

**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.**



From  
the desk  
of...  
The Rev.

## Never Write When You're Grumpy

*"If I say, 'I will forget my complaint; I will put off my sad countenance and be of good cheer.'" Job 9:27*

I try to never write anything when I'm grumpy. As a general rule, positivity breeds positivity and so forth. Negativity breeds all sorts of bad feelings and when you put the negativity in writing, it immortalizes the negativity, right? Maybe.

Scripture says a lot about being positive. Well, it sort of does. In Romans 8:28 we hear, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose." The implication thereafter is that we should take heart! Be of good cheer! Further in Romans (15:13) we hear, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace..." Scripture directs us again and again to a God who delivers us from fear and anxiety (Phil. 4:6-7; Isaiah 41:10), who will overcome the tribulation of the world for us (John 16:33), and calls us to rejoice in the Lord our Savior. This is the direction we are given as people of faith — to point our countenance toward the joy of the Lord and emulate it.

But, as we approach the season of Lent (Ash Wednesday is Valentine's Day this year), I am also reminded of our mortality, and that is a body and mind that are still fully-aware of the tribulations of the world — a heart set, at times, toward Lamentations, or the Valley of the Dry Bones alongside Ezekiel, maybe, even, Job. Rejoicing in the Lord is part of it. Being authentic, acknowledging the struggle, being 'real,' that's the rest of it. We are mortal. We experience pain and hurt. We are anxious — not in distrust, but in love. We want for us, for our families, for those walking through life alongside us, those whom we love, to prosper and fully live.

And so as it rains this morning, and I dragged two very grumpy children back to school after the gift they received in a surprise week off, and it is dark and dreary, in words less grumpy, I think that I'd like to call you to begin to come to your authentic self and realization of the fullness of the life you have. What aches when you awaken — in your body, in your mind, in your soul? What yearns — longs for — peace, renewal, forgiveness? What makes the day difficult? What mistakes do you lament? What makes you cry out for God? What is a witness to your mortality?

Reflect. As we inch closer to that season, reflect. Yes, maybe that will point us toward the God who heals and forgives — the God who will walk alongside us on the journey that we take to Calvary. But maybe it won't. Maybe, instead, it'll hurt a little. Maybe, instead, it will begin to show us how much we need a Savior, how much our relationship needs a Savior, how much our faith life, or work life, or married life, or single life, needs a Savior. Isn't that what Lent is? Isn't it a time when we recognize, again, what we are not and who Christ is? Isn't that what Epiphany is too? Jesus' baptism? He is the Son in whom God is well-pleased.

Here is the Good News. We too are children of God — authentic, real, whole, broken, children of God who needed and still need a Savior. May God be well-pleased with us, too, as we reflect, grow, and become.

Journeying with you,  
Rev. Sara



Trinity's United Women in Faith will meet in the Worship Center at noon on Thursday, January 25th, for the first meeting of 2024. Joan Smith will serve as chair for the group, and Mary McConnell will be librarian for the reading program and District Liaison. Other roles still to be filled include recording secretary and coordinators for

Old business to be discussed will include Golden Cross Mission and the reading program. New business on the agenda for Thursday's meeting includes District missions, dues for the Methodist Hospital Auxiliary (\$2/member), the United Methodist Neighborhood Center, an upcoming Church Women United meeting at Prescott Presbyterian, annual pledges, discussion on where funds should be distributed, and discussion of support of the District's recommended benevolences. Also on the agenda is consideration of changing the UWF's fiscal year to match the District's.

Members of the UWF are reminded to bring a canned or boxed food item or a dollar. Those donations will go to Trinity's new Food Pantry. Mike Potter has asked for new or gently worn large T-shirts and gym shorts for a hospice patient in need.



**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, folks 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:** You can bring canned goods or other non-perishable items for BUMM's food pantry. A box for donated foodstuffs has been placed in the lobby in front of the reception desk. A donation in the form of a check written to Trinity UMC, with "Fishes & Loaves" on the memo line, will help keep the food pantry well stocked and will be very much appreciated. Hunger is a very real problem in our community. Help our neighbors in need! **Trinity's own food pantry will open soon! Get ready to support both!**





## Fishing for People

This week's lesson in our Children's Sunday School Class is an important one to our children's understanding of what it means to be a Christian disciple. It's the story from Matthew 4:18-22 of Jesus calling his first four disciples. This was to be the subject of our Sunday School lesson two weeks ago. That day, we had no kids, and this past week we were "iced out." In this two-week period, the lectionary focused on two other gospel stories about the call of the disciples. Two weeks ago, the scripture was from John 1:43-51, in which Jesus calls Philip and Nathanael. Last week, the scripture was from Mark 1:14-20, which is very similar to the version in Matthew that our class is studying this week. Jesus is walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee when he sees two brothers, Peter and Andrew, going about their daily business, fishing with nets. Jesus calls to them, "Come, follow me! I will teach you how to fish for people." They drop everything and follow Jesus. Soon after that, two other brothers, James and John, who are fishing with their father Zebedee, do the same thing.

In ***The Upper Room Disciplines*** on January 20<sup>th</sup>, the author, Anne Cumings, says, "Jesus met the disciples right where they were every day, out by the sea, doing their jobs. Sometimes we are guilty of listening for God's call only in special places. We don't think to listen for God in the ordinary moments of everyday life. This passage reminds us that God is calling to us right here and right now. God shows up in the work we do every day...You don't have to abandon your identity and become a different person to follow Christ. Christ will transform you along with the gifts and graces you have developed throughout your life. God will use your uniqueness as you choose to follow Christ's way."

"To fish for people" is our calling, just as surely as it was that of Peter, Andrew, James, and John. When we accept this calling as disciples of Jesus Christ, we are invited to share the Good News with others, to help them discover and come to know God through the example of Jesus. When we choose to do that, we participate in the exciting challenge of helping build a community in which everyone is included, bringing all God's children together. We are not alone in this; He is there with us every step along the way, enabling us to use our own special gifts to fulfill that calling.

I found the prayer from ***The Upper Room Disciplines*** devotion that was referenced above to be wonderfully empowering, and so I want to share it with you in closing: "God of this present moment, thank you for meeting me right where I am. Open my ears to your call. Show me the ways I can use my gifts to follow your way. Give me the courage to get up and go when I hear your voice. Amen."

Peace and love,  
*Irene*



### Another year older? Watch out for the Birthday Fairy

The Trinity Card Fairy is in need of birthday cards. They can be boxed or loose. Any you can find hiding in drawers, boxes, or other obscure locales would be helpful. Leave the cards at the reception desk.

Thanks from the Trinity Birthday Fairy!

# What if Jesus really meant what he said?

by Debby Marston

I've been re-reading a book co-authored by Tony Campolo and Shane Claiborne entitled "The Red Letter Revolution." (It's subtitled "What if Jesus really meant what he said?") As most of you know, certain editions of the Bible have included the words of Jesus in red letters. That's the premise of this book. Focusing on the words of Jesus gives us insights into God's plan and expectations for God's people. What I seem to have missed on my first reading is the financial aspect of this "Red Letter" edition about God's Word. Jesus gave very specific directions on how we should live our lives, in particular our lives in relation to other believers: those persons with whom we share the bounty – or lack thereof – of our "stuff." Jesus gave instructions as to how we are to support and care for each other. And I find myself failing those instructions. I have been applauding an increase in the funds residing in our personal checking account. There has been an increase for which I cannot exactly account. I give God credit for providing for us. I have always believed that God's provision for God's creatures is perfect. We need, and God gives. However, I have also felt led to re-read this particular book, which I found quite compelling the first time I read it a few years ago. Now I find it not only compelling, but disturbing. You see, I don't want to give up the "stuff" with which God has blessed us.

In one chapter of the book, Tony Campolo describes an interaction with a Jewish college student in one of his classes, a young man who has found Christ and become an ardent Christian. When he questions Campolo's need for a 401k, pension, etc., Campolo's response is predictable to any American who has grown up with the notion of planning for retirement. Who's going to take care of me in my old age? Who will take care of my wife, my family, if I cannot? I have to plan for the future. The young man's response? (He is, after all, a new Christian.) Well, the church, of course. That's what the church does. You take care of each other, provide for each other in your need...

Look at the early church. For a while, at least, Christians took care of each other. Money and resources were pooled in order to provide for anyone who might have needs they were unable to meet themselves. That didn't last very long. Throughout the history of the church, there has been a conflict between certain saints (St. Francis comes to mind) and the hierarchy of the church. The church in the Middle Ages was rife with corruption on the part of its leadership. Nowadays, people hark back to the scandals attached to more modern Christian leaders. (Jim Bakker comes to mind.) The vast wealth certain televangelists have enjoyed is a mockery of Jesus' intent for his church.

So what is one to do? We have more money than we need. What should we do with it? Hoard it against some future need? Or spend it on the more urgent, immediate need of our brothers and sisters who go hungry to bed at night. They and their children lack so much. We have so much we could share if we only had the will to truly believe in God's provision for us.

What is the church, if it is not a collection of people who worship the same God, celebrate the same beliefs, and cherish the same promise of salvation? God calls us to reach out to our neighbors in their need and offer a helping hand, whether in the form of groceries, rent money, utilities assistance, or some other gift. Charity can be defined as, "the voluntary giving of help, typically in the form of money, to those in need." In the King James' Version of the Bible, "charity" is used in the same sense as a more modern translation uses "love." Let's start growing into the church Jesus called into being by becoming even more charitable, more giving, and more loving than ever before.





Alex Landrigan	February 6
Sally Ramsey	February 7
Myra Finch	February 12
Eli Witt	February 22
Jacobi Hemigway	February 23
Sara Corum	February 27
David Hopper	February 27
Amy Moritz	February 27



## January Birthdays

John Curry	January 2
Kay Jordan	January 4
Eleanor Brooks	January 5
Roscoe Dodson	January 10
Tom Wilson	January 10
Harrison Witt	January 10
Jay Keller	January 16
Joan Foley	January 18
Lisa Wong	January 19
Doris Porter	January 23
Irene Dycus	January 25
Lila Dycus	January 25
Jeff Corbett	January 27
Caley Foreman	January 29
Carol Miller	January 30
Sharmin Murley	January 30



## Celebration of life

Join us as we celebrate the life of  
Nelda Gray, our beloved sister in Christ,  
on Saturday, February 3rd, at 11:00 a.m.  
in Trinity's Worship Center.

Our **Tiny Pantry** is still perched in place on Trinity's front lawn, and we occasionally see neighbors come by to replenish it. It's easy to forget how important the gift of a little food can be. Most of us don't miss many meals. There are, however, hungry folks who come by looking for a can of tuna or soup, or for just enough to get them by until their food stamps arrive. Those neighbors who are chronically unsheltered may not even have public aid in the form of food subsidies. Imagine going to bed hungry, not just one night, but almost every night. Remember to keep our Tiny Pantry stocked. Next time you go to the grocery store, pick up some extra food that can be eaten "as is," without cooking, like Vienna sausages, fruit cups, or tuna packets with crackers.



## PRAYER CONCERNS

**Our country and the world** - for all those endangered by the war between Israel and Hamas and for families on both sides who have lost loved ones; for victims of natural disasters; for those families and communities who have fallen victim to the horror of gun violence in our country; for the people of Ukraine who are imperiled by the invasion of Russian troops, shelling of residential areas, and the terror being experienced by the civilian population; for all those in our country and around the world still impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and variants; 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 still struggle 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 race related violence; for President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris—pray for their wisdom and that of all political leaders.

**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 interim District Superintendent, the Rev. Dr. David Weatherly;

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

The family and many friends of **Nelda Gray**, who died December 20th

**Sarah Mozley**, Carol Miller's friend, passed away. Please pray for her friends and family as they grieve.

Sandy Guntharp's sister, **Diana DuBois**, passed away January 23rd; pray for Diana, Sandy & their family.

**Rosemary Potter**, recovering at home following hip surgery, albeit slowly

Chris Glover's sister **Carol** is now in hospice care at home

**Mike Baloga**, encephalitis, at home with nursing care, and wife **Juli** (neighbors of Joe & Katy Spake)

**Gene Archer**, diagnosed with stomach cancer; **Lauren Crews**, diagnosed with ALS - both the Millers' friends  
Melba Abraham's cousin, **Lydia Melton**, has cervical cancer.

**Gracia Alequin**, Amelia Strickland's friend, auto accident; at home with fractured leg

Pray for **schoolchildren and youth**: for travel safety, health, successes & recoveries from failures, and for teachers & parents as they guide them.

**Gwen Dodson**, bladder cancer, COPD, and osteoporosis; IV cancer treatment ongoing every 3 weeks

**Charlotte Comes**, portacath installed November 14th; chemo continuing

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

**Kanyon Glover**, pray for his speech therapy and the use of his left arm (due to a stroke)

**Jacob Foreman**, chronic back pain and nerve damage in left leg; doctors have no answer

**David Harrison**, Carol Miller's brother, on dialysis, paralyzed on one side after stroke, asthma, COPD; has had a better week, though!

**Don Culpepper**, Carol Miller's brother-in-law, has cancer in five locations; receiving radiation therapy.

**Val Coates**, ongoing serious health concerns

**Eddie Ramsey**, now in hospice care at home; **Sally**, as she prepares herself for the future; the **Ramsey family**

**Seth Genes**, 13 year old friend of Debby Marston; successful surgery on January 22nd to remove femur and replace with prosthetic bone; physical therapy has already started & Seth is doing well.

Pray for **Jonathan Goff**.

**Lyle Klein**, family member of Amelia Strickland, diagnosed with Parkinson's, cancer, and heart disease

For **Living Word Christian Church**; for **The Lab School**; for all our Scouts and leaders of **Pack 13, Troop 13G, and Troop 13B**; and for those in the **NA** groups who meet at Trinity

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