

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.



3...2...1...LENT!

It's incredibly hard for me to grasp the reality that the season of Lent is upon us. It's as though it doesn't happen *every* year. When many of you receive this, it'll be Ash Wednesday. Fat Tuesday will have come and gone, the remnants of the pancake dinner you had last night will be washed down the drain in the kitchen sink, and here before us is a desert place — not always a welcomed sight. There is a task before us. For some that will be a simple question; what will I give up this year? For others, it'll be a deeply

introspective, critical question; what hinders my relationship with God — what can I set aside to make room for the work of the Holy Spirit?

As usual, I'm stuck in the middle or teetering back and forth between the practical and seemingly simple choice, to the somewhat painful self-examination. I will give up eating out for 40 days. It's a hindrance to my temple and my bank account. I will give up the stationary moments of my day and, instead (again), make sure that the work I do keeps me moving. I'll have more energy, sleep better, and, in turn, have more of myself to give. But, *what else?*

The *what else* feels as though it is less practical and more demanding. It requires a sort of tunnel vision that blots out the periphery. In the periphery are the demands of the day — the needs of my family and of the church and my greater commitments in the denomination. It is, instead, me at one end of the tunnel and God at the other. What, in the periphery, keeps me from getting closer to the other end?

I'm going to be honest and authentic, as you well know. What we sacrifice in Lent often feels like the birthday wish we make when we blow out the candle. If we speak it, it won't come true. It's not, though. In Christian community — one where we have mutual care as well as loving accountability — we create a safe space for the authentic and true self to flourish and grow. Thus, I'll share with you my hurdle this year.

Control.

There...I *said* it. And, I've thought about it a lot. I've looked around and seen where control, or the perceived need for it, can be a destructive force. It can eat away at the soul and make moot the mission. We're seeing that in local church disaffiliations right now. I've noticed it in corners of how our local government and school system functions. The need for control is begotten pride and arrogance and, almost always, fear. None of those are attributes of the Divine and none of those are capable of building the kingdom and kindom.

Jesus prayed it, on the Mount of Olives before his crucifixion (in Luke 22), and I hope to make it my prayer during Lent (and going forward). "Father...yet not my will but yours be done."

We sing it every time we sing, "Have thine own way, Lord. Have thine own way."

The Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi implies it: "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace; where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love; for it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life." Amen.

Essentially — God, use me as YOU see fit and (perhaps more importantly) help me to lay aside MY vision, MY fear, MY arrogance, MY hope, and [thereby] MY need for control.

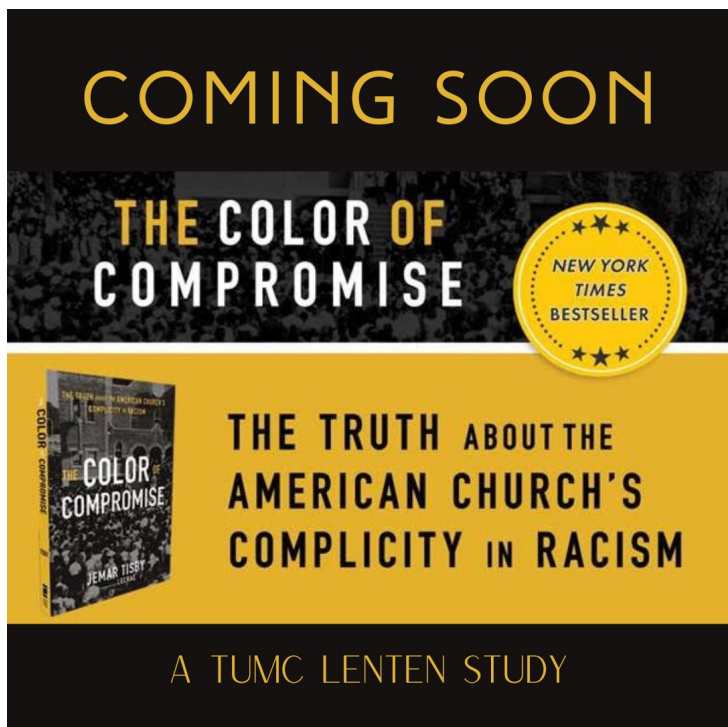
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I admit that sometimes I do not see it in myself, because it is masked by ‘good intentions,’ educated forethought, and [even] hope-filled prayer where I **ask God for the answer that I want to hear**. Admittedly, because that is very hard to admit, I hope that I am not alone — and not in the sense that I hope that is your struggle too, so much as, I don’t want to walk through that struggle alone, or, I am not meant to walk through that struggle alone.

Neither are you. Thus, I ask you to walk with me these next 40 (or so) days, and I hope you will allow me to walk with you, too.

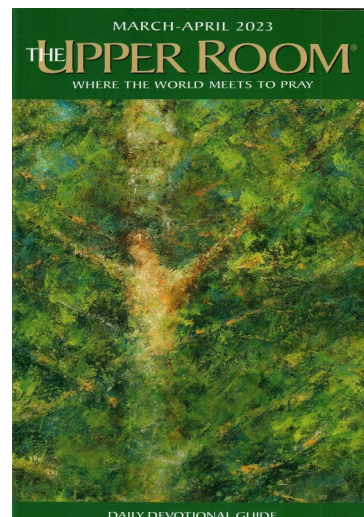
Dragging my feet to the desert place,
Rev. Sara



Tiny Pantry

Don't forget to help stock the Tiny Pantry with non-perishable food items.

Proteins such as tuna, peanut butter, canned chicken, beans, etc. are especially needed.



When is the study? There are two weekly opportunities to join the study. Sundays beginning Feb. 26th, 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. or Wednesdays beginning Mar. 1st, 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. (bring your lunch).

What do you need? A copy of the book. The book is available on Amazon or you may request a book through the church and reimburse the church for your copy. We are also asking for you to covenant to be present for all the sessions. We know things come up and are hopeful you will not have to miss more than one. The last thing you need is a willingness to accept that we don't have it all right and be willing to do some self-reflecting.

The March/April *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, send an email to office@trinityumcmemphis.org or call the church office at 901-274-6895 with your request. Be sure to specify the font size: large or regular.



God's Dream for the World

Kathy Isbell, who is "Nana" to her grandsons Carson and Eli, shared this story with us recently. As Nana was taking Eli home from kindergarten one afternoon, they saw a group of children walking in the neighborhood through which they were driving. Eli asked his grandmother who they were, and she told him they were children who were walking home from school. He replied, "Well, I wish them safe journey."

She told him that was very kind and that she knew it would make Jesus smile, to which he said, "Well, I care about people." She reminded him that's what we are all supposed to do.

This sweet story is a beautiful illustration of a **FAITH WORD** in action. **The FAITH WORD** for the current study in our Children's Sunday School Class is **KINGDOM: God's dream for the world where all people are loved and included**. During his ministry, Jesus taught that the kingdom is a present reality and that everyone has a part in this kingdom. Our **BIBLE VERSE** for this unit, Mark 10:14b, reminds us: "God's kingdom belongs to people like these children." The Spirit of God is within us and among us, even the youngest of us. Eli was still five years old last Sunday. When he comes back to Sunday School this weekend, he will be six years old, having celebrated that special birthday on Ash Wednesday. How quickly our children grow up!

Last Sunday we studied about "The Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin," two short parables found in Luke 15:3-10. Jesus told these parables to teach the lesson that each one of us is valuable to God. These two stories don't end simply with the recovery of the lost items; instead, they end in celebration and rejoicing. Our children had a lot of fun acting these parables out as we played a "lost and found" game with a toy sheep and a coin. Everyone got a turn hiding these items somewhere on or near our diorama, and everyone also got to look for them. Then we celebrated in high fashion by enjoying donut holes in honor of Eli's upcoming birthday!

This coming Sunday we will study about the parable of "The Forgiving Father," which is found in Luke 15:11-32. We usually call this the parable of "The Prodigal Son," focusing on the happy return of the younger son. However, as our teachers' notes remind us, this parable is really about all three of the characters in the story – the younger son, the father, and the older brother. At some point in our lives, each of us has probably felt like each one of these three family members. Like the father, we may have continued to love someone despite a mistake they have made. Like the older brother, we may have felt sometimes that life is unfair. And like the younger brother, we may have made poor choices and needed to ask for forgiveness. Hopefully, we have each had the affirming experience of being forgiven and loved no matter what. We are reminded through this wonderful parable that God's unfailing love and forgiveness are offered to everyone, and we can rest in the knowledge that each of us is a beloved child of God.

Peace and love to all,

Irene and Alyson



Lent: a season of sacrifice

I am not sure that Lent is my favorite season of the church year, but it is the season that has impacted my life with the most intensity. My two favorite hymns are “Ah, Holy Jesus” and “O Sacred Head, Now Wounded.” Both speak to the passion of Christ as he experienced it on the cross. I cannot help but weep whenever I sing these hymns of the Lenten season. It’s almost more than I can bear when I think of the sacrifice our Lord made for us. I take it very personally, and it’s hard sometimes to include the rest of humanity as beneficiaries of that great sacrifice.

I am a big fan of C. S. Lewis and read *The Narnia Chronicles* through all seven books about once a year. I started reading them around age 30 at the suggestion of a friend who was a seminary student at the time. At age 73, I must have read them over 40 times. My favorite of Lewis’ books of fiction, however, is the second in his space trilogy, *Perelandra*. It was in *Perelandra* that I first recognized the way one person can be offered up as a willing sacrifice, a ransom, almost like Christ himself. The main character of *Perelandra* is a man whose surname is Ransom. He is a philologist (one who studies words and their origins) and has always known that his name is derived from *Ranolf’s son* and that using it as the word *ransom*, or a payment that delivers, is a mere pun. When faced with God’s too imminent presence, in the dark, alone, with no other person around, Ransom comes to understand that it is no coincidence that his name has, indeed, the same meaning as the name of the One who was the Ransom for us all. Ransom, the man, is called upon to fight against an unholy foe in order to save a planet and its future. Jesus, the Son of Man, was called upon to resist evil by giving up his life on our behalf.

It is this holy sacrifice that we celebrate each year during Lent. This season is devoted to fasting, abstinence, and penitence in commemoration of Christ’s fasting in the wilderness. Many of us give up something as a spiritual discipline, but we can also devote our time and effort in spiritual exercises intended to grow our faith and come closer to God in very intentional ways. It is my prayer that we will spend the season working toward a truer, holier relationship with our God.

Wishing you enough,
Debby Marston

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

WE ENVISION A
RADICALLY LOVING COMMUNITY
WHERE EVERYONE BELONGS,
EVERYONE IS SUPPORTED,
AND NO ONE IS ALONE.

TRINITY UMC MEMPHIS



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UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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TRINITY UMC MEMPHIS

“Feed my sheep”

Peace Lutheran Church has put Christ’s words into action in their lunch program for disadvantaged persons in the community. We have been offered the opportunity to contribute to this work by providing lunches. The current need is for 24 lunches, to be delivered to Peace Lutheran on specific dates. This will be a team effort and the next “assembly line” to put lunches together will be after the Fifth Sunday Breakfast on April 30th. Call Sue Taylor at 901-491-2113 for further details. Gather your forces, jump in & volunteer!

Each lunch will need to include the following:

- Peanut butter & jelly sandwich
- Meat & cheese sandwich
- Bottled water
- Juice
- Fruit (1 apple/orange/pear & applesauce or fruit cup)
- Chips
- Dessert
- Napkin



(Peace Lutheran will provide condiments.)

MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS

MEMORIALS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED
IN MEMORY OF **GENE OPEL** FROM
MIKE & ROSEMARY POTTER
IN MEMORY OF **GENE OPEL** FROM
DIANE NAUER

Bibles Available

There are 17 used Bibles available to anyone who would like to pick one up at the church office. You may want one for your personal use or to give to a neighbor or friend.

Any Bibles left over will be given to an organization serving our unsheltered neighbors. There is no cost involved, so feel free to come by and pick one up.



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

(Please let us know if we left off a birthday or if a date is incorrect. We will make that correction in our next issue of Trinotes and in our records.)



March 1	Nelda Gray
March 3	Heather Jacobi Keller
March 3	Kaylee Bauer
March 6	Joe Spake
March 13	Lee Ann Wilson
March 16	Jane Waldrip
March 19	Charles Abraham
March 19	Alyson Foreman
March 23	Amy Webster
March 31	Hadley Keller

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

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:

Charles Abraham, completed successful hip surgery, now at Encompass Rehab

Myra Finch's brother, **Tim Beasley**, as he struggles with cognitive problems

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

For the family and friends of **Irene and Gene Opel** as we mourn their passing

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 a rehab center

Val Coates, multiple health problems

George Marston, still undergoing dialysis; congestive heart failure

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

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

Edward Thigpen, radiation re-started due to spot found on kidney; will continue chemo through March

For **Charlotte Comes**, as she recovers from her successful January 24th surgery

Pray for Joan Foley's daughter-in-law, **Marilyn Hawkins**.

Debby Marston's sister, **Katie Edge**, completed radiation therapy and will receive infusions for a few more weeks; chemo pump removed last week.

Pray for **Jonathan Goff**.

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

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.)