

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.

Jesus on the Move

“They say **Aslan** is on the **move**— perhaps has already landed.” And now a very curious thing happened. None of the children knew who **Aslan** was any more than you do; but the moment the Beaver had spoken these words everyone felt quite different. — C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*.

It’s the week after Christmas. Many of us can take a collective sigh of relief. It’s a busy season, no matter how much we try and commit to taking it easy, moving slowly, sitting back and reflecting....You’re not alone. I rushed around like a mad-woman, too.

Every year I work extra at Christmas for 2 reasons. 1. There’s simply more to do. There are more services. When it gets colder, more people get sick. With the office closed, inevitably there’s just more to take care of. Covid has created less for some and more for others. It’s more around here.

There’s a second reason, too. 2. It’s a tradition that I take ‘off’ (completely off) the week after Christmas. I believe in rest. I do. I believe in re-centering, re-focusing, and giving your brain a break. Nothing can wear a person out like the holiday season and I admit that by this time of year, I find myself out of words and a little deplete-of-Spirit. So I work extra on top of the extra to find a place of rest.

Scripture sort of does that this time of year too. Between Christmas (so, the manger) and Epiphany (the coming of the kings), there’s two whole years of....nothing. And I think this is good. It’s GREAT. Because when Jesus DOES get started, he never stops. He’s always on the move. But, we are not Jesus and we do need to stop.

Post-Christmas is a time of year that I like to read recreationally — so, not vocational reading and not for the work of stretching or expanding my mind. It’s a time to just read something I enjoy. It’s a bit like binge-watching something on Netflix but, admittedly, usually a bit more rewarding. Christmas bends me toward classics — the comfort food of reading — and even takes me back to a joyous and familiar part of my life — my childhood. I tend to pick up things that, where very theological in nature, are adventuresome. Lately it has been my hope to sit down and read through C. S. Lewis’ *Chronicles of Narnia* again.

I know. I know. There’s a lot Lewis wrote that I could pick up and spend time on this time of year that will theologically center me for the work I need to do come January. *The Great Divorce*. *The Problem of Pain*. *A Grief Observed*. Things that’ll make me a better pastor. (I promise, I have read them, as well.) Did you know that Lewis wrote a Space Trilogy? That I have, but have not yet read.

But Narnia.....

Christmas makes me think of Narnia. This brief pause between Christmas and Epiphany takes me to Narnia through the wardrobe in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* to that fantastic land where it’s always winter but never Christmas — in the long in-between — between what is and what is to come. Lewis paints that portrait perfectly in this children’s fantasy and, when Christmas does come, he describes Jesus so well in the character of the mighty lion, Aslan — “on the move.”

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At epiphany Jesus receives gifts from men from the east. There is a tiny interlude in the story after that where we know little. Then, Jesus is on the move. There is no time for rest — no time to breathe. He has 3 years in ministry before ministry has to become manifest in us. He doesn't stop. He never slows down.

It's my prayer for you — for each of us — that in this in-between, this Christmas season — you can breathe. Take in the manger. Take in the enormity of what was and is because he came. Rest. Reflect, however reflection works best for you, and get ready, for we, too, are called to be “on the move.”

Many Blessings,

Rev. Sara

“He said to them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation.’” Mark 16:15

[Editor's Note...]

Kay Jordan challenged us in the December 9th issue of *Trinotes* to reflect on the lessons learned during this very strange year of 2020. We have faced a pandemic, which isolated us from friends and family for fear of contagion, and continues to isolate us. The presidential election was the strangest I have experienced in all my 71 years. We saw people striking out at others simply because they were “other.”

One of the things I have done over the Christmas holiday is reach out to old friends, just to check in. I learned that Debra's husband Bill is doing well. She admired texted photos of my grandson Mason. We talked about Barak Obama's best selling book, which I am reading and she received as a Christmas gift. I didn't ask about her sons, but they were on my mind. With all the racism that has surfaced during the pandemic and election, I thought of Debra's sons, three bright, articulate, successful young men and wondered if they have been impacted by the hateful specter of racial profiling. Debra is the person who taught me how a man of color, especially a young man, is supposed to behave when confronted at a traffic stop: keep both hands on the steering wheel, make eye contact with the officer, and explain each movement you are about to make (“I'm reaching for my wallet now...”). I never taught my son any of that stuff. I didn't have to. He's white.

The bombing in Nashville on Christmas Day, the birthday of the Prince of Peace, taught us fear again, no matter what color our skin happens to be. When random acts of violence occur, we no longer think, “That can't happen here.”

I am a science fiction fan, and, throughout the past few years, have pointed to the bizarre happenings of the present time as evidence that some of Robert Heinlein's “Future History” seems to be coming true, specifically, “The Crazy Years.” It's crazy to have to spend our lives sequestered at home because of a virus. It's even crazier that some people don't isolate themselves, because they think, “I'm young and healthy, so even if I catch the virus, it won't be that big a deal.” It's crazy to watch the goings on in Washington, D.C. and news programs that tell us racism is epidemic in the U.S. (This is news?)

Despite all the woes outlined above, I've learned a few other things, as well. I've learned how much my church family at Colonial CPC means to me and how much I miss their hugs. I've learned not to take my family, including extended family, for granted. I've learned how much the folks at Trinity mean to me and how much I miss my friends, old and new. Hard times can teach us endurance, charity, and, occasionally, wisdom. It is my prayer that we learn from 2020, moving forward into 2021 with hopeful hearts and the determination to do better in terms of caring for each other, regardless of our differences.

Wishing you enough,
Debbly Marston

Doing a New Thing

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past! See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” (Isaiah 43:18-19)

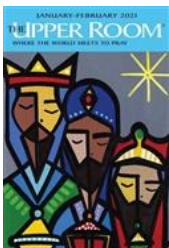
I cannot think of a better scripture to describe the experiences Alyson and I have had, as well as the lessons, both virtual and spiritual, that we have learned in teaching our Children’s Sunday School Class over the past several months. I know that I have mentioned to several of you at Trinity Church about the pattern of “blessings and lessons” that I have witnessed emerging during difficult and trying times in my personal life during the past decade (in actuality, far beyond that). In a nutshell, this spiritual heart- and mind-set recognizes God’s presence (His Active Presence) in every circumstance during which I have found myself under emotional, mental, and/or physical stress. It is a day-to-day – make that moment-by-moment - fulfillment of these words that the Lord spoke to the apostle Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

Beginning in May, we certainly felt like we were wandering in a virtual (read as “computerized”) wilderness, when we began meeting with our children on Zoom. It seemed as if we were facing overwhelming problems in those early months, and we felt ourselves longing for the ease and familiarity of working in our regular Sunday School classroom, with our wealth of supplies and resources. We so often digitally stumbled and bumbled and fumbled our way through things.

But an amazing thing happened along the way! Over time, we have discovered that, even when the front door is closed, we can often find our way in through the back door, and, yes, sometimes we end up climbing in through an open window. At this point, although virtual teaching and learning are not yet second nature to us, they are not as frighteningly new and different as they were in the beginning. We know we still have so very much to learn. But the things that we have yet to learn are far more attractive challenges than they once were. We know that, with the help of people who actually know something about computers and through our own resourcefulness, we will eventually be able to find a way to do things.

More than anything else, we know that God is with us in all of this, that he is making provision for us as we learn to navigate the wilderness and the wasteland of the Zoom kingdom and other virtual platforms. As we do so, we are discovering the many blessings he has in store for us, not the least of which is the regular attendance now of some of our kids who were once occasional attendees at Sunday School. So, in some ways, He is already delivering to us pieces of the Promised Land as we go along the way. We thank and praise Him for that and for all the other ways in which He continues to bless us.

Peace and love,
Irene and Alyson



The January/February issue of *Upper Room* has arrived and 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.

Lessons Learned

The challenge issued by Kay and Debby to identify lessons learned from the pandemic made me realize there were many and, at the same time, there were many from a broken hip. The first lesson from the broken hip came when Val heard the crash on the deck and dashed out—panicky—asking if she could help me up. I replied, “No, sit down.” I took her cold hand and quietly said, “My left leg won’t move. Call an ambulance.” She calmly took charge. Lesson learned: Sometimes, even in a very painful crisis, I must focus on another’s need.

The second lesson learned from the broken hip came with a roommate at Encompass. Lily and I enjoyed sharing funny stories from our childhood farm life. Example: my brother (8) and I (6) were sliding on the tin roof from the barn ridgepole, to land in a pile of manure. We wanted our sister (4) to get in on the fun and were coaxing her when Daddy saw us and took appropriate action. Lesson learned: Laughter helps ease pain and is mutually beneficial. “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.” (Proverbs 17:22) REALLY!

One more lesson from the broken hip, although there were many more: When I was admitted to Encompass for physical therapy, I was asked to state my goal, and I quickly replied, “To get back into the garden.” I had no idea the magnitude of difficulty of reaching that goal, but I soon learned. The next morning, an aide brought a wheelchair and announced, “Time for therapy,” and I said, “Hallelujah!” He said, “I never heard that before!” I soon learned why he had said that.

Therapy was very painful, requiring more determination and strength than I knew I had, but I gritted my teeth, pushed through, and met my goal for therapy. In six weeks, with the aid of home therapy and dedication, I was back in the garden planting seeds. Lesson learned!

I learned many lessons from the pandemic as I took advantage of the early shopping hours for seniors. One morning, as I struggled with my cart of groceries, a woman came, pushed the cart, unloaded the groceries, and offered the quarter deposit on the cart. As I started to protest, I caught myself, took the quarter, and thanked her profusely. Lesson learned: I still haven’t mastered the “art of receiving” (from a quote by Richard Rohr, “People limp through life starved for love because they haven’t learned the art of receiving.”)

Other lessons were learned from the early shopping hours at Dollar General, where the pandemic had caused dramatic changes. The store no longer had the same warm shopping ambience. Workers had changed: fewer workers - all business - no smiles - harried expressions. I tried to lighten things up, at least a little, but it didn’t seem to work. One day when the clerk rang up my bill, she said, “No charge.” What?! She said, “You are so good to us.” I was amazed - when? - what have I done? I left the store very humbled, thinking about how often in life I had been so self-absorbed that I hadn’t reached out to the one who helped. Major lesson learned: Workers notice and are affected by every friendly overture, and so ALWAYS, no matter how I feel, I must consider the worker and be positive!

I learned from Trinity as I experienced the church in mission, by the love of so many people in so many ways—encouraging calls and cards and actions: installing a bathroom grab bar; doing yard work; providing delicious, nourishing meals. I was—and am—overwhelmed and humbled.

Like Kay, the pandemic gave me lots of time for retrospective thinking and gratitude. Many lessons learned: Trinity’s service inspired me to organize meal service for a fellow garden club member who also broke her hip. And what would have happened if Val had not been there to help me and to take charge at home? I thanked God for Val, a treasure who had blessed me for 23 years. Past actions—giving Val a home—can also lead to blessings.

The greatest lesson I learned is this: Adversity is a great teacher, and I must look for its lessons and be thankful for each and every one.

—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.]

Memorials & Honorariums

Honorariums have been received

In honor of Sally Ramsey from Chris Glover

In honor of Elaine Amis from Chris Glover

In honor of Tom Wilson from Chris Glover

In honor of Kay Jordan from Chris Glover

In honor of Melba Abraham from Chris Glover

In honor of Jinx Winn from Tom Wilson

Memorials have been received

In memory of Eddie Walton from Chris Glover

In memory of Doris Webster from Chris Glover

In memory of Allane Demetrio from Chris Glover



January 1 John Curry

January 3 Kay Jordan

January 5 Eleanor Brooks

January 5 Roscoe Dodson

January 6 Tom Wilson

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 the outgoing President and Vice President and their families.

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 go back to 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, continuing treatment for brain tumor

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 daughter **Anita Bunn** is not allowed to visit and help out. The Opels continue to need our prayers and encouragement.

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 Encompass for rehab after surgery for a broken hip

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 long term acute care and in serious condition, and **Melba** as she awaits his recovery and return home

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.)