

# 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.

## An Invitation to Prayer

Lately my prayers have been more ethereal in nature. When I pray with the kids, they are always very specific in what they pray. They give thanks to God for the laundry list of things that come to their little minds. They pray for a good sleep and a good day — for their teachers and friends — for you, even. Of course, that makes my heart sing. But my prayers of late have more closely resembled a centering prayer than ever before, as I simply sit in the presence of Yahweh — the God who ‘is.’ I don’t think that’s a bad thing at all. Sometimes

there simply aren’t words and maybe that’s the Holy Spirit beckoning us to just wait in God’s presence and listen.

Other times I find myself praying the Psalms. They are a gift to us, when we feel as though we **must** have words to offer to God. Scripture also beckons us into the presence of the God who ‘is,’ while simultaneously shaping us and forming us — chiseling away at us, like we are granite in front of Michelangelo.

I want to invite you to join me in prayer — always, but especially now and in the days to come. By now you know that Trinity is beginning conversations about what it might mean to become a Reconciling community or a church that welcomes, in the fullest sense, those who are members of the LGBT+ community. In many senses, we have always been “that” church, don’t get me wrong. That’s been meaningful for us — to always welcome anyone who walks through our doors, to be a part of our community of faith. The difference, though, in becoming Reconciling, is that our welcoming, accepting, and loving specifically those people, who’ve often not been accepted into communities of faith, becomes meaningful for **them**.

This is a sensitive matter. We each come to these conversations from differing places, with differing experiences and perspectives. It’s sensitive because we have family histories with it. It’s sensitive because, of late, it’s become a political matter and all things political are polarizing when we do not agree. It’s sensitive because we know what we feel, even if we cannot pinpoint the ‘why.’

Sensitive conversations are hard ones and so often when we know there is an impending hard conversation, we avoid it at all cost. But that is not the way of the Church. It is not the way of Christ. I don’t recall him ever ducking out of a tough situation because it was going to be hard. I do know that, even when set up to say the wrong thing, Jesus boldly offered the truth for the sake of love. The truth in love is what the Church is about.

Still, we are not Jesus, and here we are approaching the tough stuff. Thus, I want to invite you into a posture of prayer. If you are like me, and you have a spiritual need to offer God words, but you cannot find them or if praying in the scriptures simply speaks to you, I want to offer you these 10 short passages to consider as you go to God in prayer. They are from all corners of the canon.

Galatians 3:28: There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

James 2:1-4: My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,” have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

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John 13:34: A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

Hebrews 12:14: Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

Romans 14:10: Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

John 9:1-3: As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him.”

Psalms 145:9: The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.

Acts 10:15: The voice spoke to him a second time, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.”

Revelation 22:17: The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

Acts 10:45-46: The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

I pray for you that these texts and any others you might find on your own, can help guide you to a place where the Spirit of the Lord is. We know that there is freedom there. We know that there is peace there. We know that, no matter where we come from and what we bring to these conversations, there is unity where the Spirit guides us and from that place — a place of togetherness, grace, and peace — the truth, in love, can grow.

If you need me to get you started, I will, gladly.

Will you join me in prayer?

“God of grace and peace, who made all that was, and is, and all that will be, we come into your presence seeking your wisdom and mercy. We are a fallen people who’ve been blessed by your grace time and again, and we pray for the strength to offer your grace to all those created in your image and after your likeness. We pray that our eyes may be open to know and understand the spark of your divine nature in the ‘other.’ We pray for the perseverance to allow the Jesus in us to love the Jesus in ‘them,’ whether that be the person across the room from us in worship, or those who we bring before one another in sensitive conversation. We pray to understand how we might value someone with whom we disagree and for the patience and understanding to see in another light. And, Holy God, we pray that you teach us again, what it means to love one another, as well as the other. Show us what love is and show us all the glorious things that love can do. We pray these things, O God, and so much more in your precious and perfect name, and that of your son, our Savior and Friend, Jesus, and by the power of your Spirit. Amen.”

In the Peace of Christ,

*Rev. Sara*

## Really Really Free Market



Discussions are taking place among Really Really Free Market coordinators in and around the Binghampton community, and it looks like this program will be starting up again. The Really Really Free Market has blessed many in the past who could use a little help and has encouraged a giving spirit in those who have enough to share. Ceasar at The Village Community Center has been reaching out to past coordinators, and it appears that he has universal support. As plans are made as to when the Free Market will start back up, we encourage Trinitarians to start doing home inventories so as to be ready to share useful, beautiful, and really cool stuff with folks who can most benefit.



## Lent: Preparing for Easter

Our **FAITH WORD** in our Children's Sunday School Class for the month of March is **LENT: "to prepare for Easter by spending time with God."** During the forty days of Lent, our class is learning about the series of events that led Jesus to Easter. We hope to help our children remember that, as we all journey closer to Easter, God is always with us, loving us deeply.

The first two lessons this month focus on healing stories from the Gospel of Luke. This past Sunday's story was about Jesus' healing ten men with skin diseases (Luke 17:11-19). Most translations refer to the disease they shared as leprosy; however, the word leprosy was used in the New Testament for many kinds of skin diseases, from psoriasis to leprosy. In any event, the effect on their lives would have been the same, in that they were required to live outside of the community, essentially in a prolonged quarantine. Our children, because of COVID, are aware of what being in quarantine means; some in our class have personally experienced what it is like to have to keep apart from others, even their families, when they are sick. We were able to discuss how this was not just a two-week quarantine, but one that could possibly have affected people with this disease for their whole lives. This is one time that a current situation has enabled our children to have a deeper understanding of a biblical story.

The story for this coming week's lesson is about Jesus' healing of a blind man (Luke 18:35-43). As Jesus comes to Jericho, a blind man who is begging beside the road persists in calling out, "Jesus, Son of David, show me mercy!" When Jesus asks the blind man what he wants him to do for him, the man replies, "Lord, I want to see." Jesus says to him, "Receive your sight! Your faith has healed you."

In our curriculum, there are always suggested Spiritual Practices for both children and adults. This is our children's Spiritual Practice for the season of Lent:

### EXPLORING LENT THROUGH ASKING

Dear loving God, *(praying hands)*  
we ask for your help *(raise hands upward in supplication)*  
in this season of Lent, *(ASL sign for Lent)*  
the time we prepare for Easter. *(tap wrist like you would a watch)*  
Prepare our hearts, *(point to your heart)*  
prepare our minds, *(point to your head)*  
prepare our bodies *(flex your muscles)*  
to do your work in our world. *(form circle over head with arms)*  
Help us to connect to you *(clasp your hands)*  
And then connect with others. *(reach arms out to the side)*  
Amen. *(praying hands)*

This is our curriculum's Spiritual Practice for Adults: "For the season of Lent, set an intention for more connection with God and your community. Is there something keeping you from connection? Do not add shame to this Lenten practice. God loves you unconditionally. Just be open to God's desires for you – to have connection and meaningful relationships." We invite you to join us in this practice. "Lord, I want to see." Lord, I want to see You in myself and in others.

Peace and love,  
*Irene and Alyson*



## Church Council Meeting

Summary of Minutes  
February 20, 2022

We opened the meeting with prayer and our Mission and Vision statements. The Pastor's Report included information about Annual Conference, to be held June 15-17 in Brentwood, TN, with Sam Goff as our lay delegate, as well as information about the persons bringing our Sunday messages while Rev. Sara is on sabbatical during March. Rosemary Potter's Finance reports showed that we are in good shape at the moment. Sam Goff, chairperson of the Trustees, reported a busy time: Our contract with the incoming Lab School when Midtown Montessori leaves at the end of May, maintenance at the parsonage, plans to upgrade the Worship Center, and helping a member and a church neighbor with home repair. Irene Dycus submitted a report on the continuing work with the children on Zoom. Carol Miller reported on the two UMW units meeting.

Church goals as we resume more of our ministries:

- 1) The Trinity Walkers are walking!
- 2) We hope to join with Binghampton UM Mission in a Bible Study when they start a new study.
- 3) Centering Prayer is meeting at 8:30 on Sunday mornings via Zoom.
- 4) Becoming a Reconciling Church? The people who volunteered to lead this study (Sara Goff, Tom Wilson, Myra Finch, Sara Corum, Kay Jordan) have lined up small group discussions for all members. As we discussed this, Irene Dycus asked for devotional materials and other resources for members to use as they prepare themselves to participate in these groups. Rev. Sara agreed to provide these.

Other goals? It's been suggested that the chapel is not being used and that space could be a Clothes Closet and/or Food Pantry. Amy Moritz also suggested it could be a coffee shop and/or young mothers' gathering space. The Trustees will prepare the space for a change, and our Outreach committee will consider what would be the best use for the space. We adjourned with excitement and with Irene leading the closing prayer, "Christ before us, Christ behind us, Christ all around us."

Respectfully submitted,  
Katy Spake, Secretary to the Council



March 1	Nelda Gray
March 3	Kaylee Bauer
March 3	Heather Jacoby-Keller
March 6	Becky Waldon
March 6	Joe Spake
March 13	Leanne Wilson
March 14	Anne Steinaway
March 16	Jane Waldrip
March 19	Alyson Foreman
March 19	Charles Abraham
March 23	Amy Webster
March 31	Hadley Keller

*(Let us know of any errors or omissions on this birthday list.)*

## MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS

MEMORIALS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED

IN MEMORY OF **DONNIE GLOVER** FROM  
MIKE & ROSEMARY POTTER

IN MEMORY OF **MARGARET RUCKER** FROM  
CALEY & ALYSON FOREMAN

IN MEMORY OF **MARGARET RUCKER** FROM  
EDDIE & SALLY RAMSEY

## Answered Prayers

Gene and Irene Opel are doing better, according to Irene's daughter Anita Bunn, who reports that the Opels are playing bingo, exercising their arms, taking walks up and down the hallway, and eating in the dining room. They even went to the Mardi Gras party! Anita has been praying for mercy and peace for them both and sends her thanks for all of Trinity's prayers and the sweet, lovely children's drawings.



## Trinity Learns About LGBTQ+ in the United Methodist Church, as Kay remembers

The first time I heard any discussion at Trinity of issues about persons identifying as LGBTQ+ was around 2011-2012. Lois Young proposed a church-wide study of the book When Christians Get It Wrong by Adam Hamilton. This book discussed issues that prevent many people from taking Christians seriously today, including a stance of non-acceptance of LGBTQ+ persons. (After studying this book, Trinity became involved in Room in the Inn, so although the study didn't result in our taking any stand on LGBTQ+ issues, it obviously had a great influence.)

About seven years ago, Jonathan Bratt Carle brought the question to the front again, as he spoke of his father coming out as gay when Jonathan was an adult, and how it caused Jonathan to consider his own level of acceptance of LGBTQ+ persons.

Five years ago, Sara Corum was our newly appointed pastor, and the Gay Pride parade was taking place. She cooperated with members and our music director, John Holtzman, in creating a booth for Trinity at the parade. We had a booth again the next year, working with our friends at Binghampton United Methodist Mission, which is a Reconciling Ministry.

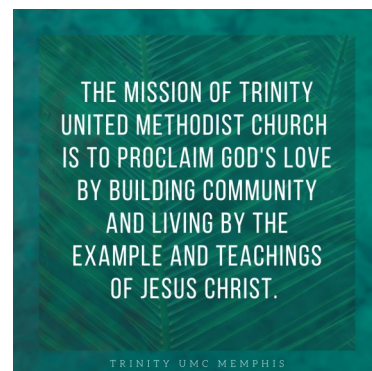
The 2016 General Conference of the worldwide UMC was explosive as it considered how the world-wide church relates to LGBTQ+ persons. A special session was scheduled for 2019 to consider this sensitive topic. After many speeches, prayers, and tears, a vote was taken, and the terminology "the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching" was retained in the UM Discipline. However, many clergy and lay delegates continued to hope that the next regular General Conference, scheduled for 2020, would change this hurtful statement.

J.J. Warren was especially noticed for his impassioned statement at the Special Session. He came to Memphis in early 2020 to speak to a study/training session of the Reconciling Ministries Network, and Trinity was invited to host him as he preached on that Sunday. We joyfully did so.

So you can see that by 2019, the seeds had been planted. Some members of Trinity felt we needed to take more specific action. The Staff Parish Relations Committee studied the book Holy Love by Dr. Steve Harper and wanted Trinity to consider becoming a Reconciling Church, affirming the full rights and full inclusion of LGBTQ+ Christians in our church. Several members of SPPRC were in the Nowlin SS Class, and they volunteered to take the question to the class. The class spent months in study and prayer and was almost ready to take a vote to become a Reconciling Group when the pandemic shut down our country. When we regrouped through online meetings, the class took that vote and unanimously agreed to become a Reconciling Group and to help lead other groups to consider doing likewise. But such a sensitive topic was hard to consider when we could not talk with each other face to face.

Now we meet face to face. So we are setting up small groups to talk about Trinity's next steps. If you cannot meet in person, we can Zoom. When a convener of a small group contacts you, please say "Yes, I will meet." We aren't voting on anything in these small groups. We are sharing stories, considering our Mission and Vision statements, thinking together about what these statements call us to do. If by chance you aren't contacted, please call Kay Jordan at 662-429-0158 or email [jordanck2@gmail.com](mailto:jordanck2@gmail.com); we may have had some clerical errors as we formed groups. Everyone has a voice, everyone is supported, no one is alone.

A personal note: You probably can tell from my writing, both here and in the earlier article, "What is a Reconciling Church?", my heart is on the side of Trinity becoming a Reconciling Church. But that is a position I have come to myself, through study, prayer, and personal experiences, and I want to leave space for other Trinity members to come to their own position. I speak here as an individual.



## PRAYER CONCERNS

**Our country and the world** - 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 now the omicron and other variants for families, churches, and communities impacted by the tornados in West Tennessee and Kentucky, especially for those who lost loved ones in those violent storms; for Haiti in the aftermath of an earthquake and hurricane; 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 Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris—pray for their wisdom.

**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. Autura Eason-Williams

**Trinity UMC** - for Rev. Sara as she takes a month-long sabbatical; for members of the congregation home-bound due to chronic illness or age; for new visitors joining us as we worship online and in person; 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

**Kanyon Glover**, now 3+ years old, can lift his left arm and giggles at his daddy when he gives him a high five.

**Donnie Glover**, Chris's brother, passed away recently. Please pray for his wife, **Sandra**, and all the rest of the Glover family as they grieve.

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

**Gene & Irene Opel**, see page 4 of this publication for a happy update!

**David Harrison**, Carol Miller's brother, recovered from broken hip; dialysis going well

**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' 95 year old cousin, now residing permanently in rehab center

**Val Coates**, serious heart condition; still 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; COPD; severe back pain has returned

**Jean Moss**, in hospice care

For **Living Word Christian Church** and their pastor, **Kyle Deren**, as they begin worshiping in our Worship Center March 27th

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