



Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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

September 25, 2013

Understanding the New Testament The Book of Acts Part 2: Peter, Paul and the Ministry to the Gentiles

About noon the next day, as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry and wanted something to eat; and while it was being prepared, he fell into a trance. ¹¹ He saw the heaven opened and something like a large sheet coming down, being lowered to the ground by its four corners. ¹² In it were all kinds of four-footed creatures and reptiles and birds of the air. ¹³ Then he heard a voice saying, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat." ¹⁴ But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is profane or unclean." ¹⁵ The voice said to him again, a second time, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane." ¹⁶ This happened three times, and the thing was suddenly taken up to heaven. Acts 10:9-16

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak to them: "I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵ but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. Acts 10:34-36

The conversion experience of Saul is described in Chapter 9 of the Book of Acts. From that point forward the rest of Acts is the account of the ministries of Peter and Paul and, in particular, the ministry to the Gentiles.

Peter is identified in the Gospels, in Acts and other Christian writings as the principal leader of the early church. Acts recounts a number of miracles performed by Peter including the healing of a crippled beggar (Acts 3:1-10), the healing of a paralyzed man in Lydda (Acts 9:32-35) and the resurrection of Tabitha (Acts 9:36-43). In Acts 12:1-19, after being arrested and imprisoned, Peter is rescued from jail by an angel who walks him out of prison in front of all the guards.

Peter is also identified as a leader in establishing the legitimacy of ministry to the Gentiles. While in the City of Joppa Peter has a vision of a blanket being lowered to the roof from heaven containing foods that Jews were forbidden to eat. In the vision God commands Peter to "kill and eat." Peter refuses claiming that he will not eat unclean or profane food. The Lord then declares that "what God has made clean must not be called unclean or profane." Acts 10: 9-16. Peter then encounters the agents of Cornelius, a Roman Centurion, who had been told in a vision to send the men to Joppa to get Peter. Peter returns to Caesarea with the men and meets Cornelius. While Peter is preaching the gospel to them he perceives that they have received the Holy Spirit. He then acknowledges that God means the Gospel for Jews and Gentiles:

⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking, the Holy Spirit fell upon all who heard the word. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astounded that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, ⁴⁶ for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ “Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸ So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they invited him to stay for several days.
Acts 10:44-48.

Following this, Peter then proclaims to the Church in Jerusalem that the Gospel is for Jews and the Gentiles.

Following his conversion and instruction in the faith, Saul, now named Paul, begins his evangelistic journeys. While the description of Paul’s journeys is interesting in an historical sense, the principle thrust of the account in Acts is to emphasize the signs of his Apostleship (i.e. miracles and conversions) and to reinforce the legitimacy of his ministry to Gentiles. Although virtually all of the original disciples in Palestine were believed to be Jews, Christianity did not garner much of a following among Jews in the greater Roman Empire. Jesus was not generally accepted as the Messiah because he was killed by the Romans. From the standpoint of many Jews, Jesus was simply one of several people in the first century who had claimed, or were proclaimed, to be the Messiah. From the beginning Christianity was primarily composed of Gentiles. Many of these Gentiles were in a category of “God Fearers” who had an association with local synagogues. By virtue of that association, they were familiar with the Jewish scripture and theology. But, since they had not converted to Judaism, they were not full members of that community. Christianity offered them full participation in a supportive community like that of the Jewish community.

Also, as is clear from the letters of Paul, the issue of conversion to Christianity did arise again. Even after Peter had proclaimed that the Gospel should be shared with Gentiles as well as Jews, some insisted that the Gentiles had to convert to Judaism. This ultimately resulted in the “Jerusalem Council” referenced in the letters of Paul. Acts 15:1; Galatians 2:1-11. At the Jerusalem Council, the leaders of the Church determined that Gentiles would not have to convert to Judaism in order to become Christians.

Acts concludes with the story of Paul’s on-going conflict with the Jews of Palestine which resulted in his imprisonment in Caesarea. According to Acts, Paul demanded his rights as a Roman citizen to have his case presented to the Emperor. This ultimately resulted in his journey to Rome as a prisoner where we are told he lived for two years while awaiting an audience with the Emperor. The details of his death are uncertain. Tradition holds that he died during persecutions initiated by Nero around 65 CE. Tradition also holds that Peter died at the same time. Paul is believed to have been beheaded and Peter is believed to have been crucified upside down because he did not think himself worthy of being crucified as Jesus was crucified.

Next Week: The Book of Romans

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 *Samuel said, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel away from you today, and he will give it to someone who is better than you. ²⁹ Besides, **the eternal God of Israel isn't a human being.** He doesn't tell lies or change his mind."* 1 Samuel 15:28-29 CEV

The Law declared that justice should be impartial, the same for all people. Yet everyone knew that Courts, being comprised of human beings, were generally anything but fair and impartial. Here in 1 Samuel, the prophet makes the point that the judgments of God are always fair because God is **not** a human being.

⁹ *Would any of you give your hungry child a stone, if the child asked for some bread? ¹⁰ Would you give your child a snake if the child asked for a fish? ¹¹ As bad as you are, you still know how to give good gifts to your children. But your heavenly Father is even more ready to give good things to people who ask. ¹² Treat others as you want them to treat you. This is what the Law and the Prophets are all about.* Matthew 7:9-13 CEV

Jesus makes the same point (God is not a mere human) when speaking to the people about God's concern for their welfare. If a human parent would not give harmful gifts to his children, how much less likely is God to give such gifts? Moreover, the heart of the law is to treat others as you would have them treat you.

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

September 29th Sermon: Good or Bad, Rich or Poor? What is the obligation of the rich toward the poor? What about the "underserving poor," those who are the authors of their misery? These are the questions raised in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. My texts are 1 Timothy 6:6–19 and Luke 16:19–31.

October 6th Sermon: How Much Faith is Enough? Just how much faith is enough and how in the world is it measured? My texts are 2 Timothy 1:1–14 and Luke 17:5–10.

Worship Leaders Schedule

September 29

Donnie Hartsock, **Liturgist**

Maurice & Joyce Edwards, **Greeters**

Charles Wilson & Herb Haynes, **Ushers**

October 6

Rachel Newman, **Liturgist**

Sam Richardson & Marty Bauguess, **Greeters**

Mike & Elaine Rohrig, **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"!**

An Assembly of Sunday School will take place **Sunday, October 6 (First Sunday)**. **Hal and Rachel Newman will be leading singing from 9:45 – 10:00**. All are invited to attend.

"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!

We are updating the church directory with names, current addresses, telephone numbers (home and mobile) and email addresses. **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 any 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.**

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 3rd Quarter Financial Results

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

Choir Rehearsal: Rehearsal is scheduled for **September 25 at 7:00 PM.**

Men's Group: The men will be meeting **Saturday, September 28 at 8:00 AM.** Breakfast will be served and the meeting will be focused on plans for the **Pancake Breakfast Saturday, October 12.** All men are encouraged to participate in this meeting.

September Birthdays

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

Happy Birthday to each of you!