



Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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June 12, 2013

The Shadow of the Valley of Death

⁴ *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Ps 23:4 KJV*

I have been at Brentwood UMC since Monday morning attending Annual Conference. We had an inspiring Ordination Service Monday night that ended with an invitation to those who felt called to ministry to come to the altar. Several young people answered that invitation and were prayed over by Bishop McAlilly and some of the District Superintendents. We also had an excellent Bible Study session Tuesday morning. The Bible Study was led by Rev. Dr. Derrick-Lewis Noble. One topic he covered is the basis for this article.

The Valley of the Shadow of Death is a way of talking about those very real things in our lives that threaten us: sickness, depression, loss of a job, loss of a loved one, death. But the Psalm speaks of the shadow cast over our lives by such things. See also Isaiah 25:7-8 ⁷ NRSV *And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations;* ⁸ *he will swallow up death forever.* Dr. Noble made three points about the nature of shadows that we should all keep in mind.

- 1. A shadow is larger than the thing casting the shadow.** From an early age we learn that often the things we fear either do not take place or are not as devastating as we feared. We need not minimize the effect of those things that threaten our lives, but we should also not respond to the shadow they cast. If we allow it, the shadow can consume our lives and joy as effectively as the thing we fear.
- 2. A shadow cannot hurt us.** This principle follows from the first. It is rational to take precautions to deal with the thing that is threatening us. But, if we focus on the shadow instead we will not be ready to meet the real threat.
- 3. A shadow cannot exist without a light.** The Gospel of John tells us, *What has come into being ⁴ in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.* John 1:4-5. Whatever it is that threatens us, we are not alone. No matter where we go, we are never outside of the presence of God. Psalm 139.

Brooks Crowell is the Lay Representative for Trinity. He and I will report on Annual Conference next week.

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.

Throughout scriptures, God's concern for the oppressed and hungry is affirmed. We saw this in one of last week's scripture readings, Psalm 146:

...⁵ *Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD their God,
6 who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them;
who keeps faith forever;
7 who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry...*

In a similar vein is the *Magnificat*, the song of praise sung by Mary, the Mother of Jesus, when she hears her relative Elizabeth pass on the prophesy she has received about Mary's child. In part Mary proclaims:

⁵⁰ *His [God] mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
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 1:50-53 NRSV.*

In the Kingdom of God proclaimed by Christ, the poor and oppressed are served.

Travel Log From Dorise and Bill

I received the following travel update from Dorise and Bill this past week.

Travel Journal III - 31-Day Transatlantic Crossing & Baltic Voyage 2013

During our adventure in London, we experienced a couple of unique events. We were there during the beginning of the celebration and festivities of the 60th anniversary of the Queen's Coronation. We saw (actually from the top of the Eye) the Trooping of the Colors as they were marching to Buckingham Palace - quite colorful and impressive. Then, while in the square at St. Paul's Cathedral the bells began ringing - very loudly - but the sound was beautiful. I do not know how long they were to ring, but they were ringing the entire time

that we were there. Our tour guide, who has lived in London for 33 years, said it was the first time she had heard the bells ring. They only ring for very important state (i.e., the funeral of Sir Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher) or religious events, so we were thrilled to be there to experience this rare occasion.

Our following day at sea was 'challenging', although we were fine. The North Sea was a bit angry, and with near hurricane force winds, we bounced around for most of the day and evening. Our captain attempted to move away from the disturbance, but there was no escaping. However, the following two days in Denmark were beautiful and sunny with just enough breeze to require a light jacket. It was great to have two days in Copenhagen - a truly spectacular city and beautiful country. Watch out for the cyclists! There are over 35,000 bicycle riders in the city, and they do not have horns and do not yield to pedestrians. Denmark is the smallest Scandinavian country (less than twice the size of Massachusetts) and borders the Baltic and North Seas. With a population of 1.2 million residents, Denmark is reportedly the happiest country in the world, and everyone we encountered did appear happy! The first day we toured Copenhagen via coach and canal. The mini-cruise through the harbor and canals was gorgeous. The harbor is clean and the canals lined with cafes, restaurants, shops and spectacular architecture. The second day we toured more of Copenhagen and visited the famous Tivoli Gardens (which were Walt Disney's inspiration for Disney World). It is a 160 year old amusement park with cafes, restaurants and gorgeous gardens. A very beautiful place to relax and stroll around. We also saw the Little Mermaid (created by Edvard Eriksen in 1913 and based on the beloved Hans Christian Anderson character) that watches over the harbor entrance from the water's edge near Churchillparken. We saw Amalienborg Palace, where the royal family resides. Behind the palace is an amazingly grand Lutheran Church - the fifth largest in the world (80% of Denmark's residents are members of the Lutheran faith). It took 200 years to complete the church because the builders ran out of money, but today it stands regal and complete! There is currently a lot of 'digging' going on in the city where they are in the process of building an underground Metro system.

June 5th, we were in Warnemunde, Germany. What a spectacular area, and the countryside is stunningly beautiful with a lot of fields of corn and various grains. We had a gorgeous day for touring and sightseeing, and found the German people to be amazingly polite and helpful. The economy here depends greatly on tourism and their warm attitude certainly makes everyone feel welcome. We rode a historic narrow-gauge steam train (known as the Molli - 100+ years old) between the lovely little towns of Bad Doberan and Heiligendamm. One of the stops on our tour was at a 14th century Monastery which was magnificent. Then we saw the hotel where a G8 Conference was held during President Bush's (GW) presidency - it was in a lovely rural area.

In the U.S. we think our gas prices are high, in Germany prices are more than twice the price of gas in the U.S. I guess we shouldn't complain; actually, everything is so expensive in this part of the world, I don't understand how people survive.

June 6th, we spent the day at sea enroute to Tallinn, Estonia. A bit of excitement! A life raft containing what appeared to be a person was spotted afloat in the sea. The captain turned the ship around and launched a rescue boat to investigate and rescue if needed. As it turned out, after all the excitement, it was a 'dummy' (the plastic type)! Apparently some ship had performed a rescue drill and did not recover the 'victim' or raft! At least the outcome was good, and Holland America is to be applauded for their actions. If it had been a real person, at least they would have been rescued (or recovered).

We are experiencing very short nights now. The sun sets after 11 pm and rises just after 4 am - who wants to go to bed when the sun is still shining! It certainly makes for very long and lovely evenings.

We have been so lucky with the weather in the Baltic - our day in Tallinn was gorgeous. Estonia is an amazing country. They got their independence from Russia in 1991, and evidently have had great leadership because their economy is very strong. Surprisingly, English is the main language taught in their schools with Russian being second. They do have their own language, Estonian, but it is a very difficult language for non-residents to learn, for one thing, there are no prepositions or past tenses! In addition to touring the city, we visited an open-air museum which was very interesting; there we were treated to a performance by local dancers.

Last evening, our entertainment in the ship's showroom was Den & Bobbie West who hail from Nashville. They used to live in Fairview (a small town near Franklin) but now reside in Rock Island, TN. They put on a great performance. We met them after the show and they were thrilled to see some fellow Tennesseans. Small world!

June 8th & 9th, we were in Russia, spending two days in St. Petersburg. It is hard to comprehend how huge Russia is - it spans 9 time zones (just as a reference, we are currently 9 hours ahead of our home time in Franklin). We did a tour of the city on the 8th, and spent some time just walking around the town center. There was no problem getting through immigration and we felt safe; however, we had been warned about pick-pockets and one of the ship's passengers fell victim. Fortunately, she didn't lose her passport as it was in a separate section of her little bag. Losing one's passport would be a nightmare, made even worse because we are there on the weekend. On the 9th we did an all day tour and visited the Summer Palace of Peterhof - beautiful palace surrounded by gorgeous gardens and amazing fountains. We enjoyed lunch at a restaurant on the grounds of the palace, and then traveled back to St. Petersburg via a hydrofoil - a new experience for both of us. It was a very smooth and fun ride and seeing St. Petersburg from the water was really a treat.

Companions in Christ Class Meeting Sunday Mornings

Sunday's at 10:00: "Companions in Christ" - The Small Group Sunday School Class will be 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! *Nanette Noffsinger.*

Graceworks' Ministries

I delivered a trunk full of food to Graceworks Ministry this past week for the Fuel Bag program. This food, along with a number of cash donations, was given out of the generosity of this faith community. 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 to Graceworks. Thanks 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

June 16, 2013: I Want It. Three simple words that are at the root of so much pain and suffering. My texts are Luke 7:36–50 and 1 Kings 21:1–21a.

June 23, 2013: Demon Fear. There are a number of scriptures that deal with demons. Most people never know how to respond to these scriptures, questioning whether demons actually exist. However, I am positive one demon does exist: Demon Fear. My texts are 1 Kings 19:1–15a and Luke 8:26–39.

Worship Leaders Schedule

June 16

Rachel Newman, **Liturgist**
Maurice & Joyce Edwards, **Ushers**
Betty & Herb Haynes, **Greeters**

June 23

Julia Moore, **Liturgist**
Charles Wilson & Ross Crutcher, **Ushers**
Tommy & Jo Cotton, **Greeters**

Announcements

Sunday School Adult Classes: There are two adult Sunday School classes to choose from. One meets at 9:45 in the Fellowship hall and the other meets in the classroom next to the Nursery at 10:00. Faith development is part of our discipleship commitment.

An Adult Sunday School Class, “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! *Nanette Noffsinger.*

The other adult class meets in Fellowship Hall at 9:45 AM.

Wednesday, June 12 at 7pm – Choir Rehearsal

Our Annual Fish Fry and Bake Sale is scheduled for Saturday, June 22, 4:00 – 7:00 PM.

This is an important event for our church. Please see the sign-up sheet on the bulletin board for assignment of responsibilities. If you prefer another assignment, feel free to make that change.

Please invite your friends and neighbors to attend this wonderful event.

The Women of the Church are hosting a **Bake Sale** which will take place in Fellowship Hall at the same time as the fish fry. **The Chairpersons of the Bake Sale are Elva Beard (395-4446) and Nancy Conway (423-0545)**, They are counting on donations of baked items which can be brought to church Saturday during the day. This bake sale is our only fund raiser for funds to support our ministries in the community. Please call Elva or Nancy if you have questions about this event. Please pray for the success of both the fish fry and the bake sale..

The dates for our church to prepare and serve dinner at **61st Street** are as follows: **August 17, and November 16**. We will also be participating at the Christmas Toy Store, dates TBD.

June Birthdays

Tom Holt, Jo Cotton, Nancy Conway, Kenneth Stevens, Larry Eastwood, June Pollard.