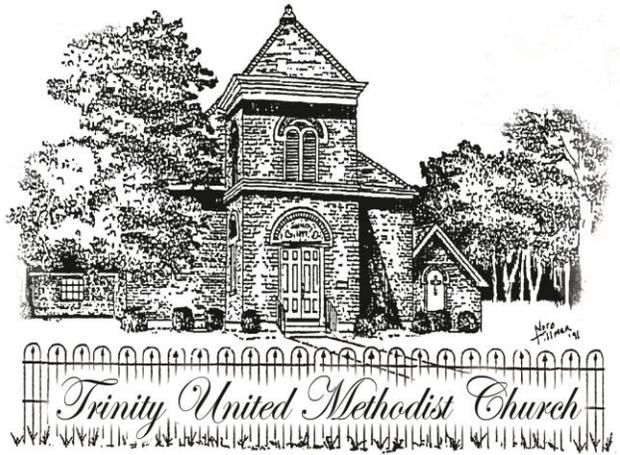




# Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter

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## Passionate Worship

*<sup>6</sup> Let everything that breathes praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Psalm 150:6.*

One of the five practices of effective congregations is passionate worship. But what is passionate worship? Does it require a praise band, an organ, a piano or no instruments at all? Should the music be loud or soft? Should we sing Gospel or Mozart? Should the pastor wear a robe, a suit or jeans? Must the congregation be quiet or vocal?

The answer to all the above questions is, "Yes." Passionate worship can take many forms. Some worship services are very structured with liturgies that have been largely unchanged for decades or centuries. A Roman Catholic Mass is an example. Some worship services are very active and spontaneous with testimonies, shouts of "amen" or even speaking in tongues. Others, like the Quaker's, are very contemplative. The Quakers gather quietly and wait expectantly for whatever happens. From time to time someone may be moved to stand and say a few words, to "preach." Or they may offer a scripture or even a song. Or, the community may gather for a time and simply sit in silence. And some worship services are like our own blended services with new liturgies mixing with old, with a variety of music and other expressions of faith. However, any of the above forms may result in a worship service that never stirs the soul. Clearly it is not the form of worship that governs passionate worship.

From time to time I have the opportunity to help new pastors who are preparing for their ordination interviews with the Board of Ordained Ministry. When I ask them why we worship some will say that we do it to honor God or because it pleases God. Some even say that God desires our worship. They are startled to hear me say that God receives nothing from us and does not desire our praise. To help them understand the concept I ask them if they would receive satisfaction from the adoration of a class of nursery age children? There are a number of places in scripture where God declares that God is unimpressed with liturgy and worship. See e.g. Isaiah 58:1-11; Amos 5:21-27; Matt 25:31-46. God desires a faithful people.

Why then do we worship? As Brooks Crowell reminded us last Sunday, worship is for our own benefit. Worship reminds us **who we are and whose we are**. We are a people called to be the Body of Christ and we belong to God. Passionate worship affirms who we are and whose we are.

The first “act of worship” each week may be overlooked by many people. It is the simple act of gathering together for worship. We, as a people who believe in God and Jesus Christ, gather together in one place to affirm those beliefs in the sight of God and each other and the community. We are the Body of Christ and by coming together each Sunday we affirm that we understand that we are the Body of Christ and that we belong to God. Where two or more are gathered, worship can take place. While one is certainly able to contemplate the nature of God while hiking in the mountains or playing golf, worship is a corporate activity.

Our opening prayer is a form of centering prayer. We acknowledge that God is always with us and we ask God’s help in opening our minds to God’s presence and by asking God’s help in being present for God. The music that follows, and indeed all the music in the service, is chosen with care each week to compliment the scripture passages and the sermon topic. In a real sense all the music taken together is a second sermon that may speak more clearly than the spoken sermon.

The call to worship is an act of corporate worship affirming who and whose we are. Likewise, the opening hymn is chosen to affirm us as the Body of Christ that belongs to God.

The next section of the worship service is receiving the written and spoken word. Two scripture passages, usually complementary, are read. The Children’s sermon is an effort, more successful at some times than others, to relate the Gospel to the lives of our young people. If the Gospel we preach cannot be related to the everyday experience of our children then we are failing to communicate the Gospel. For that reason I make every effort to connect the Gospel with something that the young people have experienced. That becomes harder as the age range of the children increases. Still, it is hoped that week after week a connection can be built that will assist our young people in their own faith journey.

The sermon seeks to do the same thing. If the Gospel does not touch our lives as adults it is dead; meaningless; useless. When I approach a scripture text I am always asking myself, “Where is the Gospel message?” Where is the Good News? In discussing the Gospel it might be necessary to discuss cultural and historical backgrounds, but if I allow the sermon to become a lecture I’ve failed. However, there is an aspect of preaching that all pastors rely upon: the presence of the Holy Spirit. Many times people will tell me that they liked a sermon. I appreciate that. Any sermon represents hours of preparation and the affirmation is appreciated. Sometimes people will describe a particular section that was meaningful. That is also appreciated. Finally there are those who tell me that what I said about subject X was just what they needed to hear. I always thank them too, even though I never said a thing about subject X. Somehow, something I said was an aid in that person hearing the Word of God that they needed that day. My assumption is that they heard the Word of God directly from the Holy Spirit.

Following the Word read and proclaimed, the congregation is given an opportunity to respond. Some of this response is structured. The Hymn of Response is already selected, as is the Apostles Creed. Likewise, the prayer of Confession is a liturgy used each week. However, the sharing of joys and concerns does provide an opportunity for the community to respond to the scriptures and sermon as well as raise other joys and concerns. And the time of private confession also encourages the members of the community to reflect upon their own discipleship journey.

The pastoral prayer offers an opportunity to lift up the concerns that are the subject of the sermon, the concerns raised by the community and on-going concerns such as the welfare of our service people. I have tried to lift up our service people every week since we first went into Afghanistan

following 9/11. I fear that many people in the United States give little thought to our service people and that many forget that they are serving in dangerous places and engaging in dangerous missions because we, **through** our government, have sent them there. Regardless of how we might feel about the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, our service people must go where they are sent. They deserve our support during and after their service and too often they do not receive that support. It is appropriate that we remember them each week and that, **outside** of worship, we do all in our power to support them.

The Lord's **Prayer** is a declaration by the community of who and whose we are, in words shaped by Christ for the Church. When I lead the prayer I tend to emphasize the pronouns of the prayer. We really are praying for God's will to be done on earth even though having that happen might be contrary to what we might wish socially and politically. We are giving thanks for God's blessings and we are agreeing that we will forgive those who sins harm us. Emphasizing the pronouns in the prayer is a way of keeping the prayer from becoming something we say with little thought.

The offering provides an opportunity to place our money where our hearts are. Matthew 6:21. Giving freely from our blessings is a concept that is established early in scripture and reinforced repeatedly. See e.g. Exodus 25:2.

As most of you have no doubt noted, I usually close the service with the same benediction:

*You are the Body of Christ made so not through anything you have done but through the power of God's Spirit. Go forth, filled with the Spirit of God, and dare to be the presence of Christ in a world that so desperately needs the presence of Jesus Christ.*

I close with this benediction because I believe that it is vital that each Christian understand that they are a part of one another's lives and that they have a responsibility to God's world. That is a message that I fear often gets lost in what has become American Christianity with an overriding emphasis on accepting Christ as personal savior. Acceptance of Christ is, indeed, central to our faith as can be seen from our liturgy of Baptism. But we are also the Body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:27. This same sentiment can be found in the prayer used to close the liturgy of the Lord's Supper:

*We give you thanks for this Holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world, in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others in the name of Jesus Christ.*

Worship is something we do. Passionate worship, however celebrated, means worship that expresses our belief that we are the Body of Christ and that we belong to God. Passionate worship is not dependent upon style. Passionate worship can take place during a very high, liturgical service, a camp meeting service or a service punctuated by beating drums and electric guitars. It is the gathered community that makes worship "passionate worship."

Passionate worship begins with each of us making the commitment to gather each and every week as an expression of who we are and what we believe. Passionate worship is expressed in our reading of the scripture, the singing of hymns, and our prayers. Passionate worship is expressed in our celebration of the sacraments and, ultimately, in our lives. Passionate worship does not only take place in the gathered community on Sunday morning, but can take place wherever two or more are gathered in God's name. As the Psalmist says, *"Let everything that breathes praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!" Psalm 150:6.*

## 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>21</sup> *You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.* <sup>22</sup> *You shall not abuse any widow or orphan.* <sup>23</sup> *If you do abuse them, when they cry out to me, I will surely heed their cry.*  
*Exodus 22:21-23NRSV*

A recurring refrain in the law of Israel is the admonition from God to ‘remember you were once slaves in Egypt and I heard your cries.’ Here, that admonition is coupled with the concept of treating the resident alien in our midst as we would treat anyone else. From the New Testament is *Matthew 25:35*:

*...I was a stranger and you welcomed me,...*

When I was at West Nashville UMC my Lay leader was a man whose parents were “illegal immigrants.” His name was Zinkowicz and his parents had immigrated from Poland through Canada. They crossed into the US from Canada without visas or other immigration papers. His father volunteered for the Army and earned his citizenship after the Second World War. His is one of millions of stories of “illegal immigrants” over the last two hundred years.

Are there important and difficult issues involved in the immigration debate? Certainly. But as Christians we must also be mindful of the fact that borders are human creations and are not established by God. We should always be asking, “How would God expect us to treat the person before us?”

## 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 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 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.

**July 7, 2013: The Fourth of July:** Christ has set us free. What does that mean in the land of the free? My texts are Psalm 30 and Galatians 5:1, 13-25.

## Worship Leaders Schedule

### June 30

Rodger Klein, **Liturgist**

Mike & Elaine Rohrig, **Ushers**

Charles Wilson & Ross Crutcher, **Greeters**

### July 7

Elaine Rohrig, **Liturgist**

Sam Richardson & Larry Eastwood, **Ushers**

Betty & Herb Haynes, **Greeters**

## Announcements

**Fish Fry News:** At this time, the proceeds from the fish fry are \$8,492.00. The proceeds from the Bake Sale are \$850.00. The Fish fry money will go to support the missions of the church including the Africa Orphanage. Thank you to all who so generously donated time, hard work, baked items. We especially would like to acknowledge the leadership of Charles Wilson who has worked tirelessly to make the fish fry possible.

**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 26, 7:00pm** Choir Rehearsal

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

## June Birthdays

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