



# Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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## Understanding the New Testament The Gospels: The Gospel Accounts of the Last Days of Christ and the “Secret Gospels.”

*<sup>9</sup> The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,  
“Hosanna to the Son of David!  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Hosanna in the highest heaven!” Matthew 21:9*

*<sup>59</sup> Then about an hour later still another kept insisting, “Surely this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean.” <sup>60</sup> But Peter said, “Man, I do not know what you are talking about!” At that moment, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. <sup>61</sup> The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, “Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times.” <sup>62</sup> And he went out and wept bitterly. Luke 22:59-62*

*<sup>7</sup> Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. <sup>8</sup> So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. <sup>9</sup> Then he answered them, “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?” <sup>10</sup> For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. <sup>11</sup> But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Mark 15:7-11 NRSV*

*<sup>38</sup> After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. John 19:38-39*

Over recent weeks we have been comparing the Gospel accounts with one another. There are significant differences among the Gospels with regard to some events but the accounts of Jesus’ last days are very similar. All the accounts state that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of either a donkey or a colt (Matthew, in a somewhat silly error, says he rode both at once.) All accounts describe the people leading Jesus and spreading branches in front of him while proclaiming Hosanna. “Hosanna” is the translation of a Hebrew expression meaning “Save, we pray.” All accounts state that the crowd considered him a King and Mark and Matthew declared him a King in the line of David.

Matthew, Mark and Luke state that Jesus ‘cleansed’ the temple by expelling the moneylenders and merchants shortly after his entry. Interestingly, John places this event at the beginning of Jesus ministry. In all four Gospels Jesus then spends some time teaching in the Temple.

Matthew, Mark and Luke all have accounts of the institution of the Lord’s Supper. These accounts are very similar to the teaching that Paul states he received when he was being taught the essentials of the faith. See 1 Corinthians 11:23-26. John describes the Disciples coming together for a Passover meal but instead of the institution of the Lord’s Supper John describes the washing of the feet of the Disciples. However, the Gospel of John contains references to the theology of the Lord’s Supper. For example:

“... but it is my Father who gives you the **true bread** from heaven. <sup>33</sup> For **the bread of God** is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” <sup>34</sup> They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

<sup>35</sup> Jesus said to them, “**I am the bread of life**. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. <sup>36</sup> But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. John 6:32-37 NRSV.

<sup>53</sup> So Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, **unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood**, you have no life in you. <sup>54</sup> **Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life**, and I will raise them up on the last day; <sup>55</sup> for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. <sup>56</sup> **Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.** <sup>57</sup> Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. <sup>58</sup> **This is the bread that came down from heaven**, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. **But the one who eats this bread will live forever.**” <sup>59</sup> He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. John 6:52-59 (NRSV)

All of the accounts state that Jesus told his Disciples that one of them would betray him and all the accounts describe the prediction that Peter would deny him.

Matthew Mark and Luke state that Jesus went from the meal to the Mount of Olives with his disciples to pray. They also state that Jesus prayed to be spared. In John, Jesus spends several chapters teaching his disciples before going to the Mount of Olives. Also, consistent with the theology expressed in John, Jesus does not ask to be saved.

In all the Gospels Judas arrives with the contingent to arrest Jesus. In Matthew, Mark and Luke Judas identifies Jesus to the others with a kiss.

All the gospels describe Jesus being taken before the High Priest or the High Priest and the Council. They also agree that he was then sent to Pilate. Also, during this time, all the Gospels agree that Peter denied knowing Jesus three times. Luke states that Pilate also sent Jesus to Herod to be judged but that Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate. All the Gospels indicate that Pilate offered to free Jesus but that the crowd instead demanded that Barabbas (literally, son of the father) be freed instead. All the Gospels indicate that Jesus was flogged and then given over to be crucified.

All the Gospels agree that Jesus was crucified with two other men and Mark, Luke and John state that there was a sign over Jesus’ head declaring him the King of the Jews. All of the Gospels agree that Jesus’ body was taken away by Joseph of Arimathea.

All the Gospels agree that it was the women, and specifically Mary Magdalene, who came to the tomb on the third day. After that the accounts vary widely in the different resurrection accounts, each placing emphasis on different events.

Before leaving a discussion of the Gospels it is appropriate to mention the so-called “Secret Gospels.” Most often you will see these referenced while you are buying groceries. One of the tabloids for sale at the check-out aisle will declare that included within its pages are the Gospels “hidden away for centuries by the Church. The Gospels the Church does not want you to see!” In point of the fact these Gospels are hidden. One of the clever hiding places the Church has chosen is a book, available on Amazon, called “The Complete Gospels,” edited by Robert J. Miller. In it you will find the canonical Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. You will also find around fifteen additional “Gospels,” some only fragments. All purport to describe Jesus and his teachings and most were written hundreds of years after his death. Most are also from the Gnostic tradition. As mentioned previously, the Gnostic tradition held that flesh was evil and the Spirit was good. The goal of salvation for the Gnostics was to escape the flesh and become a being of pure spirit and the Gnostics claimed to have the secret knowledge, *Gnosis*, to make this possible. The Gnostics denied the incarnation because it was unthinkable to them that God would choose to become flesh. They held that Jesus only seemed to be a human but was actually a spirit.

If you are interested I encourage you to read these Gospels but be prepared for some bizarre stories. In the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, for instance, Jesus is portrayed as the toddler from Hell indiscriminately killing those around him when they annoy him. In general, the Gnostic Gospels provide a picture of Jesus that is focused upon turning away from involvement in the world. As we shall see, the remainder of Christian scriptures focuses the church on spreading the Gospels in the world.

*Next Week: The Book of Acts: The Gospel Moves Into the World.*

## **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>3-4</sup> *If a person accidentally kills someone and the victim's relatives say it was murder, they might try to take revenge. Anyone accused of murder can run to one of the Safe Towns and be safe from the victim's relatives. The one needing protection will stand at the entrance to the town gate and explain to the town leaders what happened. Then the leaders will bring that person in and provide a place to live in their town.*

<sup>5</sup> *One of the victim's relatives might come to the town, looking for revenge. But the town leaders must not simply hand over the person accused of murder. After all, the accused and the victim had been neighbors, not enemies.* <sup>6</sup> *The citizens of that Safe Town must come together and hold a trial. They may decide that the victim was killed accidentally and that the accused is not guilty of murder.*

*Everyone found not guilty must still live in the Safe Town until the high priest dies. Then they can go back to their own towns and their homes that they had to leave behind. Joshua 20:3-6.*

One of the more interesting mechanisms that the Israelites set up to insure fair trials were the Safe Towns. If someone accidentally killed his neighbor, he could flee the victim's family to a Safe Town to avoid a revenge killing. If the family of the deceased wanted a trial, it would be held in the Safe Town in front of presumably unbiased judges and juries.

<sup>21</sup> *You know that our ancestors were told, "Do not murder" and "A murderer must be brought to trial."*

<sup>22</sup> *But I promise you that if you are angry with someone, you will have to stand trial. If you call someone a fool, you will be taken to court. And if you say that someone is worthless, you will be in danger of the fires of hell.*

<sup>23</sup> *So if you are about to place your gift on the altar and remember that someone is angry with you,* <sup>24</sup> *leave your gift there in front of the altar. Make peace with that person, then come back and offer your gift to God.* <sup>1</sup> *Matthew 5:21-24 CEV*

Jesus encouraged people to think about the Law of Moses. He was not trying to undermine the Law. In this passage he points out that unaddressed anger can be a deadly poison that can lead to deadly crimes. If someone has such anger, they should seek to make peace with the person with whom they are angry or who is angry with them.

## **Mid-Year Budget Report**

### **From Rodger Klein, Chairperson of Finance**

As we reach the middle of the year and enter the third quarter, it is an appropriate time for us to take a look at our church budget and how we are doing with regard to our finances. Trinity UMC is very blessed financially and we are fortunate to be in a position where we have no debt and significant cash reserves. As always we give thanks to God for generously blessing our church with these financial resources.

Looking at our giving, however, we have not achieved our budget for giving this year and unless things change, we are facing a significant budget deficit as we approach our fiscal year end (12/31/13). We are controlling our expenses, but our collections from week-to-week have fallen short of our expectations. This is not new for us at Trinity, but I wanted our congregation to be aware of our situation so that we can try to address this problem as we move forward toward the end of the year. Currently, our Sunday collections are on a trend that will leave us approximately \$21,000 short of our budget for this line item, or about 15.8%.

I wanted to make everyone aware of this fact and ask each of our members to review their personal giving patterns so that we can try to make up this shortfall over the remaining months of the year. In the past, Trinity has not used a system of pledges in order to manage our financial needs, but we have communicated with our members when we needed to ask for some additional giving in order to balance our budget. Last year, we were in a similar situation as we approached the end of the year, but year-end giving and a few special gifts helped us to finish 2012 with a balanced budget.

Again, please consider your personal giving to our church and help us if you can.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible: The Contemporary English Version.* (1995). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

## 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 need the following contributions:

### Graceworks Fuel Bags

Please pick up a few items when you are at the grocery store to include in the fuel bags:

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.

## **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

**September 15<sup>th</sup> Sermon: No One Would Do That!** Jesus was fond of spinning tales about everyday people doing foolish things. What is he trying to say? My texts are 1 Timothy 1:12–17 and Luke 15:1–10.

**September 22<sup>nd</sup> Sermon: How Honest Are We?** I often tell new pastors I am mentoring that “Ministry is messy.” Frankly, biblical teaching doesn’t get any messier than the parable of the Dishonest Manager. My texts are 1 Timothy 2:1–7 and Luke 16:1–13.

## Worship Leaders Schedule

### September 15

Renita Hartsock, **Liturgist**

Sam Richardson & Tommy Cotton, **Ushers**

Mike & Elaine Rohrig, **Greeters**

### September 22

Julia Moore, **Liturgist**

Rachel Newman & Pat Moran, **Greeters**

Donnie & Renita Hartsock, **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. **Join us Sunday for "Old School Sunday School"!**

**“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!

**All current and prospective choir members** are encouraged to attend an event scheduled for **Saturday, September 21**. Please plan to spend the morning (**8:30 – 12:00**). The choir will participate in team building as well as planning for the meaningful season ahead

Mark your calendars for **Sunday, September 15 at 5:30 PM for Trinity’s UMC charge conference.**

If you are a member of any committee, you are a member of the **Program Council**. The next meeting of this group is planned for **Wednesday, September 18 at 5:30 PM**. This will be an important meeting to accomplish planning of events and occasions for our church in 2014. All committee members are urged to attend.

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

**Exciting News:** A gospel sing is being planned for **Thursday, October 17 at 6:00 PM**. Further details will be provided closer to the event.

**Mark your calendars for Sunday, October 13.** This 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. Further details will be provided closer to this event.

**ATTENTION Finance Committee Members:**

**The following are future Finance Committee meeting dates:**

**October 19, 2013** – Review 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Financial Results

**January 18, 2014** – Review 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter & 2013 Financial Results

**Choir Rehearsal:** Rehearsal is scheduled for September 11 at 7:00 PM.

**Men's Group:** The men are looking forward to a **golf outing September 23** and will be hosting the **Pancake Breakfast October 12**. Details related to these events will be provided as the time draws nigh.

### **September Birthdays**

Millie Fly, Elva Beard, Joann Harper, Jessica Bauguess, Wanda Folds, GL Jones, Bill LeCates

**Happy Birthday to each of you!**