church budget and how we are doing with regard to our finances. Trinity UMC is very blessed financially and we are fortunate to be in a position where we have no debt and significant cash reserves. As always we give thanks to God for generously blessing our church with these financial resources.

Looking at our giving, however, we have not achieved our budget for giving this year and unless things change, we are facing a significant budget deficit as we approach our fiscal year end (12/31/13). We are controlling our expenses, but our collections from week-to-week have fallen short of our expectations. This is not new for us at Trinity, but I wanted our congregation to be aware of our situation so that we can try to address this problem as we move forward toward the end of the year. Currently, our Sunday collections are on a trend that will leave us approximately \$21,000 short of our budget for this line item, or about 15.8%.

I wanted to make everyone aware of this fact and ask each of our members to review their personal giving patterns so that we can try to make up this shortfall over the remaining months of the year. In the past, Trinity has not used a system of pledges in order to manage our financial needs, but we have communicated with our members when we needed to ask for some additional giving in order to balance our budget. Last year, we were in a similar situation as we approached the end of the year, but year-end giving and a few special gifts helped us to finish 2012 with a balanced budget.

Again, please consider your personal giving to our church and help us if you can.

## **Graceworks' Ministries**

Graceworks has on-going needs in their ministries to the community. In particular, at the present time, the following items are in short supply:

Toilet Paper	Shampoo/Conditioner
Razors	Shaving Cream
Dishwashing Liquid	Cleaning Supplies
Laundry Detergent	Soap
Toothpaste	Toothbrushes

If you are able to contribute any of these items, please bring them by the Church and we will deliver them. Graceworks has experienced a dramatic increase in the need for children's fuel bags. Please consider donations of money or the individual items as we seek to support this important ministry. Graceworks is also beginning a capital campaign to raise money for a larger building. Please consider donating to this effort. Thank you for your support of this ministry.

### **Still Looking for Worship Leaders**

The Worship Ministry is central to any church because it involves the majority of the members every week. Central to the Worship Ministry is the leadership of the laity. Judy Richardson and I are trying to organize the worship leadership schedule so that it is easier for people to plan in advance when they will be serving as **Greeters, Liturgists, Ushers and Counters**.

I would very much like to see greater participation in worship leadership from the laity. If you would like to make worship leadership part of your ministry in the church, please contact either Judy Richardson or Rev. Meaker.

### **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.

### **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

**August 25<sup>th</sup> Sermon: God's Call.** Who does God call to minister to the world? Is God calling you? My texts are Psalm 71:1-6 and Jeremiah 1:4-10.

**September 1<sup>st</sup> Sermon: The Un-dinner Party.** What if you threw a grand party, but no one came? My texts are Hebrews 13:1-8, 15-16 and Luke 14:7-24.

## Worship Leaders Schedule

### August 25

Elaine Rohrig, **Liturgist**

Tommy & Jo Cotton, **Ushers**

Betty & Herb Haynes, **Greeters**

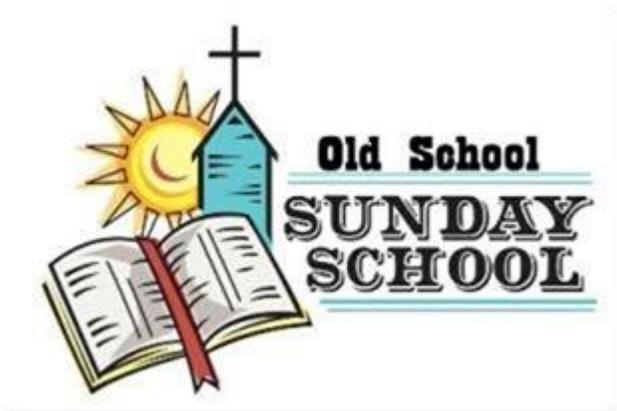
### September 1

Tom Moore, **Liturgist**

Maurice & Joyce Edwards, **Ushers**

Rodger & Cherry Klein, **Greeters**

## Announcements



You are invited to "**Old School Sunday School**" at **9:45** in the Fellowship Hall. We are singing, praying, studying scripture and caring for one another as we strive to become new people in Christ. Our curriculum is

Cokesbury's Adult Bible Studies and our template is Colossians 3:12-17. **Join us Sunday for "Old School Sunday School"!**

**“Companions in Christ” gathers at 9:45.** We are talking about how to be better companions to our fellow Christians, discover what our spiritual gifts are, and dig deeper into what we believe and why. Please come and enjoy this time with your church family and deepen your spiritual connection with God. We will meet in the Youth Sunday School room. All are welcome!

**Ministry with 61<sup>st</sup> Ave. UMC.** The remaining date to serve and worship this year is **November 16.**

**ATTENTION Finance Committee Members:**

**The following are future Finance Committee meeting dates:**

**September 14, 2013** – 2014 Budget Review and Approval

**October 19, 2013** – Review 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Financial Results

**January 18, 2014** – Review 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter & 2013 Financial Results

**Choir Rehearsal:** There will not be any rehearsals during the month of August.

**Men’s Group:** The men are looking forward to a **golf outing September 23** and will be hosting the **Pancake Breakfast October 12.** Details related to these events will be provided as the time draws nigh.

### **August Birthdays**

Mike Rohrig, Sarah Jordan, Larry Kirk, Charles Wilson, Dana Bauguess.

**Happy Birthday to each of you!**