



# Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



2084 Wilson Pike · Franklin, TN 37067 · 615.794.2665  
Pastor Dennis Meaker: 615.794.2665 · djmeaker@gmail.com

May 1, 2013

## Create In Me A Clean Heart

- 10 *Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and put a new and right spirit within me.*
- 11 *Do not cast me away from your presence,  
and do not take your holy spirit from me.*
- 12 *Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and sustain in me a willing spirit.*

*31 The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 32 It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more. Jeremiah 31:31–34*

Which one of us has a clean heart? The Bible, in large part, is the story of humanity's unclean heart. The bible tells us that even the most unlikely people are capable of doing great wrong. Think about this for a moment. If I told you that a prominent historical figure in Germany once advocated, in writing, burning synagogues, destroying Jewish prayer books and confiscating the homes and property of Jews, whose name would come to mind first? Hitler? But in fact those words were written by Martin Luther, one of the most influential Christians in history. The father of Protestantism and a profound spiritual leader. Yet, in his heart, he was able to harbor the vilest hatreds, and those words were later used by the Nazis in their largely successful effort to take over the churches of Germany. How is it that in one moment we can be living the most devout Christian life and the next moment fall far away from any semblance of God's love?

Psalm 51 is a profound confession of sin and a plea for the mercy of God. It is attributed to King David as he prayed for the life of the baby born of his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba. David is described in scripture as a servant after the Lord's own heart. Scripture relates that God so loved David that he promised to re-establish a Kingdom from David's line. Many Jews viewed this as a promise that the Messiah would come from the line of David and Christians contend that the Messiah, Jesus Christ, did come from the line of David.

But notwithstanding God's love for David, and David's faithful service to God, David was capable of great evil. Recall the story. As King he spies upon Bathsheba, the wife of one of his officers. While her husband is away at war, David commits adultery with her and she becomes pregnant. David first conspires to conceal that the child is his and when it becomes plain that his scheme has failed he orders another of his officers to put Bathsheba's husband at the front of the attack and then pull away, leaving Bathsheba's husband to be killed in battle. In effect, he conspires to murder the husband of Bathsheba and her husband is indeed killed in battle. Still, after all of that, it is not until one of God's prophets confronts David that he acknowledges his sin to himself. Tradition holds that psalm 51 was the prayer David wrote acknowledging his sin and pleading with God for mercy.

David says that it was against God alone that he sinned. *Psalm 51:4*. That line always bothered me some since David sinned against so many, especially the husband of Bathsheba. On another level it states a basic truth. Our sin is always against God. When we hurt others, we are hurting God. David, mindful of the Law of God, figuratively tore apart the Ten Commandments the heart of God's law. He coveted another man's wife, committed adultery, lied to try and cover up his adultery, conspired to kill and did in fact kill Bathsheba's husband as surely as if he had run him through with a sword. King David, the trusted servant of God, favored by God, demonstrated contempt for God in his relationship with Bathsheba. The person who should have been the model for all his people instead followed an evil, hurtful path. It is only after confronting the depth of sin that he was capable of committing that David acknowledged his need for God's help in making in him a clean heart. David acknowledges that he needs God's help to walk in God's ways. *Create in me a clean Heart O God*.

God cannot create in us a clean heart unless we are prepared to acknowledge our sin and open ourselves up to the grace of god.

Few people have the stature of a King David or a Martin Luther. Few people have the ability to influence history the way these two men did. Yet we all need to face the fact that we are capable of evil, sometimes great evil.

Around the beginning of 1990 I came back to the Church after separating myself from the Church for over 15 years. My children, for the first time, were exposed to Sunday school and the teachings of Christ. The teachers for my eldest daughter were a husband and wife team about our age with children of their own. My daughter loved them and learned from them. They were a very positive influence in her life. And yet, at that very time, the husband of this husband and wife Sunday School team was involved in a financial scheme that defrauded people throughout the country, totally bankrupting and ruining some.

Was he a bad person? Well, he committed this horrible crime. And yet for years we had worshipped side by side, listened to the same sermons, studied the same bible. I am reasonably certain that, in the beginning, he was only trying to create a better life for his wife and children. I suspect that he got started down the wrong path. as so many people do, one small step at a time. And, when he found himself deep into a situation that he could no longer control, he couldn't face that he had gone so wrong. He is not, for the most part, remembered for the good things he did but instead for the great harm he caused.

*Create in me a clean heart O lord*. The sad fact is that we are all capable of committing evil acts. That is not some form of self-hatred but it is demonstrably true throughout human history. The most common of us, the most innocent of us, given the right circumstances is capable of great evil. We are also capable of great good but the other side of our natures is always there. And that is why we need God in our lives.

The Gospel, the Good News, is that God desires better for us. If we are willing to acknowledge our need for God, and accept the grace that God offers, we can master that side of ourselves willing to hurt others. If, like David, we are willing to acknowledge our need for God's help in living our lives with love toward one another, that help is there. *Create in me a clean heart O Lord.*

We remain in the Easter Season. A time of resurrection and New Beginnings. A time to turn our lives toward God. Standing before God, dare to confront the evil in your life, whatever form it has taken. Acknowledge that evil, repent of that evil, and ask God's help in living as God would have you live. *Create in all of us a clean heart O lord.*

## **Our New Baptismal Font**

On Sunday April 21<sup>st</sup> we consecrated our new Baptismal Font with the Liturgy for Reaffirmation of our Baptismal Vows. Purchase of the Font, utilizing memorial funds, was approved by the Administrative Council back in January. Rodger Kline shepherded the project as the Font itself was custom built for the Church by the same Amish craftsmen who made our new Altar Table and Lectern.

There are many symbols of our faith in the sanctuary. There is the Cross, representing the sacrifice of Christ. The Lectern represents the written word of God as contained in scriptures. The pulpit is a symbol of the living Word of God proclaimed in the world. The Altar Table reminds us that we are a people of the Table, constantly called back to the Table to receive the grace of God through the Lord's Supper. And the Baptismal font reminds us of our Baptism; reminds us that we have been adopted by God and have committed to live our lives as the Body of Christ. Whenever you look upon the Baptismal Font in the Sanctuary, remember your baptism and be thankful.

## **Thanks to the Trinity UMW for its Support of the Bishop's Cedar Crest Scholarship Fund**

A few weeks ago the Bishop put out a request for support for children who could not afford to attend one of the Cedar Crest Summer Camps. When it last met the Trinity UMW voted to provide two \$300 scholarships for children of the Conference. *"Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."* Matthew 19:14

## **Worship Leadership**

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**. Those who have been serving in those capacities will soon receive a proposed schedule through the summer months.

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.

## **Program Council Meeting Wednesday**

There will be a meeting of the Program Council Wednesday, May 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:30. Light snacks will be provided. Please make every effort to attend.

## **Bishop McAlilly Promotes a 40 Day Period of Prayer Leading Up to Annual Conference**

### **40 Day Walk**



Daily devotionals of **The 40 Day Walk With God** will post each morning on the Bishop's Blog during our season of intentional prayer. If you would like to Follow the Bishop's Blog during this time, posts will be delivered to your INBOX daily – enjoy them each morning on the device of your choice!

**To download a copy to your computer for reading or printing, please follow the instructions below:**

1. [CLICK HERE](#) to download .PDF file (you may “right click” and “save as” to your desktop or destination of choice)

**1a. NEW:** If you're here to download the Children's prayer guide, [CLICK HERE](#) to download (.PDF)

2. The cover image below also provides a link for download

3. NOTE: The .PDF prayer guide is 84 pages, please allow ample time for downloading depending on your connection speed

### **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  
Larry Eastwood  
Leslie Eastwood

Sarah Jordan  
Mac McAfee  
Rachel Newman

Kenneth Stevens  
Patricia Stevens  
Sam Richardson

Judy Richardson  
Charles Wilson

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.

### **Prayer Requests and Praises**

**We do not post prayer requests in the online edition of the Newsletter because of privacy concerns. These continue to be included in the mailed version of the Newsletter and in the weekly worship bulletin.**

### **Up-Coming Sermons**

**May 5: The Plain Meaning of Scripture:** Ever hear that one? Sounds easy. But is it always easy to find the "plain meaning" of scripture? My texts are Acts 16:9-15 and John 14:23-29.

**May 12, 2013: Watch Where You Are Going;** When our children are learning to walk we tell them not to look down at their feet but to watch where they are going. Consider that, as Christians, we cannot see where we are going if we are looking up. My texts are Luke 24:44-53 and Acts 1:1-11.

### **Worship Leaders Schedule**

**May 5**

Julia Moore, *Liturgist*  
Rodger & Cherry Klein, *Ushers*  
Betty & Herb Haynes, *Greeters*  
Mike Rohrig, *Counter*

### **Announcements**

**Sundays at 10:00:** The topic for discussion this Sunday (May 5) will be, **“What Happens One Minute After We die?”**

This group meets in the Sunday School Classroom. All are welcome to enjoy fellowship with your church family and deepen your spiritual connection with God. **Nanette Crowell** leads this study and will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

**Sunday school starts at 9:45am** in the Fellowship Hall.

**Wednesday, April 24, 7:00pm** Choir Rehearsal

The **61<sup>st</sup> UMC** is in need of men’s clothing. When you clean your closets, please consider donating men’s items of clothing to a worthy cause. Bring clothes to the church and they will be taken to 61<sup>st</sup> UMC.

The dates for our church to prepare and serve dinner at **61<sup>st</sup> Street** are as follows: **May 18, August 17, and November**

**16.** We will also be participating at the Christmas Toy Store, dates TBD.

### **April Birthdays**

Mary Coleman, Houston Hartsock, Colette Keyser, Jo Oliphant, Betty Whitefield