

Trinotes

The Mission of Trinity United Methodist Church is to proclaim God's love by building community and living by the example and teachings of Jesus Christ.



For the Sake of Peace

"How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'" Isaiah 52:7

There is an ancient Mesopotamian mythology that I studied in an Old Testament class at Lambuth under the instruction of Dr. Gene Davenport. The Epic of Gilgamesh is a mythology of the creation of the earth. It took several classes to cover it all and wasn't until the end that I understood why, in an Old Testament class, we were covering ancient mythology.

Here are the cliff notes of the story of Apsu, Tiamat, and Marduk:

Apsu and Tiamat were the goddesses of water — one fresh water and the other salt. Each goddess birthed her children in the form of giant water serpents. From the serpents other things in creation were birthed, but the progeny became noisy, which upset both Apsu and Tiamat. They began to plot how to destroy their children and their children's children.

When one of the offspring discovered the plot, he kidnapped Apsu, which angered Tiamat, and so a war began and only ended when the god Marduk, a great warrior, was called forth to battle Tiamat. The violent battle is described in great detail. I'll spare you those details.

In the end, Marduk wins the battle and is promised supreme authority over the gods. And here's the important part. With his authority, he cut Tiamat in half and with one half created the dome of the heavens, and with the other half he made the earth. He established the dwelling of the gods, fixed the position of the stars, ordered the movements of the heavenly bodies, and fixed the length of a year. From the blood of battle he created mankind.

Parallel to this story was presented Genesis 1.

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. Genesis 1:1-5

I'll add one more parallel.

In my last newsletter article, I wrote about C.S. Lewis' indirect references to the impact of Christ's being in our world as depicted in the fantastic beast, Aslan, in his Narnia Chronicles, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. In the first book of that series, *The Magician's Nephew*, Aslan is seen roaming a void and singing. As he sings, life springs forth and the world is created, and we see how Lewis understands Genesis.

I know why Davenport taught about Tiamat, Apsu, and Marduk. We needed to catch a glimpse of how other ancient civilizations understood creation and, though the language seems similar — there was a void,

(continued on page 2)

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and the void was separated to become the heavens (above) and the earth (below) — creation as a verb itself is very different in these stories. Marduk creates from violence. After a war, he butchers what's left of his adversary and creates life from the violence (and us from the blood of battle). In some ways, this might explain our nature well..... But God speaks and what wasn't, was. Aslan sings and what isn't there, is there! Not only that, as outsiders looking in, we get the reflection, "And it was good."

It was never God's intention for violence to be a part of Creation. That was Davenport's point and as I continued to study the first two chapters of Genesis, even translating them word-for-word from Hebrew, I was able to see that more and more clearly. It was never God's intention for violence to be a part of Creation, but it is. Wars are a part of our history and bend as far back as ancient Israel in scripture, but Creation was meant to know peace as a part of our very nature. Violence and violent ambition is something we learned. We can pinpoint places in scripture where that might've come to fruition, as well. Adam and Eve ate from the fruit in the garden and understood right and wrong. Cain killed Abel. Moses killed a servant. Joshua and the battle of Jericho. Sodom and Gomorrah weren't destroyed because of "unnatural acts" in the city — but for violence. Destruction. Murder. We weren't created for these things.

It's important for us to know that — to know the heart of our Creator — as we reflect on the acts of violence that occurred last week at our nation's Capitol. It's important for us to claim God's intent for us, as we process what that violence means. If this is not God's hope for us, how should we, who are far more than Easter/Christmas Christians, respond?

It is my responsibility to condemn violence. I do. The United Methodist Church does. It is also my responsibility to condemn the pervasive inequality on display during the violent acts that occurred January 6th. I do — vehemently. It is the responsibility of those who are baptized people of faith to, "reject the evil powers of this world," — testifying that this is not of our Creator — and work, together, toward peace. Will you join me?

Be Well,
Rev. Sara



Celebrate Wonder: INCLUDE

As we begin the new year of 2021, we are also beginning a new unit of study in **CELEBRATE WONDER**, the curriculum for our Children's Sunday School Class. Our new FAITH WORD is **INCLUDE**, which means "to welcome all of God's children in God's love." We are wondering together what it means truly to include others, how we can connect to one another in God's love. Perhaps that is something that all of God's children, no matter how old we are, need to consider and to be in prayer about, most especially during these trying times in our country.

This past week we studied about Jesus' baptism. We were reminded that, just as God spoke to Jesus during his baptism and showed a deep sense of joy and happiness in Jesus, God also finds joy in us. Through our own baptism, God calls us, names us, and honors our gifts.

This week's lesson focuses on Jesus' calling of the first disciples. This story is an invitation to choose discipleship. These men were called, but they had a choice in whether they answered and accepted that calling. When we, too, choose to be disciples of Jesus Christ, we get to help build a community in which everyone is included, bringing all of God's children together. What a wonderful opportunity - and what a big challenge - that is!

—Irene Dycus

[Editor's Note...]

I am notorious among my friends for my refusal to read newspapers, watch the news on television, or listen to news programming on the radio. My philosophy has always been, if you want to live a happy, peaceful life, avoid bad news. (I do read the comics in the Commercial Appeal.)

A friend of mine started her own, personal newsletter a while back, and, since her attitude toward the media was pretty much the same as mine, she only reported good news. It was delightful. We all looked forward to reading her charming stories, laughed at the occasional cartoon, and just had fun taking a break from life as we knew it.

So I'm an ostrich. I stick my head in the sand and ignore the ugliness around me. I'm about as apolitical an animal as you'll ever find. I vote based on the character of the candidates. I love Bernie Sanders, although I didn't vote for him. (I suspect my daughter did. The bird video did it for her. It's still out there on You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FV2wCXXKg1E>)

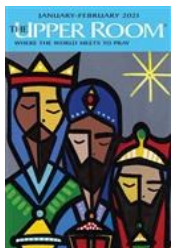
The events of January 6th changed all that for me. I've subscribed to National Geographic online for a few months now, so I get a lot of up-to-the-minute news, usually about endangered species and such. If a headline intrigues me, I click on that link. Well, NatGeo covered the happenings in Washington last week, and I found myself reading not only the lead article, but the sidebars, for which links were scattered throughout. I will continue to read the articles on the natural world, stories of mostly anthropological interest, and articles featuring the country of the week (the Netherlands this past week). But it looks like I'll have to start keeping up with current events.

I just finished reading *A Promised Land* by Barack Obama. It happened that my reading of the section Mr. Obama wrote about the current outgoing president coincided with January 6th's events. It was disturbing to read in Mr. Obama's words his reactions to and rare interaction with Donald Trump. They seem now to be prophetic.

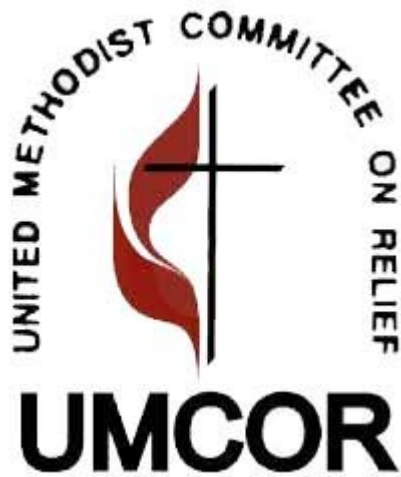
We have experienced a season of extremes over the last few years: "fake" news, a lot of pretty ugly hostility toward people of color or anyone who is different from some sort of undefined "norm," and active persecution of people who only crossed our borders because of a desire to grab the American Dream for themselves. I, for one, am ready for a change, a return to a time when I wasn't afraid to voice my opinion for fear of offending someone I counted—and loved—as friend. I am hopeful that, from this point forward, we can find our way back to civility and kindness.

When I ask myself, "Where is God in all this?" I confess to some uncertainty. However, knowing that humans have choices, for good or ill, I have to recognize that our God-given free will comes with a price. We must live with the outcome of our decisions. I choose kindness and pray that, as a nation, others will choose it, as well, so we can at some point live together in harmony.

Wishing you enough,
Debbly Marston



The January/February issue of *Upper Room* can be picked up from the front porch of the church building. We can also mail you a copy if you cannot get out. Leave a voicemail message at (901) 274-6895 or send an e-mail to office@trinityumcmemphis.org. Please be sure to specify the print size: regular or large print.



Global Ministries of the UMC

“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.” - Luke 10:27

Late last year, Trinity sent a donation of \$100.00 to UMCOR, for which that global ministry expressed their thanks. The money will support U.S. Disaster Response and Recovery. Since 1940, UMCOR has served as the humanitarian agency of the United Methodist Church, providing disaster response and relief to areas impacted by natural and man-made disasters around the world. It is through our financial support that UMCOR can respond to increasingly frequent and destructive storms, sharing 100% of donated funds with those in need. Please remember UMCOR as you plan your charitable giving for 2021.

BINGHAMPTON FOOD PANTRY

Fishes and Loaves Food Pantry at Binghampton UMM, 258 N. Merton St., is open on Tuesdays and Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. for distribution of fresh fruits and vegetables....people can come as often as they want for these.

Once a month, persons can request an emergency food bag (canned goods, peanut butter, cereal, rice, dried beans, soup, etc). Neither of these options require any proof of residency or need.....you ask, you receive. Individuals and families who need an emergency food bag can call Michael Anderson at (901) 503-2748.

Trinity members: please contact Debby Marston at office@trinityumcmemphis.org or leave a message at (901) 274-6895 to ask about the next opportunity to bring staple items for Binghampton UMM’s food pantry. We can wear masks and practice social distancing while still partnering in this vital ministry to the poor. A donation in the form of a check written to Trinity UMC, with “Fishes & Loaves” on the memo line, will also help keep the food pantry well stocked and will be very much appreciated.



Just because this blurb about our **Tiny Pantry** is near the bottom of the page doesn’t mean it’s unimportant. It’s up to us to keep said pantry stocked with canned goods and non-perishable items so our less fortunate neighbors can pick up groceries they can’t afford to buy. Try to put yourselves in their shoes as you shop for food for the Tiny Pantry. What if you had no access to refrigeration, no can opener, no way to cook, no way to store leftovers? Look for small cans of fruit, tuna, or pasta with pop tops; peanut butter or cheese crackers, etc. Use your imagination, and you will find all sorts of food items that an unsheltered neighbor can carry around in a back pack and eat without the need for anything more than a fork or spoon. (We try to keep plastic utensils in stock whenever possible.) Become a regular donor. Set aside one day a month when you shop for the Tiny Pantry. After you put away your groceries at home, drive to Trinity and re-stock **our** Tiny Pantry. It belongs to **all** of us. You’ll be glad you did.

Memorials & Honorariums

Honorariums have been received

In honor of Elaine Amis from Irene Dycus

In honor of Alyson Foreman from Irene Dycus

In honor of Pastors Sara Corum & Josh McClurkan & Family from Alyson Foreman

In honor of Charles & Melba Abraham from Alyson Foreman

In honor of Valerie Coats from Alyson Foreman

In honor of Chris Glover from Alyson Foreman

A memorial has been received

In memory of Orion & Virginia Blanton from Chris Glover

[**Editor's Note:** If you wish to receive Trinity's ENews electronic newsletter, please send your request to office@trinityumcmemphis.org so your e-mail address can be added to the list of ENews subscribers. ENews is published each Thursday, and a link to TRINOTES is included in ENews the week the print newsletter is mailed out.]



January 1 John Curry

January 3 Kay Jordan

January 5 Eleanor Brooks

January 6 Tom Wilson

January 10 Roscoe Dodson

January 12 Doris Porter

January 15 Jeff Corbitt

January 16 Joan Foley

January 16 Jay Keller

January 25 Irene Dycus

January 25 Lila Ruth Dycus

January 29 Caley Foreman

January 30 Carol Miller

PRAYER CONCERNS

Our country and the world - for all those in our country and around the world who are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; for people of faith around the world who are experiencing persecution; for refugees seeking asylum from war and social unrest; for safe drinking water for those living in developing countries; for people around the world experiencing terrorist attacks; for the poor, homeless, and disenfranchised in our city; for immigrants who are struggling due to lost jobs and lack of resources; for persons of color who are speaking out against racial profiling and injustice, and for families who have lost loved ones due to violence; for President-Elect Joe Biden and Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris as they prepare to take office; and for those impacted by the violence in Washington, D.C. on January 6th

The United Methodist Church - for our Pastor, Rev. Sara Corum, her husband Josh McClurkan, and their five children; for our Bishop, the Rev. Bill McAlilly; and for our District Superintendent, the Rev. Dr. Deborah Smith

Trinity UMC - for members of the congregation homebound due to chronic illness or age; for children and youth as they attend school, whether virtually or in person; for new visitors joining us as we worship online; for all families who are grieving; for our congregation as we deal with transitions. Wisdom for our Trustees and Church Council. Also, specific prayer requests by and for:

Maggi Comes' niece, **Katie Pendleton**, diagnosed with Tumefactive MS

Bryce Sellers, fighting Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy

Paige Warmath, Alyson Foreman's cousin, died January 11th after a long illness. Pray for her husband and two sons and her mother and two brothers.

Kanyon Glover, heart transplant survivor; in and out of hospital

Donnie Glover, Chris's brother, still battling leukemia

Jacob Foreman, son of **Caley & Alyson**, diagnosis is ENS; please pray for him.

Gene and Irene Opel, grateful for all the cards from TUMC members and the children, but still medically fragile and missing daughter **Anita Bunn**, who is not allowed to visit.

Jeri Ashley, multiple health concerns

David Harrison, Carol Miller's brother, is suffering from a broken hip, many other critical health issues.

Don Culpepper, Carol Miller's brother-in-law, has lung cancer.

Sally Ramsey, out of her back brace and having physical therapy

Joan Smith's cousin/mom, **Gigi**, aka **Kathryn Ellis**, at Allenbrooke Rehab for another month

Carol Bruce, Chris Glover's sister, living alone & grieving the death of her last companion, a talking bird

Peggy Kinney, Charlotte Comes' 95 year old cousin in Georgia with broken hip, in rehab, struggling with depression

Charles Abraham, in hospital still, on a liquid diet, but having difficulty swallowing

Rev. Richard Hackleman, in rehab in Somerville, TN, said to be doing well

For all members and friends of **Trinity UMC** as they shelter at home, as they work from home, and as they look forward to a time when they can see — in person — the faces of their church family

(Please contact the church office if you have additional prayer concerns, need a concern removed, or need to make a change or correction.)