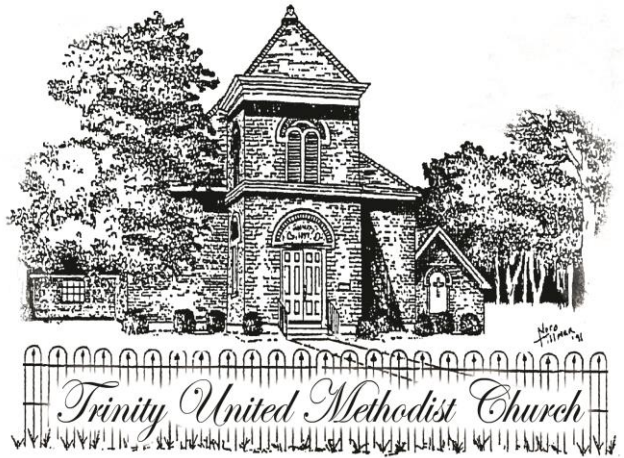




Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter

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June 19, 2013

Why First Corinthians Is My Favorite Book of the Bible

¹⁶ The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? ¹⁷ Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians has long been my favorite book of the bible. In it Paul explains to the Church at Corinth who they are and whose they are. They are a people whose lives are to be built on the foundation of Christ's atoning sacrificing and they are a people who belong to God. And, on top of everything else, they are people just like you and me. Paul is not speaking to people who have everything worked out; people who never make mistakes. Indeed, much of Paul's letter focuses on the shortcomings of the people at Corinth. But it is these people that Paul declares are the Body of Christ.

First and foremost, 1 Corinthians is a book about Christ. Paul uses the word 'Christ' nine times in the first nine verses of the letter. These verses set the tone for the whole letter. The letter is to be about Christ and the people's relationship to Christ.

He then addresses divisions in the church based upon the identity of the Apostle who baptized different members. Some in the Church are apparently claiming special status based upon the fact that they were baptized by Paul, or Cephas (the Apostle Peter) or Apollos. Paul brings the focus back to Christ:

¹³ Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 1 Cor 1:13

Paul proclaims that **the** Gospel is Christ crucified; Christ who died for our sins and was resurrected.

Beginning in Chapter 5, Paul begins addressing some specific problems in the church. These include members who are engaging in sexual immorality and members who are suing one another in court. There may have also been members who engaged in other activity considered immoral. Paul condemned these persons and called upon them to repent. There was also a lively discussion taking place around marriage. Most in the church at this time, including Paul, believed that Christ's return would take place at any moment and that it was a distraction to commit to a marriage. Nevertheless, Paul advised people to get married if they wished. Another discussion involved the issue of eating food sacrificed to idols. The argument was presented that, since idols were not really Gods, there was no reason not to eat such food. Paul pointed out that while there was only one God, the eating of such food might lead a new believer to worship other Gods and should be avoided for that

reason. In that context he spoke of our Christian freedom and emphasized that our free will must be exercised responsibly.

By the time we get to Chapter 10 it is clear that the people in Corinth are not unlike people everywhere. Some want to feel that they are better than others. Some want to feel that they are smarter than others. Some want to do whatever they please. Some are cruel to one another. Paul's dilemma is how to help these people understand that they are the Body of Christ.

Paul begins the process of laying out a theology for the church in chapter 10 in connection with the discussion about eating food offered to idols. It is here that he makes the statement about the nature of the Lord's supper set out above. **Eating and drinking the bread and the cup make us one in Christ.** This theological statement in 10:16-17 is so central to our faith that it is incorporated into our communion liturgy.

At this point, Paul moves into a discussion about orderly worship. This section is often puzzling to modern readers because of its discussion of what men and women should wear while praying and prophesying (i.e. preaching) during worship. Prostitutes are believed to have displayed their hair for all to see and apparently some of the women in the worship services are letting their hair become unbound. This is a distraction to others. **Note that Paul does not state here that women should not be praying and preaching in Church.** Paul does want to those participating in worship to do so in an orderly manner that does not detract from worship.

Paul then returns to his focus on Christ and the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper at this time was celebrated, in part, as a community meal whenever the Church came together. Rich members of the church are coming to worship and eating all the food before those who are poorer or slaves can arrive. To Paul's way of thinking, the rich members are showing disdain for Christ and for their brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul believes that the rich members are taking the Lord's Supper "unworthily" by acting in this manner. The "worthy" manner to celebrate the Lord's Supper is by discerning that Christ is a part of the celebration and that the Lord's Supper is to be celebrated by everyone in the Church at the same time. In this section Paul also lays out the earliest known teaching concerning the Lord's Supper. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.

Having established that Christ should be at the center of our lives; the celebration of the Lord's supper should make us one with Christ and one with each other; Paul then proceeds to Chapter 12 where he explains that every person in the church is part of that unity in Christ; part of the Body of Christ. He uses the analogy of the human body and all its parts. The key theological points about this section are:

1. God created the diversity that we see around us. We all have different gifts that we bring to the body of Christ and all those gifts are needed.
2. Once you have been made a part of the body of Christ you cannot be "unmade." An eye cannot declare itself separated from the body; the head cannot proclaim that the feet don't belong to the body. Those parts can cease to work, but they are still part of the body.
3. What happens to one of us affects all of us.

Paul then proceeds to Chapter 13 where he explains how we are to live together. We are to have love for one another. Love that forgives each other's shortcomings, that does not demand its own way, that is not angry or arrogant or rude. Indeed, the way Paul sees it if you do not have love for one another in the church you have nothing. In order for the Body of Christ, the Church, to function we must have love for one another.

The last part of Paul's theology is laid out in Chapter 15. While Paul preaches Christ crucified it is the resurrection of Christ that affirms God's victory over sin and death. Without the resurrection of Christ, Paul explains, the people's sins have not been forgiven and the Gospel is meaningless.

For many Christians it is Paul's letter to the Romans that they think of when asked about the theology of Christianity. It is Paul's letter to the Romans where he explains that we have been saved through faith alone. Nevertheless, if you have the time I encourage you to go back and re-read First Corinthians. If you would understand who and what we are to be as the church, the Body of Christ, First Corinthians is the starting place.

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.

Exodus 16:2-4

² *The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness.* ³ *The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."*

⁴ *Then the LORD said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and **gather enough for that day**. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not.*

A theme that appears throughout scripture is that all blessings come from God and that God's blessings are not to be hoarded. This lesson was made a part of the life of the people of Israel during their wanderings in the wilderness. The manna they ate came from God each day, but they were admonished to not collect more than a day's worth except on the day before the Sabbath. If they tried, they lost the extra they tried to set aside.

Matthew 5:1-3:

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² *Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:*

³ *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

This passage is often confusing to people because they assume that a Christian should be rich in spirit. The Greek here is subtle. Another translation of this section is:

³ *"God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. New Living Translation.*

One who is “poor in spirit” is humble before God and knows that all they have comes from God.

New Travel Log From Dorise and Bill

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

Travel Journal V: 31-Day Transatlantic Crossing & Baltic Voyage 2013

I attached a picture to my previous travel update, and the internet system just couldn't handle the extra data in a timely manner (and internet minutes on the ship are not free!). Will share pictures later.

Germany is so beautiful and we have been told that other parts of Germany are even more gorgeous than the area we are in. Our sail through the Kiel Canal was spectacular. The Kiel Canal is an artificial canal - 61 miles long, linking the Baltic Sea (at Kiel-Holtenau) and the North Sea (at Brunsbützel). It is the world's busiest artificial waterway. The sail takes about 10 hours, but that time can be longer depending on when the ship can get into the locks. Due to delays entering and exiting, we were about 3 hours late arriving in Hamburg Thursday evening. However, it was a gorgeous sail-in at Hamburg as it was still daylight when we arrived at 9:00 pm. There is a live website at www.kiel-canal.de where you can witness ships transiting. It was originally called the Kaiser-Wilhelm Canal until 1948 when it became the Kiel Canal. People come to the canal banks to see, photograph, wave at those on the ships, and some even have huge welcome flags that they wave. It was raining most of the day, but the residents were out in their rain gear and with umbrellas to welcome the ship. When we exited the canal we went on the Elbe River to Hamburg (nice to be on a small ship and be able to get into these smaller locations), and on a pier/dock just before we got into the city, people were playing music and welcoming us to Hamburg.

Hamburg is a huge port, the largest in Germany, and the third largest in Europe. It is a lovely city and although there is obviously a lot of new buildings, the planners were careful to preserve what remained of the old city. Two-thirds of the urban area is parkland sometimes making it easy to forget you are in one of Germany's most important commercial centers. We took the train to Berlin. Words cannot describe the feeling of walking through the Brandenburg Gate and the thrill of seeing the American Embassy, Old Glory flying, standing proudly by the gate and in EAST Berlin. Our embassy occupies a place of honor by the German people - it is a chilling and thrilling experience. We saw the Reichstag Building (Hitler's headquarters and home of the Third Reich), and what remains of the Berlin Wall which stood from 1949 - 1989 (the remaining section is much larger than I ever imagined). Also, 'drove' by the spot where Hitler committed suicide (the area has been paved over for a parking lot with nothing to mark the site). We visited Checkpoint Charlie, and saw the Charlottenburg Palace, the oldest surviving Prussian palace. We walked through the Holocaust Memorial and it is amazing. It was built by the Germans to honor the Jews which makes it quite unusual. Memorials are not usually built for victims by the aggressor.

Our train ride into Berlin was fabulous, but on the return trip we experienced how the locals live. We had reserved (very comfortable) seats going to the city, but our returning train was unable to make it due to the flooding going on in the country. So, we had to hop on a coach (no reserved seats, and not luxurious ones either!) for the return to Hamburg. We were lucky to get a seat, and many were left standing or sitting on the floor - guess the locals are accustomed to it as they didn't seem to mind. The train station in Berlin was a

logistical wonder - built in 2006, it is enormous and an experience, too, as most Americans are just not real familiar with train stations! We had a fabulous day. Bill couldn't believe that he was in the heart of Berlin and 30seeing all the sights that he has only read about or seen in documentaries or movies.

We sailed out of Hamburg yesterday morning and the sail on the Elbe River was very scenic, beautiful country. We will be sailing the North Sea, arriving in Tilbury/London Sunday evening. We will spend a week in Southern England before setting sail on the Queen Mary II for New York on June 24th.

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 this 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 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.

June 30, 2013: Walk the Road. We just don't get it. Too much of the time, we just don't get it. Too much of the time this Christian stuff just passes us by. When Jesus talks about the Kingdom of God we can't seem to connect with him. What does it mean to be a Disciple? My texts are Galatians 5:1, 13–25 and Luke 9:51–62.

Worship Leaders Schedule

June 23

Julia Moore, **Liturgist**

Charles Wilson & Ross Crutcher, **Ushers**

Tommy & Jo Cotton, **Greeters**

June 30

Rodger Klein, **Liturgist**

Mike & Elaine Rohrig, **Ushers**

Charles Wilson & Ross Crutcher, **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 9:45. 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*

Wednesday, June 19, 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal

Special Meeting for all who are working on the Fish Fry. There will be a meeting **Thursday, June 20 at 6:00 PM** to discuss the final details for this event. Please plan to attend this meeting.

Our Annual Fish Fry and Bake Sale are scheduled for this 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 plan to attend and 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 looking forward to donations of baked items which can be brought to church Saturday during the day. This bake sale is our only fundraiser 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..

Ministry with 61st Ave. UMC. The last two dates for our church to prepare and serve dinner at **61st Ave UMC this year** are **August 17, and November 16**. We will also be participating at the 61st Ave UMC Christmas Toy Store, dates TBD.

June Birthdays

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