



# Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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## Understanding the New Testament The Gospels: The Gospel of John

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. John 1:1-5 NRSV*

<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. John 6:35 NRSV*

<sup>30</sup> *The Father and I are one. John 10:30 NRSV*

<sup>17</sup> *Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.' "* <sup>18</sup> *Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her. John 20:17-18 NRSV*

Matthew, Mark and Luke are the synoptic Gospels; the "seen together" Gospels. For the reasons discussed over the last few weeks most scholars believe that they were written using the same sources and that the entire Gospel of Mark was probably used as a template of sorts for the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. In contrast, the Gospel of John is quite different in writing style and content.

To begin with, unlike the synoptics, Jesus speaks about himself extensively in the Gospel of John. Some examples:

*"Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these."* <sup>51</sup> *And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." John 1:50-51*

<sup>14</sup> *but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." John 4:14 NRSV*

<sup>30</sup> *“I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me. John 5:30 NRSV*

<sup>6</sup> *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6 NRSV*

There are many more examples. For the most part, the Synoptics only hint at the declarations made in John.

Another distinguishing feature of the Gospel of John is the lack of parables. Jesus offers many teachings such as those cited above. But Jesus never tells parables in the Gospel of John. The Gospel does, however, contain many stories not included in the other Gospels. Among these are the wedding at Cana, the encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, the raising of Lazarus and the washing of the disciples feet.

Like Mark, there is no birth narrative and no genealogy. However, unlike the Synoptics that refer to Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God, in John there are direct claims for the divinity of Christ. This begins in the very first verse of the Gospel where Jesus is identified as the very Word of God that brought all creation into being and that He “was with God” and “was God.” Likewise in 10:30 Jesus states “the Father and I are one.” See also 14:9.

Another theme in the Gospel of John is that of Christ descending from God and ascending to God. Once again, this is a much more direct claim for the divinity of Christ than is usually found in the Synoptics. There is also a great deal of talk about the Spirit in John. We are to be “born of the Spirit” (3:6), God “gives the Spirit without measure,” (3:34) “God is Spirit,” (4:24) and “the Spirit gives life.” (6:63). There are more, including the giving of the Spirit to the Disciples by Christ (20:22). In several places, John contrasts the Spirit with the flesh. See e.g. John 3:6. This differentiation between the Spirit and flesh was a characteristic of the beliefs of the Gnostic Christian church. The Gnostics believed that all flesh was corrupt and that salvation was to be found in obtaining the *gnosis* (knowledge) that would enable the person to shed the flesh and become pure spirit. For the Gnostics, becoming pure spirit was salvation. The Gnostics, however, rejected the idea that God could become flesh. The Gospel of John makes that claim very early: <sup>14</sup>*And the Word became flesh and lived among us... . John 1:14 NRSV.*

As with the other Gospels, there are disputes about the authorship of the Gospel and when to date it. Church tradition from the second century held that the author was John, son of Zebedee. Most scholars date the Gospel of John as being written no earlier than 90 CE and possibly as late as the early second century. A minority believe that it may have been the first of the Gospels. Whenever it is dated, however, it is probably the most beloved and well known of the Gospels.

*Next Week: The Gospel accounts of the Last Days of Christ and the “Secret Gospels.”*

## **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).

*Moses said to Israel:*

<sup>12</sup> Every year you are to give ten percent of your harvest to the LORD. But every third year, this ten percent must be given to the poor who live in your town, including Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows. That way, they will have enough to eat. <sup>13</sup> Then you must pray:

*Our LORD and our God, you have said that ten percent of my harvest is sacred. I have obeyed your command and given this to the poor, including the Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows. Deut 26:12-13 CEV*

The Levites were the Priests in the Temple and received a portion of the yearly tithe. However, to insure that the poor would be fed, the people were commanded, at a minimum, to contribute to the feeding of the poor every third year. (As has already been shown, the law encouraged charity at other times as well.) Since not everyone would be on the same schedule, this insured that the poor would receive some portion of the yearly offering every year.

<sup>14</sup> My friends, what good is it to say you have faith, when you don't do anything to show that you really do have faith? Can that kind of faith save you? <sup>15</sup> If you know someone who doesn't have any clothes or food, <sup>16</sup> you shouldn't just say, "I hope all goes well for you. I hope you will be warm and have plenty to eat." What good is it to say this, unless you do something to help? <sup>17</sup> Faith that doesn't lead us to do good deeds is all alone and dead! James 2:14-17 CEV

Martin Luther criticized the Book of James because, in part, it seemed to emphasize "works" over "faith." John Wesley would have pointed out that faith that is not lived out in your daily life has little meaning. We express what we believe by how we live our lives. From the standpoint of James, we cannot simply tell someone who has little or nothing that God loves them and that they have our best wishes. We must do what we can to alleviate their need.

## **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.

## **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 8<sup>th</sup> Sermon: Gracious Gifting.** The Gospel is premised upon sharing a gift. But, how do we communicate the Gospel to people who don't know how to give? My Texts are psalm 139:1-18 and Luke 14:1, 7-14.

**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.

## Worship Leaders Schedule

### September 8

Marty Bauguess, **Liturgist**

Maurice & Joyce Edwards, **Ushers**

Tom & Julia Moore, **Greeters**

### September 15

Renita Hartsock, **Liturgist**

Sam Richardson & Tommy Cotton, **Ushers**

Mike & Elaine Rohrig, **Greeters**

## 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 **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:**

**September 14, 2013** – 2014 Budget Review and Approval

**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 4 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!**