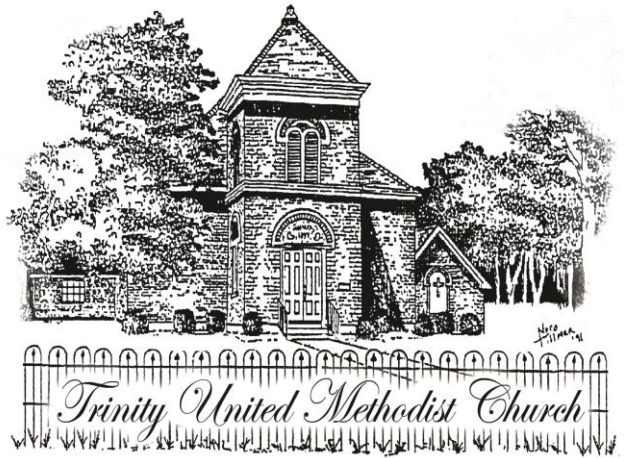




Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter

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Understanding the New Testament The Gospels: The Gospel of Luke

³ I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed. Luke 1:3 NRSV

²³ Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his work. He was the son (as was thought) of Joseph son of Heli, ... ³⁸ son of Enos, son of Seth, son of Adam, son of God. Luke 3:23, 38 NRSV

²⁰ Then he looked up at his disciples and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Luke 6:20 NRSV

The Gospel of Luke is the first book of a two volume work. The second book is Acts. Something that is not apparent in the translation of these texts is the quality of the written Greek. The quality of Greek used in Luke is superior to that used in either Matthew or Mark. Moreover, it is written in a Greek format used for histories. Taken together the two volumes do provide a history of the Church from its beginnings with Jesus and the Disciples through the ministries of the early Disciples and the "thirteenth Disciple" Paul. Church tradition holds that the author was a companion of Paul, possibly the "Luke" referenced in Col. 4:14; Philem. 24; and 2 Tim. 4:11. It is usually dated between 80 and 85 CE. Both volumes were written to a certain Theophilus. The name was not uncommon and some have speculated that Theophilus was a highly placed Roman Administrator in a place to help Christians who were being persecuted. However, literally translated the name means "lover of God" or "God's Beloved." Most scholars believe that the book is addressed to the Church; "God's Beloved."

Although the author may have been Jewish there is reason to believe that he fully embraced Paul's theology that Christ came for the salvation of the world. Unlike Matthew who penned a genealogy that linked Christ to Abraham and emphasized Jesus' Jewish heritage, Luke's genealogy traces Jesus back to Adam, the "son" of God. Luke 3:38.

One of the most distinctive aspects of the Gospel of Luke is his focus on the poor. This begins early with the magnificat, the song of praise that is attributed to Mary before Jesus' birth:

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty. Luke 1:51-53.

This theme is enhanced with the birth of Jesus in a manger, the meanest of accommodations. Rather than wise scholars discerning Jesus' birth as a King from the position of the stars, angels give the news to shepherds in a field. Shepherds at that time were looked upon much as gypsies in later day European culture. They were not prosperous farmers, but people who had no homes but the tents they lived in and who wandered the hills. Thus, the first people to receive the Good News of the birth of Jesus were among the lowliest in the land. When Jesus begins his ministry, he uses the Isaiah text describing the Jubilee Year, the time when all debts were supposed to be forgiven and slaves were to be freed:

He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.*

*He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,*

¹⁹ *to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”*

²⁰ *And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹ Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” Luke 4:16-21. NRSV.*

Where Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, blesses the “poor in Spirit,” Jesus in the Sermon on the Plain in Luke blesses the poor and hungry. Luke 6:20-21. In the parable “the Rich Man and Lazarus” the rich man is sentenced to everlasting torment not because he was evil but because he was indifferent to the suffering of Lazarus. Lazarus enters into an afterlife of bliss not because he was good but because he had none of the good things while he was living. Luke 16:19-31. The “Rich Fool” fails to be “rich toward God,” hoarding all he owns. Luke 12:13-21. Again and again, Luke warns about the danger of allowing wealth to get between you and a relationship with God.

Luke is the last of the synoptics (See the article on the Gospel of Mark.) It has almost all of the material from Mark and much of the material from the missing “Q source” that the writer of Matthew draws upon. It also has a number of stories unique to Luke. These include the “Rich Fool” and the “Rich Man and Lazarus.” Also unique to Luke is the parable of the Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, the story of Zacchaeus and many others. In some ways the Gospel of Luke is the richest source in the bible for the stories and teaching of Jesus.

Above all, Luke wants us to understand that God is a God of love and grace. It is in Luke that we hear the story of the Prodigal Son. After the Son demands his inheritance before his father's death and comes crawling back home, the Father does not punish but rejoices in the son's repentance. The father models the unending grace of God. And, it is in Luke that Jesus offers a prayer for grace from the cross:

³⁴ *Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” Luke 23:24 NRSV*

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 and justice, 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.

¹³ *You shall not have in your bag two kinds of weights, large and small.* ¹⁴ *You shall not have in your house two kinds of measures, large and small.* ¹⁵ *You shall have only a full and honest weight; you shall have only a full and honest measure, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.* ¹⁶ *For all who do such things, all who act dishonestly, are abhorrent to the LORD your God. Deut 25:13-16 NRSV.*

“It’s not personal, it’s just business.” As noted a few weeks ago in connection with another passage of scripture, the Bible doesn’t recognize a separation between our “faith life” and our “business life.” They are one and the same and whatever we do that affects the lives of others is God’s concern. In this instance the law of Israel, of God, demanded that people not use false weights and measures to cheat others. All who act dishonestly are insulting God. Thus Wesley encouraged all Methodists to earn as much as they could, but only through honest means that did not harm others.

²⁰ *So they watched him and sent spies who pretended to be honest, in order to trap him by what he said, so as to hand him over to the jurisdiction and authority of the governor.* ²¹ *So they asked him, “Teacher, we know that you are right in what you say and teach, and you show deference to no one, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth.* ²² *Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?”* ²³ *But he perceived their craftiness and said to them,* ²⁴ *“Show me a denarius. Whose head and whose title does it bear?”* They said, *“The emperor’s.”* ²⁵ *He said to them, “Then give to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”* ²⁶ *And they were not able in the presence of the people to trap him by what he said; and being amazed by his answer, they became silent. Luke 20:20-26*

The Gospel of Luke provides a different twist to the concept of honest dealing; pretending to be a friend or genuine disciple when you are actually seeking to hurt someone. As outlined in the passage above, Jesus saw through such ruses, but we often do not. Central to the biblical concept of Justice is honesty in all our dealings with one another. We can disagree, but they should be “honest disagreements” where we have disclosed our hearts to one another.

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

September 1st 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 14:15-24.

September 8th Sermon: Gracious Gifting. The Gospel is premised upon sharing a gift. But, how do we communicate the Gospel to people who don't know how to give? My Texts are psalm 139:1-18 and Luke 14:1, 7-14.

Worship Leaders Schedule

September 1

Rachel Newman, **Liturgist**

Rodger & Cherry Klein, **Ushers**

Mike & Elaine Rohrig, **Greeters**

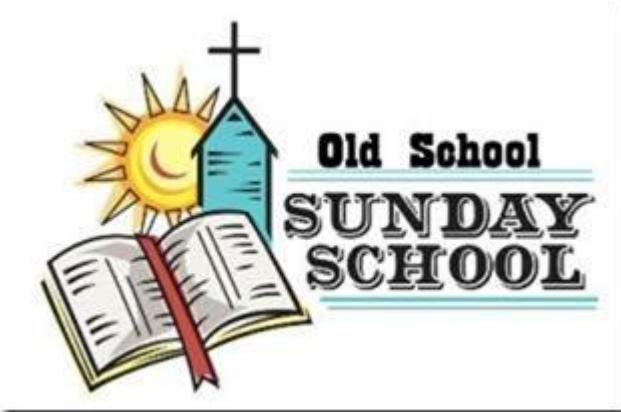
September 8

Marty Bauguess, **Liturgist**

Maurice & Joyce Edwards, **Ushers**

Tom & Julia Moore, **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"!**

Hal and Rachel Newman will be leading the singing in Fellowship hall at 9:45 AM this Sunday. All are welcome!

"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 61st Ave. UMC. The remaining date to serve and worship this year is **November 16.**

Exciting News: A gospel sing is being planned for **Thursday, October 17** at **6:00 PM.** Further details will be provided closer to the event.

Mark your calendars for Sunday, October 13. This is **Worship Leadership Sunday.** Following the service, **Worship Leadership Volunteer Training** will take place from 12:00 – 1:00. **All persons who participate as Worship Leaders, Ushers, Greeters, Liturgists, Acolytes,** etc. are encouraged to attend this training. Further details will be provided closer to this event.

ATTENTION Finance Committee Members:

The following are future Finance Committee meeting dates:

September 14, 2013 – 2014 Budget Review and Approval

October 19, 2013 – Review 3rd Quarter Financial Results

January 18, 2014 – Review 4th Quarter & 2013 Financial Results

Choir Rehearsal: Rehearsal is scheduled for September 4 at 7:00 PM.

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.

September Birthdays

Millie Fly, Elva Beard, Joann Harper, Jessica Bauguess, Wanda Folds, GL Jones, Bill LeCates

Happy Birthday to each of you!