October 22, 2025

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.

From the desk of... The Rev.

Building a Longer Table

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise." Luke 10:36-37

A few years ago, I put something mildly controversial on our church sign. I like doing this. It's never really bothered me to ruffle feathers for the right reason. The sign read, "Build a longer table, not a taller wall." One can approach the message from several different angles. Since we're a church, one can interpret this message as meaning that the table of the Lord is a place where everyone belongs, so set a place at the table for anyone who'd come. Yes, I did mean that. But also…

Several years ago one of America's key focuses was who we might keep out of our country at the U.S./Mexico border. One of the most popular praise and worship songs of that year was by Hillsong United called *Oceans*. The first line to the chorus is, "Spirit, lead me where my trust is without borders." We were singing praise to God and asking for a consciousness and faith that would help us see the world as one humanity, while building a wall to separate us because of a rhetoric, largely based in fear, of the 'other,' and hypotheticals with only occasional exceptions (actual drug traffickers and people traffickers). We were spending resources that could be invested in impoverished communities, to keep out people who largely make **better** our country. We were treating desperation as though it is criminal, while God has ALWAYS called us to a faith that has no borders.

And here we are again, or, still.

The wall is still there. There are small spots along it where people on "our side" pass jugs of water to tired sojourners on "their side." There are spots along it where seesaws have been placed between the bars and children in Mexico ride up and down on one side, adjacent children in the U.S. Children often ignore language barriers where joy is involved. People can hold hands with others through it — hands that are no different on one side or the other — the hands of those who need comfort (that goes both ways), of those who need food (that goes both ways), of those who need safety, and security, and freedom, and hope. But there is a distinct line that is drawn.

A few weeks ago as I was preaching I said (and then reiterated) that no human being is illegal. I cannot understand how we have attempted to make that so, when the Kingdom of God is diverse in every which way — when, "This land is your land. This land is my land." I cannot understand a culture or a community of faith (for that matter) that would see desperation and say, "It's not my problem." Likewise, I cannot fathom the fear our immigrant siblings — our neighbors — must be feeling right now as the wall gets longer and seats at the table remain empty.

Church, we are called to obedience. We repent of our failure to be obedient, often, but do not often talk about how we can be better between the bouts of repentance. We are called to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. We love ourselves enough to claim our freedoms — both in Christ and as Americans. We love ourselves enough to do whatever it takes to keep our families safe and provided for. We love ourselves enough that we enjoy the comforts of 'extra' from time-to-time (and sometimes more often than that). We love ourselves, our children, our families. But, we are also called to love our neighbor.

The question in Luke chapter 10 was, "Who is my neighbor?" Its parallel question today is, "Are they

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here legally?" Jesus' answer was the parable of the Good Samaritan and at the end, the legal expert who'd asked who his neighbor was, was asked the same by Jesus. He answered, "The one who showed him mercy."

To whom are we showing mercy? Are we being obedient? Which master are we serving? May we not only repent of our failings, but do better today than yesterday.

Spirit, lead us where our trust is without borders. Let us walk upon the waters, wherever you will call us.

Resisting evil and injustice,
with you.
Rev. Sara

Editor's Note: Still moving right along...

I warned you in the last *Trinotes* that there might be more to the ongoing saga of my planned move to Huntsville, Alabama. I think the expression I used was, "Stay tuned." It has definitely been an adventure. Tuesday, the hardwood floor guys stained the living/dining room, hallway, and two smaller bedroom floors a nice, rich chestnut. It makes me wonder why in the world we put carpet on top of those floors back in 1989 when George and I bought the house. On Thursday, the master bedroom and upper den floors will be carpeted and part of the kitchen re-floored in LVP (luxury vinyl plank to the uninitiated). When Bernie, the flooring guy, came with samples for the kitchen floor, he sat with my sister Katie and me in the den (crowded with boxes) and visited for a while. He shared a beautiful testimony of his life and faith. Bernie is Hispanic, and his English is heavily accented, but he was very clear about Whose he is. His relationship with Jesus is deep and profound, and it was a joy to listen to him.

Almost all of the trades people who are doing the renovations on my house are Hispanic. Felipe's crew consists of six men and one or two women, depending on the day. They are unfailingly courteous and thoughtful. I realize that you don't have to be Christian to be a nice person, but somehow I think these folks are all believers. They greet each day with enthusiasm and joy. My contractor, Randle, told me from the beginning of this process that he was only sending me the very best, but I didn't realize that it was as much about character and integrity as it was about skill.

I live in a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood. My experience here has been very positive for the past 36 years, but as the neighborhood has evolved and more and more Hispanic families have bought homes here, the "feel" of the street has changed. People are out walking their dogs, pushing strollers, chatting with neighbors in front of houses, working in their yards, and generally acting like folks used to do when I was a kid growing up on a similar street in Madison, Tennessee.

I guess what I'm trying to say is that some people who claim to be Christians look down on anyone who looks different, speaks with an accent, does manual labor, or doesn't fit the WASP mold. In my experience, a Christian is the neighbor who saw me struggling with a heavy box just delivered by Amazon and ran across the street to help me get it into the house. A Christian is the neighbor who mowed our yard when he knew George wasn't able to anymore. A Christian is the woman who noticed that Kelly, a neighbor down the street, hadn't been out of her house for a day or two and went to check on her and learned there had been an accident, and Kelly had hurt her back pretty badly. Kelly's neighbor went in and cleaned her house, cooked her meals, and checked on her regularly until she was able to manage on her own. Can you guess the ethnicity of all three of those neighbors who stepped up and helped their Anglo neighbors? You got it: Hispanic women and men who know what it means to "walk the walk" and not just "talk the talk." I love them and will miss them when I move as much as I will miss all of you.

Wishing you enough,
Debby

Memory

Today, as I was writing this article, my mind was wandering in the wilderness. This may be an indication of the beginning of memory issues, as it is much harder for me to remember things now. I have problems with "portal amnesia," times when I can't remember what my original intentions were when I have entered a room. The remedy to overcoming this difficulty is to go back through the door and then return to the room; often the original mission comes to mind. Unfortunately for me, these days it sometimes takes two or three times back-tracking and re-entering before I can accomplish the intended task. I exchange stories with friends of my vintage about our misplaced phones and keys and words that refuse to come to mind. We are all laughing at this point, but it's also pretty scary.

This past Sunday was my first time being the storyteller in our Godly Play Sunday School. The story was the very familiar one of Moses leading God's chosen people in the difficult journey through the wilderness, their arrival at Mt. Sinai, and God's giving the Ten Commandments to them. As the storyteller, I found the sensory experience of working with my hands in the sand of the Desert Box to be quite revealing. Usually when we think of wilderness, the areas in this country that come to mind are heavily wooded. Touching and moving the sand reminded me that the biblical wilderness was far more discouraging than our forestlands. This wilderness consisted of "sandy deserts, rocky plateaus, barren pasture lands, and desolate mountain regions," according to our **Deep Blue Kids Bible Dictionary**. I could envision God's people struggling through the bleakness of the desert and could also imagine the great challenges Moses faced as their leader. I continue to be amazed that Moses was eighty years old when he took on that responsibility and that he carried that heavy load for forty years.

Among the questions that the Godly Play storyteller asks the children after the telling of each story is, "I wonder what part of the story is about you or where you are in the story?" So, I asked myself these same questions. I think I share several things with Moses. This coming January, I, too, will be eighty years old. Over forty years ago, God spoke to my heart through the Biblical passage (Exodus 3) in which he called to Moses from the burning bush. I give the Lord lots of reasons why I can't do things that He calls me to do, just as Moses did. When I told this story using the Godly Play script last Sunday, I struggled at times to come up with the right words, even though I had worked hard on learning them by heart. Perhaps that's something else I share with Moses, who said, "I have never been eloquent...I am slow of speech and tongue." When I am working on ***Trinotes*** articles, I feel more confident putting things in writing because I don't do well speaking extemporaneously about my faith. Sometimes it takes me all day just to write one article.

I read just this week that learning new things is a way to counter memory loss. Perhaps that will be one of the blessings that I will experience as a Godly Play storyteller. As of right now, I know my name and those of my loved ones. I remember where I live. I'm not likely at this point to wander off somewhere and get lost. I have the feeling that if I do, I may just end up in the parking lot at Trinity Church. Even now, sometimes while operating on autopilot, I find myself heading to Trinity when I am intending to go elsewhere. My years of ministry here, mostly with children in some capacity, are such a significant part of my memory that they strongly pull me in that direction, like a compass pointing toward "home."

Right now, I am remembering who I am, Whose I am, and Whose you are, too,

With a thankful heart,
Irene

Confirmation Class Fall Schedule

November 2: Jesus

November 16: Matthew/Mark

December 14: Luke/John

United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith meets Friday, 24 October, at 11:30 for potluck in the Center. Please continue in prayer for our sister, Kay. Also, please come with suggestions for how we can display our lovely needlepoint kneeling cushions.

The devotional is from the 22 October UPPER ROOM, "The Kindness of Others." Questions to ponder include: When have you cared for someone in your community? How did the experience enrich your life and faith. Recall a time when someone made the effort to check on you. Did you know the person? How did it feel to be cared for in this way? Who in your community needs a helping hand today? How can you care for them. What do you need today? How will you accept help from others?

We look forward to seeing you there. Come and bring a friend.

Church Council and Commitees

Church Council met after worship on October 19th with Chair Allen Stanton and Irene Dycus, Katy Spake, Mike Potter, Rev. Sara Corum, Joan Smith, Jeff Corbett, and Sam Goff present. Committee reports included:

1. Pastor's Report from Rev. Sara: Charge Conference with Dr. Deborah Smith was a success. 2026 committees are set. Trunk or Treat is on schedule with even some Scout parents having trunks. Advent coordination is on schedule.

2. Spiritual Formation from Mike: The Food Pantry is working well. Sunday School classes are growing.

3. SPPRC from Rev. Sara in Kay Jordan's absence: 2026 salaries are set. We have had one applicant for the Administrative Officer job. SPPRC will assume responsibility for Safe Sanctuary background checks.

4. Children's Department from Irene: Irene is bringing in a new chair, but she will remain as co-chair. The committee includes Marisa Montgomery, Adina LaFlamme, and Rebecca Jordan. Advent Workshop will be chaired by Jessica Dycus.

5. UWF from Joan: UWF has completed all missions for the calendar year, the latest being the purchase of 50 food boxes for the Pantry. We have new members from the community outside Trinity.

6. Trustees from Sam Goff: The tree that dropped limbs recently does not have to come down—only be trimmed up. The estimate will be revised. The stump in front will be removed. The storage room downstairs is being emptied and cleaned to become the new conference room. The sprinklers need timing adjustment or to be shut off for winter. The zero turn lawn mower has been purchased. The common room downstairs has its new paint and ceiling ready for use.

November

Birthdays

Joan Smith	November 7
Katy Spake	November 12
Cooper Tate	November 14
Mary McConnell	November 17
Martha Ostenrude	November 18
Abby Stanton	November 24
Raquel Norton	November 27
John Allmon	November 29
Venus Hamric	November 30

Memorials & Honorariums

An Honorarium has been received in Honor of

Craig Jordan

from

Doris Porter

October Birthdays

Clara Farabee	October 2
Nora Dycus	October 8
Danielle Wilkerson	October 22
Ellen Weatherly	October 24
Sonnet Booth	October 26
Natalie Stanton	October 27

Trunk-or-Treat RAIN PLAN

Friends, as of now (Tuesday) there is an 85% chance of rain this Sunday. One cannot yet predict when that rain may come through, but we are going to set in place a rain plan for our Trunk-or-Treat. I hope if you have signed up for a trunk, that you will make plans to attend either way, so that this event can be successful.

We have done this once before (about 5 years ago) when it rained for our Trunk-or-Treat, and we still had a wonderful event. If it rains, we will set up candy stations at tables in the Center. We will make sure there are games for children to play, and we will set up a blow up movie screen and show a Halloween movie. Your pastor, who is well-stocked on popcorn (thanks to Pack 13), will make sure there is popcorn to pop, and perhaps our scouts will help us make s'mores in the micro-wave. We will make sure to STILL have a wonderful time.

What we need no matter what is YOU. Please continue to keep this on your calendar, rain or shine, because we cannot do it well without your support and presence.

Prayer Concerns

Our country and the world - for the continued process of resolution of the conflict between Israel and Hamas; for victims of natural disasters, especially for those who have lost loved ones; 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 struggle due to lost jobs, threatened deportation, 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 the resolution of division among people of the United States and the wisdom of all political leaders.

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

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:

Kay Jordan, pneumonia and pleural effusion in left lung; chest tube inserted Oct. 20; at Methodist University, but no visitors for the time being
Laura Comes Hubbard, incurable multiple myeloma
Carol Miller, at home recovering from knee replacement surgery
Jimmy Rast, Melba Abraham's brother, diagnosed with genetic Alzheimer's
Millie, 8 month old infant with tumor on her liver (request from Myra Finch)
Betsy Black's friend **Ken Savage**, diagnosed with metastatic cancer
Baby Stella, born 7 weeks early with extra chromosome; developmental problems expected
Sharman Murley & Frank Cantrell's son, **Frank, Jr.**, heart issues
Pam Stafford battling liver disease, surgery postponed after fall & broken hip; husband **Jim Stafford**, dementia; **Whitney**, knee surgery (from Sandy Guntharp)
Martha Ostenrude's close friend **Ashley**, diagnosed with leukemia
Continued prayers for **Sally Ramsey** and daughter **Sandi**
Bobby Glover, Chris's brother, in care for early Alzheimer's
For Sharman Murley's grandchild **El**, for well-being, making friends, and a better school year
Chris Glover's sister, **Sherry Carruthers**
Seth Norton, Raquel's son, serious ongoing medical concerns
Gwen Dodson, bladder cancer, COPD, osteoporosis; cancer treatment
Kanyon Glover, good medical report; no sign of heart rejection
Jacob Foreman, for healing and pain relief; praise that basal cell carcinoma on his lower back was removed
Gene Archer passed away after a long struggle with cancer; his wife **Julia** has MS. (Friends of the Millers)
Carol Miller's brothers: **David Harrison** moved to new nursing home with in-house dialysis; **Jerry Harrison**, now in rehab.
Carey Miller's brother, **Lee Miller**, is in long-term rehab in Mountain Home, AR, recovering from a stroke.
Val Coates, for relief of constant pain & healing of serious multiple issues, including depression
Karen Barker, Sara Goff's sister, lung issues; **Jonathan Goff**
Laura Major Conner, for her physical health and living situation
For Trinity's new **Youth Group** and **Confirmation Class**
For Trinity's **Children's SS Class** & upcoming **Trunk or Treat** on October 26th

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