Trinotes

December 11, 2024

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.

Glittering Minutia and Lessons from God

"She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21

Every year, around this time, my friend Rev. Jeanne Williams who serves churches in Arkansas, posts on her Facebook a sort of permission to say "no" that accompanies this time of year. Jeanne has 3 children and is the 'wife side' of a clergy couple, and knows what it feels like this time of year to have obligations all over the place. In our house this includes no fewer than 20 different theme days at school (wear 'white' for snowman day — that's today). It can get a little maddening, to say the least. The rush is fun for a moment, but the second one gets behind, it's all downhill. There is no catching up, as the snowball turns into an avalanche.

Debby and I were talking a little about this, indirectly, this week. Debby had some things happen over the weekend that have forced her (and there is no better way to put it) to slow down. Alongside her, last week Cooper had strep throat and this week I'm picking up what appears to be some sort of cold (both of which are going around so don't forget to wash your hands, friends). I've been forced to slow down a tad bit too. The two of us reflected that perhaps God is telling us something.

And before we go there, let me remind you that I do not think God makes children have strep throat or any number of other less-than-helpful occurrences, to teach us a lesson. I do think, however, that in the occurrences, God reminds us of things we otherwise might miss. In this moment for Debby and me both, maybe we're needing to reflect, ourselves, on the miracle that is the source of this season's celebration. She and I both work very hard to make sure that others see that this time of year, while often rushing through all the details (where ARE the candles we light for Silent Night Christmas Eve?!) and risk missing it ourselves.

That's easy to do. There are Christmas parties, Advent services, special dinners to prepare, presents to wrap, shelf-elves to move, magic to create on our own, good will to give, decorations to hang, and on, and on, and on….so much so that, if we're not careful, we miss the baby in the manger, and we cannot miss the baby in the manger. There is no Christmas without him.

And so, friends — family — I pray in this very moment that you have slowed down enough to read this and reflect. I pray that amid the wonderful, colorful, glittering minutia that is inevitably a part of our traditions this season, you are able to spy in a cave out back of an inn in Bethlehem, on a not-so-silent night, centuries ago, the love of God Incarnate, given to this world that you might know grace, mercy, and compassion. Slow down. Take it in. This is the very reason we will sing "Joy to the World."

With Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love,

Rev. Sara

Stewardship and Financial Pledging 2025

For many years Trinity has asked members and participants to consider a Stewardship and Finance Pledge during the month of November. **In 2025 we will be making that request in February.** The Stewardship and Finance Committee is making this change for two reasons. First, individuals and families may have a better sense of their available resources after the new year begins. Second, we will have a better idea of Trinity's budgetary needs in February than we have in November. We will be able to share that information with you as we request your consideration of a Pledge. Certainly this change will require an adjustment for all of us. If you have concerns about this change contact Craig Jordan at 901 412 1893. After January 1st we will remind you of this change and how to document any contributions you may make prior to our February Pledge and Commitment effort.

Craig Jordan, Finance Chair

Trinity's Good Financial News

In February of 2023 Rosemary Potter, on behalf of Trinity, contracted with the company, ERTC.com to prepare an application for Employee Retention Tax Credits which were part of the Cares Act following COVID. Under this program small businesses and non-profit organizations including churches could apply for these funds. Trinity made the application, not knowing if we would receive funds. To avoid any financial risk in using ERTC.com to prepare our application, we agreed to pay the company 30% of any funds Trinity received. The process took a long time. In October Trinity received payments from the U.S. Treasury totaling $42,227. After paying ERTC.com their 30 % fee, Trinity netted $29,559. As many of you know, Trinity struggled financially during the summer months. We used $15,000 from our Endowment Fund to cover expenses. With receipt of the ERTC funds, we have restored the $15,000 to our Endowment Fund. We will now be able to provide our Trustees with the 10% of rental fees for 2024 for their work on buildings and grounds to which we had previously committed. Trinity will hopefully end 2024 with balanced income and expenses. If you desire further information or clarification please contact Craig Jordan at 901 412 1893.

Santa & Mrs. Claus

Santa Stop Big Success

Santa Stop Visitors

Master of both the light and the darkness

Thanksgiving week this year was a particularly stressful and exhausting one. So many out-of-the ordinary things were happening that I lost track of the days. The most difficult thing for me was that my regular early-morning devotional time was disrupted all week long, and this is what usually keeps me grounded during times of stress. Toward the end of the week, I was engaged in frantic preparation of the Children's Sunday School room; the previous quarter's displays had to be taken down and new information about Advent and this quarter's study put up on walls and out on tables. When I left the church building that Saturday shortly before 5 p.m., I could think only of how very tired I was. As I started to get into my car, I glanced up and was amazed to see the tops of the nearby trees gloriously reflecting the vivid hues of the approaching sunset.

As soon as I got home, I went immediately to the western-facing glass doors that open onto my balcony. There I was greeted by one of the most awesome sunsets I have witnessed in the five-plus years I have lived on the 12th floor of the Parkway House. Right in the middle of the sunset there appeared to be a bold column of fire, a vertical shaft of fiery light that reached straight up into the clouds. I immediately thought of the pillar of fire in the book of Exodus, that amazing manifestation of God's presence and glory that guided the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and through forty years in the wilderness. Here I was at the end of a week that had been something of a wilderness experience - emotionally, physically, and spiritually - and I felt as if God were speaking directly to me through the powerful light of that sunset. He was once again reassuring me that He would never leave me, not even when I might be experiencing dark times in which I am feeling lost, disoriented, abandoned, or powerless. He is always Immanuel, God with us, God with me. He is the great **I AM**, who lit a fire in my heart over forty years ago during the reading of the Old Testament story of Moses' encounter with Him at the burning bush, who continues to breathe life into the flame when it flickers and falters within me at times. I know that I can always trust God's promise that "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5).

This past week, I came across this lovely Advent prayer by Henri Nouwen that touched me deeply:

> Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.
>
> We who have so much to do and seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.
>
> We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us.
>
> We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom.
>
> We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.
>
> We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.
>
> To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!" Amen.

Peace, love, and joy to you,

Irene

Happy holidays and Merry Christmas! from United Women in Faith

The months of November and December are busy ones for UWF. November saw us working hard at the very successful election day bake sale which will provide 100 Kroger cards for our fall project, Neighbors Feeding Neighbors. After a comedy of errors Sandy, Sue, and I opened our checking account at Cadence and wrote our first check to Trinity to pay for the gloves and ear warmers for our winter project, Christmas bags for Sista2Sista.

Other items planned for the bags include candy, Starbucks cards, lotion/oil, eyelashes, chocolate candy, fingernail polish, body spray/lip gloss/lotion, and mints. If you have not committed for bag stuffers and feel led to do so, please send your list to Joan S. so we know what items to expect. We are packing 24 bags for Sista2Sista.

Due to the date of their holiday party, we will pack the Christmas bags at noon on Thursday, 12 December, in the Worship Center. If you have some free time then, please stop by to help.

Our December meeting/Christmas party/potluck will be held on 20 December at noon in the Worship Center. My plan is to have no program and only the reports from Sandy and Kathy for business. Come, be welcome, and enjoy the fellowship.

Joan Smith, UWF President

Memorials & Honorariums

DONATIONS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED

IN MEMORY OF

CAROLINE CANTRELL
FROM FRANK CANTRELL

SHIRLEY FLINT
FROM BETTY & ELLEN BUCHIGNANI

SHIRLEY FLINT
FROM BILL & MARY MCCONNELL

SHIRLEY FLINT
FROM WENDEL & LINDA STOLTZ

SHIRLEY FLINT
FROM KERRY HANNON

ROSCOE DODSON
FROM WENDEL & LINDA STOLTZ

December Birthdays

Lori Brown	December 1
Kate Ostenrude	December 5
Alexis Weatherly	December 12
Sara Jane Goodman	December 13
Sue Taylor	December 16
Debby Marston	December 19
Melba Abraham	December 21
Carey Miller	December 25

Medical Equipment Available to Lend

Remember Carol Miller's idea about starting a list of medical equipment that could be offered to church members and friends? Well, Mike Potter responded very quickly with his list:

Shower stool, bedside commode, shower chair, standard walker, Rollator walker, portable oxygen machine, portable nebulizer, bathtub grab bar that affixes securely to the side of the tub, two hand grab bars that affix to a wall by suction (must be very careful with these), and an unopened box of nasal cannula tubing.

Here's what George and I have on hand (due in large part to our tendency to fall down in the house):

Two orthopedic boots, one ankle-high and one knee-high; two pairs of crutches, one tall and one medium; an adjustable cane; two flexible knee braces; and two standard walkers.

And Carol's list includes a wheelchair, crutches, a grabber, knee-to-hip immobilizer, and an orthopedic boot.

If you are in need of any medical equipment from that listed above, or if you have your own accumulation of medical "stuff," you can contact the church office with your requests to borrow or offers to lend what you have on hand.

—Debby Marston

...and then my cell phone died.

by Debby Marston

I've had an interesting few days. In preparing for my husband George's family's annual Marston Christmas Extravaganza and for a buffet luncheon for my two kids and their families, I've spent 'way too much time in the car running back and forth to Sam's Club and Kroger's, as well as too much time shopping online via Amazon Prime. I think God must have decided to make me slow down, because on Saturday afternoon I was involved in a minor traffic accident, requiring the towing of my car. So I was without a vehicle between that afternoon and Wednesday, when I (hopefully) got a rental car.

Anyway, someone in a stationary vehicle told the driver of a red Chevrolet HHR (by gestures, not words) that it was clear for her to drive onto Covington Pike/Stratford from Macon Road where it is a short side street that dead ends into the larger thoroughfare. It was not clear. I was driving south on Covington Pike/Stratford when the Chevy HHR dashed across two lanes of traffic and right into my path. Now, for a 75 year old church lady, I have very good reflexes, and I slammed on my brakes. Unfortunately, she was about two inches (or maybe two feet, but who's counting?) from my front bumper, so there was no way I could avoid hitting her car. It hit the driver's door, and I just knew she had to be hurt. God is good, though, all the time, and she wasn't even scratched. Neither was I, nor were airbags deployed in either vehicle. We got off pretty easy.

Both of us were still shaking when we finally met face to face. She had to squeeze out of her car through the passenger door, since the driver's door was jammed. When she came over to my car (still in the middle of the road), she asked if I was hurt and took full responsibility for the accident. She had no insurance, but offered to pay for any repairs my car required. I had already called the police to report the accident. I didn't get her full name, driver's license information, license plate number - none of the stuff one is supposed to obtain. All I saw was a frightened, anxious young woman who understood the consequences of her unfortunate decision to trust a stranger's gesture urging her to drive out into traffic when visibility was - not just poor - but non-existent. So I stood up, hugged her, and told her it was going to be all right. That she was going to be all right. Neither of us was hurt. The vehicles sustained some damage, sure, but that's just machinery, not flesh and blood people who suffer and bleed when they're injured.

The police came, investigated the accident, asked questions of both drivers, made their assessment, and decided I wasn't at fault. My car was towed, and I was driven home by two nice police officers. It was the first time I'd ridden in the back of a squad car. Uncomfortable, but interesting.

I'm praying for Bridget, that her expenses aren't too high, that she's really okay and not too upset. She'd only had the car for a month. Her brother gave it to her. Some of the passing drivers were upset and angry that we were in the way, but it seemed more important that Bridget should receive comfort, not blame. And the police officers were really nice.

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; pray for civility during the transition to the new administration.

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:

Venoma Newhart, age 102, is now in hospice care.
The family of **Sharon Booth** (Sean & Rowan's grandmother) as they mourn her passing
Pam Stafford, battling liver disease (request from Sandy Guntharp)
Bo, step-grandson of George & Debby Marston, waiting on second kidney transplant; on dialysis for now
Ila McDonald: pray for a speedy recovery following her knee surgery.
Sharman's brother, **Chuck Murley**, recovering from cancer treatment
Kate Ostenrude asks for prayers for **Marshall**'s health concerns.
Seth Norton, Raquel's son, biopsy negative; awaiting endoscopy results
Adam Hill, serious vein ruptures in legs, much pain (friend of Joan Smith)
From Heather Jacoby-Keller: friend's husband **Eddie** diagnosed with cancer. Heather's sister **Faith** also fighting cancer (for the past year). Please pray for healing!
Joan Foley's daughter-in-law, **Marilynn Hawkins**
Gwen Dodson, bladder cancer, COPD, osteoporosis; cancer treatment
Joan Smith's cousin, **Doug Robbins**, aggressive kidney cancer, facing 5th surgery; high medical bills, selling Texas home and moving to Arkansas
Kaelyn Wright, wife and mother of two young children, has aggressive thyroid cancer. (Friend of Joan Smith)
Gene Archer, diagnosed with stomach cancer; his wife **Julia** has MS; **Lauren Crews**, diagnosed with ALS
Maggi Comes' niece, **Katie Pendleton**, diagnosed with Tumefactive MS
Kanyon Glover has had issues with his heart & continues physical therapy.
Jacob Foreman, ongoing health problems & job search
David Harrison, Carol Miller's brother, on dialysis; paralyzed on one side after stroke; asthma; COPD
Don Culpepper, Carol Miller's brother-in-law, liver cancer returned, receiving radiation and chemotherapy
Val Coates to receive information on her medical problems from doctor
Eddie Ramsey, in hospice care at home; **Sally**, macular degeneration
Jonathan Goff, lost half of right index finger due to injury and resulting infection
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.)