



Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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Understanding the New Testament 1&2 Corinthians

*1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,
2 To the church of God that is in Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints,
together with all those who in every place call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both their Lord and ours:
3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus,
5 for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind— 6 just as the
testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you— 7 so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you
wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. 8 He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be
blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of
his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. 1 Corinthians 1:1-9*

Thirteen letters in the New Testament are attributed to Paul. Scholars agree that seven of these are clearly the work of Paul and two of these are Paul's letters to the Corinthians. The other five undisputed letters are Romans, Galatians, 1 Thessalonians, Philippians and Philemon.

Paul's letters to the Corinthians are the letters of a pastor to a troubled congregation. As I discussed in the introduction to the epistles, the earliest Christians did not have a rich tradition of leadership and experience to help them understand what it meant to be Christian. When disputes arose, there were no precedents to help resolve the disputes. Paul's letters are meant to guide the members of the church back to lives of faithful Discipleship.

1 Corinthians

Paul's overriding message in First Corinthians is that our lives as Christians begin and end with Christ. Christ is everything. If you look at the opening to the letter cited above you will see that Paul uses the name of Christ nine times in the first nine verses of the letter. He is an apostle of Christ, the Church in Corinth is sanctified by Christ, they are joined together with all other Christians through Christ, Christ is the source of the grace that they have experienced, Christ is the source of their knowledge and strength and they are joined in Christ awaiting the return of Christ. Think of that mantra during the Clinton and Bush presidential campaign; "It's the economy, stupid!" Paul is telling the church at Corinth, "It's about Jesus Christ, stupid!" If you believe that Paul wouldn't call the people at Corinth "stupid," consider what he addresses next.

The primary problem at Corinth is divisions. The first division Paul addresses arises when people try to make the church about themselves and particular pastors instead of about Christ. Some members are apparently claiming superior spirituality based upon the person who baptized them or at least led them to profess their faith.

¹² What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." ¹³ Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 1 Cor 1:12-13

Paul reemphasizes that the Church is about Jesus Christ and that he preached only Christ Crucified for our sins.

Other disputes arise when people try to demonstrate their superior knowledge of the faith. Some argue that, since there is only one God, eating the meat sacrificed to pagan Gods is not a problem. Paul points out that this is just another way of making the Church about them instead of Christ. If someone recently converted from a pagan tradition sees other Christians eating the meat sacrificed to pagan gods, they might be lured back to pagan worship. Rather than building themselves up by demonstrating their knowledge and wisdom, they should focus on how to share Christ with the community.

Others argue that people should not marry because Christ will soon return. They should instead focus on Christ. Although Paul apparently follows a celibate lifestyle, he acknowledges that God created us as sexual beings and that it was not a problem to marry. However, simply because our sins were forgiven, sexual immorality could not be tolerated in the community.

Paul also chides those who are seeking to convince others of their spiritual superiority by speaking in tongues. He notes that although speaking in tongues is a gift of the Spirit, it is something that does little to share the Gospel and it can be a distraction. He urges that, unless there is someone standing by to translate, such persons should not interrupt worship with the practice. My personal view is that Paul believed that at least some of these persons were seeking attention instead of experiencing a true encounter with the Spirit. Again, they were making the Church about them instead of about Christ.

The most damaging division in the church is drawn along social and economic lines. This is manifested by the richer people in the church coming together for worship and consuming all the food and wine before the others could arrive. The poorer people and slaves had to do a full day's work before they could leave to worship. This took place at a time when the Lord's Supper was celebrated as a full meal. It is at this point that Paul begins constructing the chain of logic that leads to the proposition that the Church is the Body of Christ.

Earlier, in connection with the dispute involving eating food sacrificed to idols, Paul emphasizes the power of the sacrament to make us one with each other:

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 Cor 10:16-17

Paul then recounts the institution of the Lord's Supper, which is the earliest known account of the practice in Christian literature:

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” ²⁵ In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. 1 Cor 11:23-26.

Therefore, Paul reasons, those who take the bread and the cup in an “unworthy manner,” that is, without acknowledging that Christ is at the center of the Lord’s Supper, are desecrating the Lord’s Supper.

After establishing that Christ is at the center of the Lord’s supper and that we are made one through the celebration of the Lord’s supper, Paul completes making his case for unity in the Church in Chapters 12 and 13. In chapter 12 he outlines his concept of the Body of Christ. Just as the human body is made up of many different but complimentary and necessary “parts,” so the church is made up of many different but **complimentary and necessary individuals**. He then tells the fractious church at Corinth that they are “the Body of Christ.” 1 Cor 12:27. He does not tell them that they must act correctly to be the Body of Christ, but that God has already made them so. Now it is their duty to act like the Body of Christ. How is that to happen? Look to chapter 13. Paul, in one of the most elegant and moving passages in scripture, outlines the hallmark of the Body of Christ: Christian love.

2 Corinthians

Although scholars agree that Second Corinthians was written by Paul, most believe that it is a conflation of two letters to the congregation written at different times. This is based upon the differences in the tone of writing. In parts of Second Corinthians Paul is praising the Church for its faithfulness. In other parts of the letter is he is expressing his extreme anger at the Church.

Part of Paul’s letter concerns a problem that Paul also encountered in Galatia. It seems that after Paul established the Church, new evangelists came along with a different version of the gospel. In Galatians these persons were preaching conversion to Judaism. In Corinthians, Paul refers to the new evangelists as “super-apostles.” Apparently they appeared claiming to be richer, better and more powerful than Paul. In a sense, they appear to have been preaching a form of the prosperity Gospel. If you are faithful, God will award you with power and riches. Since Paul was not powerful, rich or particularly eloquent, he was not a true apostle. Paul counters that faithfulness is not demonstrated by strength but rather by total submission to God through Christ. Paul marks his faithfulness by his sufferings for the Gospel, not his personal wealth and power.

Second Corinthians also deals with the issue of stewardship. He discusses an issue that is as contemporary as this morning’s headlines: how much of our wealth should be shared with those less fortunate. In that regard he makes a statement that eloquently sets forth the balance but is hard news for most of us in this nation:

⁸ I do not say this as a command, but I am testing the genuineness of your love against the earnestness of others. ⁹ For you know the generous act of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. ¹⁰ And in this matter I am giving my advice: it is appropriate for you who began last year not only to do something but even to desire to do something—¹¹ now finish doing it, so that your eagerness may be matched by completing it according to your means. ¹² For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has—not according to what one does not have. ¹³ I do not mean that there should be relief for others and pressure on you, but it is a question of a fair balance

between ¹⁴ your present abundance and their need, so that their abundance may be for your need, in order that there may be a fair balance. ¹⁵ As it is written,
“The one who had much did not have too much,
and the one who had little did not have too little.” 2 Cor 8:8-15

Paul proclaims that there is such a thing as a fair balance between what we have and what others have. In a society where 80% of the wealth is held by 20% of the population, that is a hard message to hear.

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.

¹⁷ The LORD said to Elijah the prophet, ¹⁸ “King Ahab of Israel is in Naboth’s vineyard right now, taking it over. ¹⁹ Go tell him that I say, ‘Ahab, you murdered Naboth and took his property. And so, in the very spot where dogs licked up Naboth’s blood, they will lick up your blood.’ ”

When Elijah found him, ²⁰ Ahab said, “So, my enemy, you found me at last.” 1 Kings 21:17-20 CEV

Another passage dealing with the sense of entitlement brought about by great wealth is the story of Naboth’s vineyard. King Ahab wanted Naboth’s vineyard and was angry when Naboth would not sell it to him. Ahab’s wife, Queen Jezebel, arranged for Naboth to be falsely accused of treason, tried and murdered. Ahab then claimed the vineyard as forfeited by Naboth. Elijah was dispatched by God to pronounce judgment on Ahab for his complicity in the treachery of Jezebel.

⁸ Christ gives me the courage to tell you what to do. ⁹ But I would rather ask you to do it simply because of love. Yes, as someone in jail for Christ, ¹⁰ I beg you to help Onesimus! He is like a son to me because I led him to Christ here in jail. ¹¹ Before this, he was useless to you, but now he is useful both to you and to me.
Philemon 8-11CEV

Philemon was a disciple of Paul who owned a slave, Onesimus. Onesimus had run away, a serious crime in the Roman Empire and one punishable by death. Although no one would classify Paul as an abolitionist as that term would later be used. In this rather curious letter, Paul is questioning the concept that one person could own another, at least as it pertains to those who are part of the Body of Christ. He challenges Philemon to renounce his rights of ownership of Onesimus, his brother in Christ. Although slavery is no more, how often do we Christians of the modern Western world look at what we have as only what we are entitled to have when our brothers and sisters in Christ are struggling with crushing poverty?

Bible Study

For the last two years I have led a bible study on Thursday mornings from 10:00 to noon. This group is just finishing up Disciple I. We will begin a new study on October 24th. 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 24th.

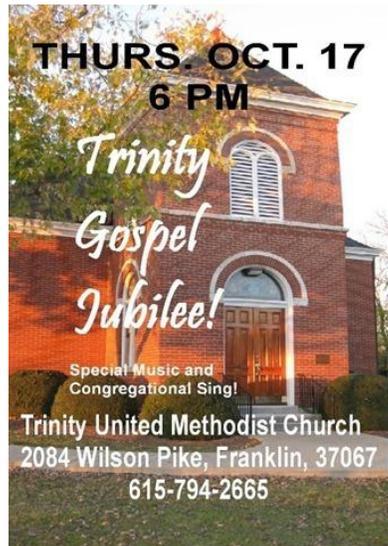
I believe that study of scriptures with other Christians is an essential part of our journey as Disciples. If you would like to be a part of a bible study at another time, during the day or evening, please contact me. If we can interest four or five people in gathering at a particular time I would be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

Trinity Gospel Jubilee

Hello everyone...We are excited about our up-coming gospel sing on Oct. 17th. We would like to put together a little "ad hoc" gospel choir for the occasion to sing 2 or 3 things and help lead the congregational singing. We will rehearse **Tuesday, October 15th at 6:00 PM** at church. This time of singing will be very informal and fun. No music reading necessary...only a song in your heart! If you can help, please let us know ASAP! Of course, if you know of anyone else who would like to sing, please pass this invitation along to them.

Thanks and make a joyful noise!

Hal & Rachel



Graceworks' Ministries

As I have mentioned a number of times from the pulpit, around 250,000 children go to bed hungry in Tennessee some part of every week. That figure has grown over the years. Their families are what are called "food insecure." There is rarely enough nourishing food in the home to be certain of providing for the needs of the children. Some of those children live right here in Williamson County.

Graceworks ministry has a program to provide food for children in need to take home over the weekends. These "Fuel Bags" provide nutritious food that the child can eat without preparation or with minimal preparation. The Children's Sunday school class is organizing Trinity UMC's support of this program. We can coordinate donations of money to Graceworks. Simply

designate that Graceworks should receive the funds on a check to the church. If you would rather donate the goods themselves, we need the following contributions:

- Boxed Milk
- Raisins/Fruit Snacks
- Peanut
- Butter Crackers
- Cheese Crackers
- Cereal Cups
- Pudding Cups
- Microwaveable Meat Meals
- Easy Mac
- Tuna & Crackers

Thanks for your support of this ministry. If you would rather not shop for these goods yourself, you could make a check payable to the church and earmarked for the Fuel Bag program. That money will be used to purchase food to be given to Graceworks.

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. Thank you 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.

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 13th Sermon: Worship is a Verb! Too often we think of worship as an event that we attend. However, worship is actually something that we **do**. My texts are 1 Timothy 2:8-15 and Luke 17:11-19.

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

Worship Leaders Schedule

October 13

Elaine Rohrig, **Liturgist**

Tommy & Jo Cotton, **Greeters**

Jeanne Rybolt & Linda Robinson, **Ushers**

October 20

Charles Wilson, **Liturgist**

Cherry Klein & Pat Moran, **Greeters**

Herb Haynes & Sam Richardson, **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!

The church directory is nearly complete. If you know of changes yet to be made in the current directory, please speak to **Judy Richardson** or call her at **615-595-4833**. Also, her email address is **Richardson824@msn.com**. We want to include all members in our directory so please use either of the options above as soon as possible.

Ministry with 61st Ave. UMC. The remaining date to serve and worship this year is **November 16**.

This Sunday, October 13 is Worship Leadership Sunday. Following the service, **Worship Leadership Volunteer Training** will take place from 12:00 – 1:00. **All persons who participate as Worship Leaders,**

Ushers, Greeters, Liturgists, Acolytes, etc. are encouraged to attend this training. A snack lunch will be provided and you will be given information pertaining to your particular area of service. Please plan to attend.

ATTENTION Finance Committee Members:

The following are future Finance Committee meeting dates:

October 19, 2013 – Review 3rd Quarter Financial Results

January 18, 2014 – Review 4th Quarter & 2013 Financial Results

Choir Rehearsal: Rehearsal is scheduled for **October 9 at 7:00 PM.**

Men's Group: The **pancake breakfast** is planned for this Saturday, **October 12 from 8:00 – 10:00 AM.** Please plan to attend as the men share their talents for the sake of the mission work of the church. This will be a great time of food and fellowship.

October Birthdays

Elaine Rohrig, Julia Moore

Happy Birthday to each of you!