



Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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Understanding the New Testament Colossians

¹² As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³ Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Col 3:12-17 NRSV

As with Ephesians, scholars question that Colossians is an authentic letter of Paul. The most persuasive reasons for questioning authorship is a distinctly different writing style and, as will be discussed below, a very different theology of resurrection than is found in Romans and First Corinthians.

Colossians is principally concerned with the issue of false teachings that are leading people away from the Gospel as preached by Paul. The exact nature of these teachings is hinted at in Col 3:8-23. It seems that the false teachers are focusing on worship of "elemental spirits" and even of angels, emphasizing the importance of "visions" and also emphasizing Jewish law observance. As in the authentic letters of Paul, the writer emphasizes the "spiritual circumcision" of the believers over the physical circumcision. The writer also emphasizes that there is no need to worship elemental spirits and angels, or comply with Jewish law when they have already accepted Christ who is supreme:

²⁰ If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations, ²¹ "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch"? ²² All these regulations refer to things that perish with use; they are simply human commands and teachings. ²³ These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-imposed piety, humility, and severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in checking self-indulgence.

3 So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, ³ for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory. Col 2:20-3:4 NRSV

However, one reason scholars question that Paul is the author of this letter is his almost disinterested approach to these false teachings and their teachers. In Galatians, in his deep anger, he speaks of wishing that the false teachers were castrated and he chides the Galatians for having lost their minds. Here the writer simply mocks the law as something that is no longer relevant.

The writing style used by the writer in Colossians is very different than in Paul's undisputed letters. Paul tends toward a short and crisp writing style. The writer of Colossians, however, uses long convoluted sentences. This difference does not show up in the translation since it would make the English very difficult to understand. But it is very obvious in the original Greek.

The writer of Colossians also has a distinctly different theology of the resurrection than that expressed in Romans or First Corinthians. For example, in First Corinthians Paul places our resurrection as coming at the return of Christ at the end of time:

*²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. ²¹ For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; ²² for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. ²³ But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, **then at his coming** those who belong to Christ. 1 Cor 15:20-23 NRSV*

Likewise in Romans Paul says this about the resurrection:

*What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? ² By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it? ³ Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too **might** walk in newness of life. Romans 6:1-4 NRSV*

Paul agrees with the statement in Colossians that we are baptized into Christ's death but asserts that the resurrection will come on Christ's return. See also 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 where Paul describes the Returned Christ calling the living and the dead to him on the last day.

The writer of Colossians, however, seems to have a theology of "realized" resurrection. For him, our baptism into Christ's death is accompanied by our baptism into Christ's resurrection:

¹² when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³ And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. Colossians 2:12-14

Which theology is correct? Maybe that's not the question. Whenever scripture speaks about death it is speaking about something that we can't fully know while we live. We are trying to use the language of the living to describe a reality that can only be experienced after life. This particular "conflict" in scripture shows up in both the Old and New Testaments. As I search the scriptures for the Gospel in this regard I find great comfort in the words of Psalm 139:

*⁷ Where can I go from your spirit?
Or where can I flee from your presence?
⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there;*

*if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
9 If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
10 even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast...
I come to the end—I am still with you. Ps 139 7-10; 18b*

Finally, contemplate these words of guidance from the writer of Colossians that I think does speak the gospel for my life:

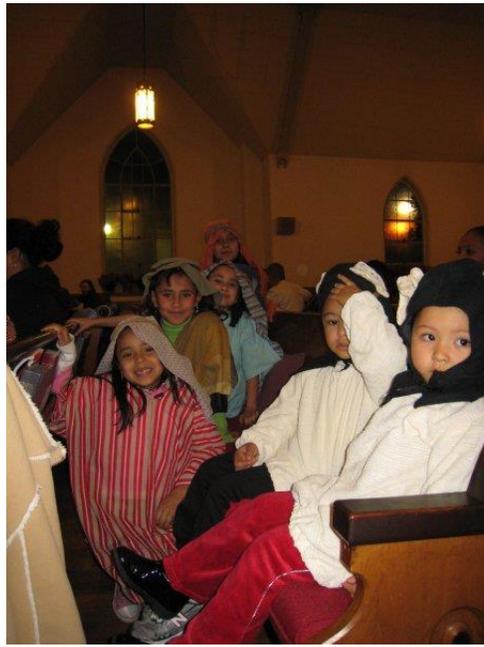
12 As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. 13 Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Col 3:12-17

Next week: 1 and 2 Thessalonians

What Is An Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant?

If you have not heard of it yet, We are planning an Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant for Sunday, December 8th . But what is an unrehearsed Christmas Pageant?

The typical Church Christmas Pageant is a telling of the Christmas story by our children by means of a play. Usually there are about three weeks worth of chaotic rehearsals which require young children to memorize lines and where they are supposed to be during the play. The result is often quite jumbled with children showing up in the wrong places at the wrong times and forgetting their lines. None of that usually matters much to the parents and families because they simply came to see their own child anyway.



The Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant produces much the same result without all the angst associated with rehearsals and trying to get young children to memorize a script. The children dress up as Shepherds, Sheep, Stars, Angels and Wise Persons. There is a narrator to tell the story, supported by congregational singing of Christmas Carols. Everyone enjoys participating in the program (there are opportunities for adults to dress up as well) and then we break for punch and cookies. We will also provide an opportunity for children and adults to make an offering of canned food or money to support the food pantry at GraceWorks.

The pictures here will give you some idea of what is involved in the way of costumes. Julia Moore and Jeanne Rybolt are coordinating this event but will need help from as many members of the church as are willing to help to get costumes together and otherwise organize the event. Please prayerfully consider being a part of this ministry this Advent.

A Note from Julia Moore and Jeanne Rybolt

As we prepare for the Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant we could use some help collecting the following:

Plain sheets/fabric – to make animal costumes and shepherd tunics
Thick yarn for donkey’s tails and manes
Robes for the shepherds and innkeepers
Head coverings – scarves, possibly towels, etc
Crowns or something to make them from for the wise peeps
Tinsel for halos and angel adornments
Props (gifts from the wise peeps, staffs, very small flashlights)
Cording/rope to hold head coverings on heads and/or close those robes
Animal costumes (a stretch but thought we’d ask)
Headbands suitable for holding halos
Tulle (I’m dreaming of making at least one camel costume)
Elastic
Velcro
OLD plain light colored t-shirts in various sizes (we’ll probably cut them up a bit to make child sized tunics)
Some kind of hanging rod set up
LOTS of prayers

Thanks for your help

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.

²⁸*My friends, you think up ways
to blame and torment me, saying
I brought it on myself.*
²⁹*But watch out for the judgment,
when God will punish you!*

As previously noted, the bulk of the Book of Job is made up of theological exchanges between Job and his friends. Job has suffered great misfortune at the hands of God, but we are told that God has not done this to punish Job. Nevertheless, Job’s friends insist that he must be the author of his own misfortune. It’s natural for people to want to know why something happened and why, for instance, someone cannot take care of their family. However, in the search for the answer to the question, and any solution, it is worthwhile to remember that the problem is not an academic one. Poverty, whatever its cause, results in whole families with food and shelter. While we work on the solutions to the problem let’s remind ourselves that misfortune can also follow us and treat others as we would be treated.

³⁰ *Give to everyone who asks and don’t ask people to return what they have taken from you.* ³¹ *Treat others just as you want to be treated.* Luke 6:30-31 CEV

For at least the last century it has been taught as the Golden rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” But it seems to have gone out of vogue. As in Job, Jesus reminds us that what we do today to someone in need may be what we receive tomorrow.

Bible Study

For the last two years I have led a bible study on Thursday mornings. We have recently begun a study of the Book of Psalms. There is room for as many as would like to participate. Please call me if you have questions or simply come and be a part of our study. We meet from 10:00 to 11:30 on Thursday mornings.

I believe that study of scriptures with other Christians is an essential part of our journey as Disciples. If you would like to be a part of a bible study at another time, during the day or evening, please contact me. If we can interest four or five people in gathering at a particular time I would be glad to lead another study.

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

November 10th : God of the Living: Because sometimes we seem to forget that. My texts are Psalm 139:1-18 and Luke 20:27-38.

November 17th: Do what is Right: But it's hard to know what is right. Can we at least agree on what is wrong? My texts are Isaiah 65:17-25 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13.

Worship Leaders Schedule

November 10

Renita Hartsock, **Liturgist**

Tom & Julia Moore, **Greeters**

Maurice & Joyce Edwards, **Ushers**

November 17

Julia Moore, **Liturgist**

Betty & Herb Haynes, **Greeters**

Charles Wilson & Linda Robinson, **Ushers**

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.

“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.**

You will want to mark your calendar for the **Christmas Cantata, "Canticle of Joy"** which will be presented by the choir and orchestra. This event will take place **Sunday, December 22 at 4:00 PM.**

You are also invited to a reception following the cantata at 5:00 PM.

The **Program Council will meet Thursday, November 14 at 6:00 PM.** Please make plans to attend. The agenda for the meeting will include planning for Christmas-related events as well as planning for 2014.

The SPRC Committee has been authorized to hire a nursery worker for Sunday mornings, but it is unlikely that person will be in place before early December. We need two adults in the Nursery when there are children present. We would like to rotate the volunteers so that the responsibility doesn't fall on the same people every week. **If you would be willing to volunteer to help with the Nursery please contact Rev. Meaker or Judy Richardson.**

We continue to take photographs for our church directory. The remaining days for photographs are **Thursday, Nov. 7** and **Sunday, Nov. 10.** Signup sheets are on the bulletin board. Please sign up so that your picture will be included in the Directory. There is no charge for this opportunity.

Choir Rehearsal: Rehearsal is scheduled next week **November 13 at 7:00 PM.**

November Birthdays

Cheryl Wilson, Betty Haynes, Brooks Crowell, Ross Crutcher

Happy Birthday!