



# Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter

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## Understanding the New Testament Galatians

<sup>4</sup> Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant <sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup> it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. <sup>7</sup> It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. **Paul to the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7**

*You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Paul to the Galatians, Galatians 3:1*

We have seen that the early Church was not a place of harmony populated by especially virtuous people. It was pretty much what it is today: a very human organization that, at its best and most faithful, can be an extraordinary instrument for good but can also be very dysfunctional. In the letters to the Corinthians Paul is dealing with problems arising primarily within the congregation at Corinth. In Galatians, Paul is addressing the effects of outside evangelists who are challenging the Gospel as taught by Paul.

The exact nature of the message being taught by these outside evangelists isn't known, but it's possible to infer much of the message from Paul's letter. They are making a two prong attack. In the first instance they are attacking Paul's credentials as an evangelist, possibly emphasizing his early history of persecuting the Church. They may also be challenging his faithfulness to Judaism. The second part of their attack is against the proposition that one can be Christian if they have not first converted to Judaism. They are likely emphasizing that, since Jesus was a Jew and his Disciples were Jews, conversion to Judaism is essential to becoming a Christian. For men this would mean submitting to circumcision, a practice that was contrary to Greek and Roman culture.

Paul opens by proclaiming that he is an Apostle chosen by Christ every bit as much as any of the other Disciples/Apostles.

*Paul an apostle—sent neither by human commission nor from human authorities, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead—<sup>2</sup> and all the members of God's family who are with me, Gal 1:1-2.*

He goes on to emphasize that his first human based instruction came from the Church in Damascus and then from Peter (Cephas) himself. Moreover, after preaching for fourteen years, Peter, James and John each approved the Gospel that he preached to the Gentiles thereby affirming his Apostleship. Galatians 2. However,

Paul goes on to emphasize that the Gospel is the same for Jew and Greek. It is appropriate for a Jew to be circumcised, but circumcision does not affect salvation. It is through faith that Jews and Gentiles receive salvation:

<sup>15</sup> *We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; <sup>16</sup> yet we know that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. Galatians 2:15-16*

The Jerusalem Council with Peter, James and John, approving the Gospel as Paul preached it to the Gentiles, is referenced in Acts. Acts 21:17 et.seq. There is no mention in Acts of the rebuke Paul says he had to make to Peter for refusing to share in the Lord's Supper with Gentiles. Galatians 2:11 et.seq.

Much of the rest of Galatians deals with Paul's explanation of the nature of the Law of Moses and its inadequacy. In many respects it is unfortunate that Paul spoke as negatively about the Law as he does. This letter, more than any other scripture in the New Testament, is responsible for the lack of understanding among Christians about the Law of Moses. The Law was never described in the Old Testament as a means of salvation as that term is used in the New Testament. The People of Israel were commanded to follow the Law so they could be a "Light to the World" showing how God desired people to live together. Following the Law was not then, and is not seen by Jews today, as an impossible burden. Rather it was, and is, viewed as a blessing; a privilege.

<sup>5</sup> *See, just as the LORD my God has charged me, I now teach you statutes and ordinances for you to observe in the land that you are about to enter and occupy. <sup>6</sup> **You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!"** <sup>7</sup> For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is whenever we call to him? <sup>8</sup> And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today? Deut 4:5-8 (Emphasis added).*

A Jew then, and today, would agree that it is through faith in God and the grace of God that we receive salvation. The primary distinction between Judaism and Christianity is the Christian belief that God became flesh and died for our sins. Jews, and Christians, are meant to be guided by the law and the prophets:

<sup>17</sup> *"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. <sup>18</sup> **For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished.** <sup>19</sup> Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:17-20. (Emphasis added)*

Many scholars believe that those opposed to Paul used his statements about the Law in Galatians to undermine his ministry. It is likely that the purpose of the letter to the Romans was written, in part, to allow Paul to clarify his view of the Law.

Where is the Gospel for us in Galatians? Primarily, I think, in the warning to be true to the Gospel and not allow ourselves to be led astray. Each of us is responsible for testing the Gospel as it is preached and proclaimed around us, always seeking to insure that the message of Christ is not being misused. Any one person can intentionally stray from the Gospel or just lose their way. Together it is more likely that we can help one another stay on the path of discipleship.

*Next week: Ephesians*

## **GraceWorks Ministries**

The following information is from a letter I received from GraceWorks ministries which focuses on serving the needs of Williamson County:

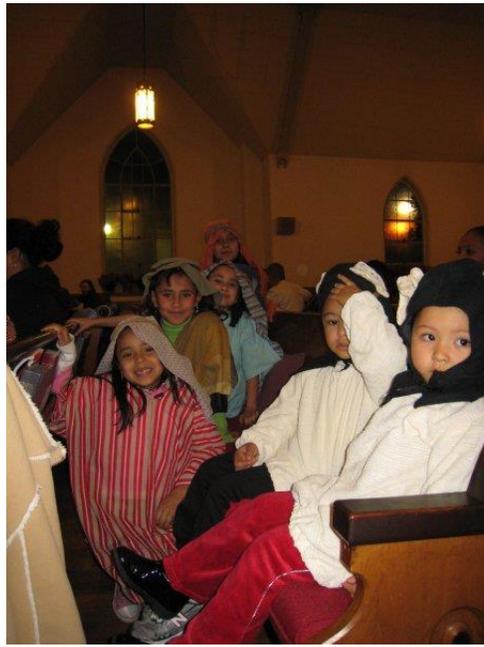
- Forty percent (40%) of Franklin school children participate in the free or reduced lunch program.
- Over the last five years requests for help with rent and utilities has doubled. Requests for food have increased 275%. Food requests are expected to go up as recent reductions in the SNAP (Foodstamp) program go into effect.
- GraceWorks provides around 2000 meals a month to hungry children in Williamson County. They estimate that the need is for 20,000 meals.
- GraceWorks provided over \$2 million dollars in assistance to the poor in Williamson County in 2012.

The need is on-going even in this wealthiest of Tennessee Counties. In the coming months I will ask you to explore with me how we can assist the work of GraceWorks through our prayers, our presence, our witness, our gifts and our service.

## **What Is An Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant?**

If you have not heard of it yet, We are planning an Unrehearsed Christmas Pageant for Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>. 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.

## **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](http://www.Justicebible.org).

<sup>20</sup> *Mordecai wrote down everything that had happened. Then he sent letters to the Jews everywhere in the provinces<sup>21</sup> and told them:*

*Each year you must celebrate on both the fourteenth and the fifteenth of Adar,<sup>22</sup> the days when we Jews defeated our enemies. Remember this month as a time when our sorrow was turned to joy, and celebration took the place of crying. Celebrate by having parties and by giving to the poor and by sharing gifts of food with each other.*

<sup>23</sup> *They followed Mordecai's instructions and set aside these two days every year as a time of celebration.*  
*Esther 9:20-23 CEV*

Many Christians have never read the Book of Esther. It tells the story of a young Jewish girl elevated to the position of Queen of the Persian Empire. Nevertheless, Esther risked her life to save the Jews in Persia from destruction. The Festival of Purim was established in recognition of the event. Appropriately, the people were directed to celebrate by sharing their riches with the poor and their abundance with each other. Bringing hope to people in need.

<sup>7</sup> *Crowds of people came out to be baptized, but John said to them, "You bunch of snakes! Who warned you to run from the coming judgment?"<sup>8</sup> Do something to show that you really have given up your sins. Don't start saying that you belong to Abraham's family. God can turn these stones into children for Abraham.<sup>9</sup> An ax is ready to cut the trees down at their roots. Any tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into a fire."*

<sup>10</sup> *The crowds asked John, "What should we do?"*

<sup>11</sup> *John told them, "If you have two coats, give one to someone who doesn't have any. If you have food, share it with someone else."*

<sup>12</sup> When tax collectors came to be baptized, they asked John, "Teacher, what should we do?"

<sup>13</sup> John told them, "Don't make people pay more than they owe."

<sup>14</sup> Some soldiers asked him, "And what about us? What do we have to do?"

John told them, "Don't force people to pay money to make you leave them alone. Be satisfied with your pay." Luke 3:7-14

People came to John the Baptist to be baptized as a symbol of repentance; turning back toward God. When they asked John what to do, his answers focused on sharing their abundance and forgoing the acquisition of wealth through unfair means. In other words, righteous living includes dealing with our wealth in a righteous manner.

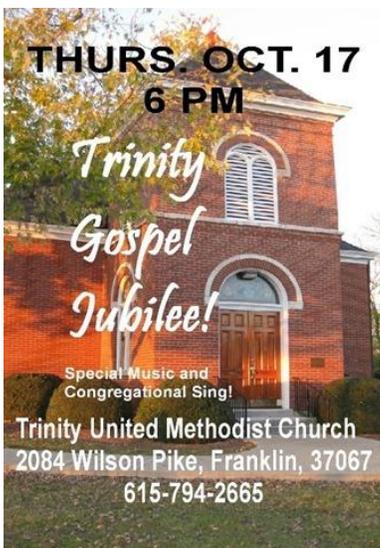
## Bible Study

For the last two years I have led a bible study on Thursday mornings from 10:00 to noon. This group has just finished Disciple I. We will begin a new study on October 24<sup>th</sup>. We will be studying 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 beginning October 24<sup>th</sup>.

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.

## Trinity Gospel Jubilee

We are excited about our gospel sing this Thursday Oct. 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM. There will be congregational singing of old, familiar songs; special groups will sing and special guests will provide music. You will not want to miss this special event. Hal and Rachel have planned the evening so you know it will be wonderful. See you there!



## 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.

## 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

**October 20<sup>th</sup>: Laity Sunday** On October 20<sup>th</sup> the laity of the church, including Certified Lay Servants, will lead worship.

**October 27<sup>th</sup>: It's All Up to Me.** Some people view the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector as a story about pride. To some extent that is correct. But there are deeper meanings to be explored. My texts are 2 Timothy 4:6–8, 16–18 and Luke 18:9–14.

## Worship Leaders Schedule

### October 20

Charles Wilson, **Liturgist**

Cherry Klein & Pat Moran, **Greeters**

Larry Eastwood & Sam Richardson, **Ushers**

### October 27

Marty Bauguess, **Liturgist**

Mike & Elaine Rohrig, **Greeters**  
Tommy & Jo Cotton, **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 61<sup>st</sup> Ave. UMC.** The remaining date to serve and worship this year is **November 16.**

**ATTENTION:** There will be a combined **Finance Committee and Administrative Council Meeting** this **Saturday, October 19 at 11:00 AM.** All church members are members of the Administrative Council so everyone is invited to this meeting. Please plan to attend to discuss important church business.

A photographer will be coming to the church to take photographs of individuals as well as families to update our directory. A free copy of your photo will be available for download for your personal use from a designated website. **The dates for the photographs are Friday, November 1; Saturday, November 2. The scheduled times on those days will be from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM. We are also scheduling appointments for Wednesday, November 6 and Thursday, November 7. The scheduled times on these days will be from 6:00 to 9:00 PM.** Photographs will be scheduled at 20 minute intervals. Signup sheets will be posted on the bulletin board. You will want to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity for your personal photograph as well as for our new Directory.

**Choir Rehearsal:** Rehearsal is scheduled this week on **October 16 at 7:00 PM.**

**October Birthdays**  
**Elaine Rohrig, Julia Moore**

**Happy Birthday to both of you!**