

Trinotes

November 16, 2022

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.



The United Methodist Church

From
the desk
of...
The Rev.

We are not alone, we live in God's world. We believe in God: who has created and is creating, who has come in Jesus, the Word made flesh, to reconcile and make new...
— A Statement of Faith of the United Church of Canada (1968), UMH 883

"See, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy."
— Isaiah 65:17,18

When I stepped out of my car at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, I didn't know what to expect. Even after several years of preparing, I felt lost. Maybe it was because it was only lunch time and I'd already been in the car for 8 hours. I was exhausted. Maybe it was because everything that was before us felt insurmountable.

The Church is changing. It has been for decades. It is no longer a staple part of every family dynamic. Faith life feels expendable. We've made it **too** personal — **too** about 'us'. It IS about us, but only inasmuch as it affects the whole. There is a decline in protestantism that began long before my time, and perhaps yours as well. But that's not what's going on in the United Methodist Church. No, our shift is much more specific.

I've said it before and I'll continue to say it. I love the United Methodist Church. As wishy-washy as he could be from time-to-time, I love John Wesley — what he stood for and what he began to build here in 1736. Methodism was and is holistic in that it is not inward facing to serve only the religious. It is outward facing to serve, affect, and influence all facets of human life. Methodists have always been at the forefront of social change — it's written in the Social Principles of our United Methodist Book of Discipline — the ways in which we see God, vivified through the Holy Scriptures, empowering humanity to live among all the issues that come to the surface of our lives. Our social principles speak to where God is in scientific development, in tough issues like abortion and capital punishment, among matters related to racism and racial reconciliation, and, most recently (and that meaning the last 4 decades), in matters of human sexuality.

We have weathered so many of society's storms, and none of it has been easy. The difficulty has only ever been exacerbated by our unique identity as a global church — something many other mainline Protestant denominations are not. Our global church is governed by the doctrines of two books — the Holy Bible and the United Methodist Book of Discipline — neither of which make it easy for a church that exists for hundreds of different cultures, in hundreds of places, with hundreds of thousands of different people.

When I stepped out of my car a couple of Tuesdays ago, honored to have been elected a delegate by my conference to go and make hard choices for the Southeastern Jurisdiction, the enormity of it all was incredibly heavy, and I had to remind myself to breathe.

We'd spent several years debating how we could afford to elect the maximum number of bishops we were allotted (5), and reconciling the reality that we could not. We'd spent several years figuring out how we can align conferences by geography so that bishops could serve more than one episcopal area. We tried to predict the numbers — the number of churches that would disaffiliate and, more importantly, the number of

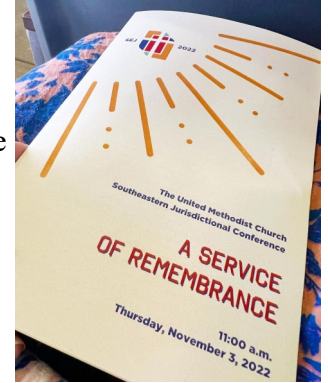
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people who'd be leaving the second largest Protestant denomination in the world, all without any precedent. We ran numbers, again and again — prayerful, hopeful, and yet, concerned.

Jurisdictional Conference was much like Annual Conference, except with a lot of bishops present and covid-conscious assigned seats. We heard reports from agencies of every conference represented. We spent **hours** in round robin sessions asking episcopal candidates questions about how they see themselves leading a church that is taking on a new identity that we cannot yet fully predict. We met as a delegation to talk about what we'd heard, and gain or regain perspective from one another and from those whom we came to represent. We prayed. Oh, did we pray. We worshiped — all the time. We mourned those in our delegations who'd died untimely deaths since they were elected (including our own Rev. Dr. Autura Eason-Williams) and held a memorial for our Bishops (elected for life), who'd gone on to the Church Triumphant since the last gathering of the jurisdictional conference. We listened to reports from the Council of Bishops and the General Council on Finance and Administration for the Southeastern Jurisdiction. I was blessed, also, to attend a worship service held by those reconciling members of the full delegation present, where I was able to hear the voices of our queer Methodists — there to pray for and hope for a more inclusive church — many, who'd been hurt by the United Methodist Church but refuse to give up.



All of this was wonderful, but it was also extremely difficult. The days were 14 hour workdays where we often worked through meals. The debate on the floor was arduous and often painful. There were tear-filled moments of reflection of the church that is *not yet*, where our delegates who are persons of color, bravely and boldly spoke to the continued racial disparities amongst the people called Methodist and in our episcopal voting and elections. There was a painful demonstration from our LGBT+ siblings who asked simply to be seen as fully human, and were, in some ways, shut down by the conference and the binding nature of our processes. I saw evidence of the harm that we continue to perpetuate in our *systems* and, as I told Trinity's Church Council Sunday, I 'quit' more than once. The Church is not yet the fulfillment of hope for the world. There are still too many who are not included.

...which is why I did **not** quit.

I am a road-paver, whether or not I want to be. I was called to begin professional church work in my 20's as a newly-wed young woman in a Church that is largely served by cis-gendered, Caucasian men in their 50's and 60's. I have done the hard work of paving the way for several churches to see and understand that God has an interest in using young people, mothers, and women, too. But I recognize, as well, there are others who still need their roads paved.

I am a straight, white, middle-class, highly-educated woman (now in my 30's) who understands how important and necessary it was and is for the white, cis-gendered, older men in ministry to offer their support and affirmation to help pave a road for me, whether or not I like it. There are African American men and women who need that from those in a place of privilege as well. There are young people and LGBT+ who need that too. With privilege comes great responsibility.

Methodists have always been road-pavers, and no matter what the denomination looks like on the other side of this schism ("God's doing a 'new thing'") the main thing is still the main thing — to in **all** ways and for **all** people, love as we have been loved by God, and make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. That is what it means to be a Christian and what it means to be a United Methodist — to, in **all** ways and at **all** times, do no harm, do good, and stay in love with God. Jurisdictional Conference showed me that, in some ways, we are there and that ever-so-slowly, roads of inclusiveness in God's Kingdom are being paved. In other ways I was privy to witness the *not yet*, but know this: I can report that God is here among the people called Methodists and God isn't at all through with us yet. This *new thing* may not look as much like the old thing as some of us may hope, but I believe that what is ahead of us is the **best** yet.

I encourage you to reach out with questions you may have about the conference and about the upcoming General Conference (2024). It affects you. I want you to know what is happening so that you can know where you might be needed and, if nothing else, or perhaps most importantly, so that you know how to pray. And, Trinity family, remember always, the best of all is God is with us.

In the Grip of God's Grace,
Rev. Sara



Speak Up about What You Believe

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever." Psalm 107:1 is our featured Bible verse for this unit of study in our Children's Sunday School Class, a very appropriate one as we approach the Thanksgiving holidays.

Our **FAITH WORD** is **VOICE: to speak up about what you believe**. We are learning about some Old Testament prophets who stood up and spoke out for God, calling God's people and their leaders to act faithfully and righteously. This past week our Bible story was "Elijah and the Ravens," which comes from 1 Kings 17:1-7. In this story, the prophet Elijah proclaimed to King Ahab that it was not Baal, a false idol, who provided rain and life, but the Lord God alone. Elijah boldly declared as the servant of the Lord that there would be no rain until he said so. Shortly afterwards, Elijah was running for his life. But God did not abandon him, sending some unlikely agents to provide bread and meat for the prophet twice a day; those caregivers were ravens. In the process of learning about Elijah, our children also learned from Ms. Alyson some very interesting facts about ravens and what clever birds they are.



The diorama in our classroom has changed from a depiction of the lush Garden of Eden to a more barren representation. We see Elijah now, hiding alone in rocky territory, except for two ravens that have brought him sustenance. This next week's scene will reflect a story of another Old Testament prophet, Elisha.

"Elisha and the Widow's Jars" from 2 Kings 4:1-7 will be our story for this coming Sunday. Elisha, the prophet who inherited a double portion of his predecessor Elijah's spirit, was another bold witness for the Lord. He, too, spoke out fearlessly when he saw the unfaithfulness of others, especially leaders. Among the other great things that he did as a prophet was to bring about miracles. This Sunday's story is about one of these miracles, a time when Elisha helped make provision for a poor widow and her sons.

In these two stories we see different ways of using our voices faithfully. In the story of Elijah, he used his voice to stand up for God and to speak outwardly about his faith, putting his safety and well-being at risk. This tells us that sometimes when we speak up, things might not turn out as we expect. However, we can know that God is with us when we speak faithfully and truthfully, and he delights when we use our voices for good.

In the story of Elisha, the widow used her voice to ask for help. The message here is that it's okay to use our voices to ask for help when we need it. We can ask God to help, and we can ask others to help. We can also respond to requests for help and share God's love in so many ways. All voices matter when it comes to helping each other and serving God.

Peace and love to all,
Irene and Alyson



Election Day Bake Sale

Last week's Election Day Bake Sale at Trinity Church was a tremendous success! Thanks to everyone's wonderful contributions, we made \$1,487! We greatly appreciate all who helped by baking food items galore and/or covering the sales table! Chris Glover provided her signature "Pearadise Marmalade," and Sam Goff was so enthusiastic that he spent much of the night before, as well as the morning of, the bake sale baking scones and muffins in the Trinity kitchen. It smelled most enticing all day long!

Our neighbors were thrilled to see us back in action, and our hearts were warmed by their welcoming smiles, words, and purchases. It was a wonderful day in every way. All proceeds will benefit the two food pantries that we support, our own Tiny Pantry and the Fishes and Loaves Food Pantry operated by our friends at Binghampton United Methodist Mission. Our neighbors were very pleased to know that their purchases were benefiting those in need.

Updates from Our Scouts

On November 13th we had a very big moment for our Screeching Sirens, our girl Troop. Vivian Rushing



Pictured, left to right: Robert Fountain, Anna Rushing, Vivian Rushing, Bennie Howie, and Elzy Rosebud

completed her Eagle Court of Honor, the first Eagle for our Troop, and the first female Eagle Scout in Twin Banks District. Vivian is a great example of why we are in Scouts to start with – driven, smart, but most importantly, kind. We're excited for her success and are grateful that she joined us!

In Troop 13B News, we have 3 Eagles awaiting their final Boards of Reviews – You'll recognize Lorenzo Aguirre's project, our new planters, and Russel Wolfe constructed a new bridge in Shelby Forest that is used daily by runners, hikers, and nature lovers. Hunter Wright recently completed a dog park at a senior living community so that residents would have a safe place to spend time with companions. In progress, we have Brock Weaver, who is restoring a food pantry at his home church, Alex Landrigan, who is - as he reads this update - finalizing the paperwork to begin

work on creating Trinity's own Food Pantry space, and Jesse Ammons, who is working with our Evergreen neighbors on revitalizing a local park area.

That is seven (7) Eagles, out of 33 Scouts. The National average for Scouts is that 10% make Eagle – having our home at Trinity has let us exceed that by far.

But the rank isn't what is important. These are kids, who suddenly became young men and women, that were able to set a course and follow it, because there was a place for them to feel safe, to feel...Home. Some of these Scouts came to us from other units, and were losing interest in continuing. But they found their troop, their home, and are building a future that will help so many more than just themselves, due to Trinity's support.

Every child that walks through our doors – in Scouts, Sunday School, LAB School, every child that watched a movie with us on the lawn or got to trick or treat or find Easter eggs – was loved more because of Trinity's love. They left our space with a little more hope, a little more love - just imagine what that can do!

Where Is Trinity Financially?

As Trinity winds down this year, the Finance committee wanted to get you up to date on where we are. Through the end of October, we are over budget in total income (a good thing) and over budget in total expenses (a bad thing). What does this mean? It means we are doing better in getting in money, thanks to the rents collected from the Lab School, Living Word Christian Church and Midtown Montessori school (through late May). We are also above our projected income on pledged giving and non-pledged giving. In terms of total expenses, we ran about \$6,700 over budget primarily due to HVAC repairs. Program expenses are under budget, but several expenses have been covered by using funds earmarked for a specific ministry.

Okay, before your eyes glaze over from all these numbers, let's look at our available unrestricted cash:

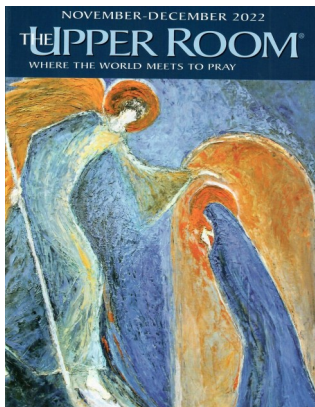
Cadence Checking Account Balance	\$ 49,153
Endowment Fund Interest	<u>4,155</u>
Total	\$ 53,308
Less:	
Special Purpose Revolving	\$ 42,454
Reimbursables (flowers)	174
Current Liabilities	<u>1,995</u>
Total	\$ 44,623
Net Unrestricted Cash	\$ 8,685
Net Cash Available	\$ 8,685

As of October 31, 2022, we have net unrestricted cash available of \$8,685 in unrestricted funds and projected budget losses of **(\$8,722)** through the rest of the year. We have enough unrestricted cash to cover the projected losses. **This means we will go into 2023 with no excess cash.** However, we do now have the congregation's approval to draw from the Endowment Fund if necessary and will probably need to make a draw sooner rather than later in 2023.

Although we will still have a net loss for 2022, it should be noted that we will be well under the original projected loss for 2022- **(\$40,000)** projected loss vs. **(\$28,000)** actual loss (roughly) by year end. However, a net loss is never a good thing. Next year's budget is shaping up similarly, unfortunately.

If you want more detailed information, please email Rosemary Potter at rosemarywpotter@gmail.com.

THE UPPER ROOM



The November/December *Upper Room* is on display at the reception desk just outside the Worship Center. Feel free to pick up a copy when you come for worship on Sunday. If you need to have one mailed to you and

aren't on the regular *Upper Room* mailing list, call the church office at 901-274-6895 or send an e-mail to office@trinityumcmemphis.org with your request. Be sure to specify the font size: large or regular.



November 7	Joan Smith
November 12	Katy Spake
November 14	Cooper Tate
November 17	Mary McConnell
November 20	Julian Cullen
November 25	Carson Witt
November 26	Vanoma Newhart
November 27	Shirley Flint
November 27	Donna Windham
November 29	John Allmon
November 29	Jonathan Goff

PRAYER CONCERNS

Our country and the world - 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 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; the family and many friends of the Rev. Dr. Autura Eason-Williams as we grieve

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. Wisdom for our Trustees and Church Council. Also, specific prayer requests by and for:

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, son of **Caley & Alyson**, hip/leg/back and nerve damage issues, doing PT & showing some slow improvement

Gene & Irene Opel, for Gene on hospice and Irene as she cares for him, with home nurse help

David Harrison, Carol Miller's brother, on dialysis, paralyzed on one side after stroke, asthma & COPD

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

Joan Smith's cousin/mom, **Gigi**, aka **Kathryn Ellis**, receiving in-home care

Peggy Kinney, Charlotte Comes' 97 year old cousin, now residing permanently in rehab center

Val Coates, in constant pain and undergoing testing to discover the cause; grieving the loss of her mother, sister, and father this year

George Marston, still undergoing dialysis; congestive heart failure

Rosemary Potter, recovering at home from her falls, having physical therapy

A praise! **Sean & Rowan Booth's** eye surgeries went as well as hoped

Lori Brown has aggressive HER2 breast cancer and is receiving gene therapy and radiation.

Eddie Ramsey, multiple health concerns, and **Sally** as she cares for him

Bishop Bill McAlilly as he begins intense physical therapy to regain his ability to walk; more surgery to come; Bishop McAlilly will be on medical leave during November and December.

Edward Thigpen, friend of Trinity UMC, started back on chemotherapy after finishing up radiation treatments for cancer

For **Living Word Christian Church** and their pastor, **Rev. Kyle Dearen**, as they worship and do ministry here on the campus of Trinity UMC.

For **The Lab School**, as their students learn, grow, and develop, and for their adult Guides

For **Pathway to Dignity** as they work towards starting classes in the near future

For all our Scouts in **Pack 13**, **Troop 13G**, and **Troop 13B**, and for all their leaders

For those in the **NA** groups who meet at Trinity and for their continued determination to succeed

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