Trinotes

June 25, 2025

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.

Come Just as You Are, Hear the Spirit Call

Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore, ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."
Matthew 9:37-38

Yesterday after worship we gathered for a brief Church Council meeting to discuss one matter before dismissing for the day and something very interesting happened during that meeting.

The discussion was about our renewal of a lease with the Lab School and all the changes we'd incur by renewing the lease, with the provisions they've requested. And in the middle of the discussion, one person raised their hand and volunteered to help clean and organize space. It had been a while since someone volunteered to do something for which we were not asking for volunteers. At least, it had been a while since I'd heard it. Then a second person offered to do the same. Both these things happened after another very capable Biblical scholar in our midst had offered to teach a mid-week Bible study (which I thought was WONDERFUL). It got me wondering and thinking…

The United Methodist Church has an interesting local church structure that is based on committee leadership, but I wonder if we aren't limiting ourselves with that structure. So rarely does the work within the church stretch beyond those committees. When we see that the workers are few but the work is vast, it is no wonder that we regularly find areas of church leadership steeped with burn-out. **Leaders forget that the work belongs to more people than them.** We forget that other people have spiritual gifts they are called to use to serve God through the life of the church, and when we do not pass along needs for service and work, WE are unintentionally prohibiting the use of the gifts that God has given others in our community of faith. I cannot imagine that makes glad the heart of God. We are given those gifts for an important purpose.

And so today I woke up grateful for the witness of those who, without prompting by anyone other than the Holy Spirit, volunteered themselves to jump into the deep end of ministry and service with Trinity, and I want to encourage a few things in light of their witness. If you are on a committee or leading one, I hope that you will **pay attention to the Spirit's guidance** when it comes to the spiritual gifts of those you serve with and those in the broader congregation. Where can we help others get plugged in? If you do not already serve on a committee, **that doesn't mean that you aren't called to serve.** When you joined the church, you made a commitment to support and uphold it with your prayers, presence, gifts, witness, and **service**. Where is the Spirit leading you? What gifts of the Spirit do you think you possess? How might **you** jump in?

There is no need to be "official" to help further the Kingdom of God, and there is no need to wait to be asked. There is a need for laborers who will stack proverbial bricks in the Kingdom. There is likewise no need to do it all yourself when we are in community together and called to a similar purpose — to create a space where our neighbors belong, are loved, are supported, and are never alone. Finally, I pray that we can all remember that we are each called according to a purpose by something far greater than ourselves, and might should always be asking the question, "God, where are you leading me now?"

I'm asking it, too. I promise.

In this with you,
Rev. Sara

Why Trinity?

By Lois Young

I met with Pastor Sara a week ago, and she asked me to write something for "Trinotes." Why did husband Jan and I come back to Trinity? What does the future hold now that Jan is retiring?

Some of you are new and do not know me or why I left in the first place. I used to be Trinity's program coordinator for Room in the Inn-Memphis. I was about as involved with this church as anyone could be. I know that the church is talking about getting involved in RITI again, so it might help you to know it is a ministry that takes in guests who are experiencing homelessness for a weekly meal and a safe night's sleep. More importantly RITI provides holy hospitality—sharing the love of God with our unsheltered neighbors. We were able to gather support from the community and many other churches to help us in this ministry. I encourage you to learn more about it at www.ritimemphis.org.

So why did I leave Trinity for a few years? After seven years of leading RITI, I was experiencing burn out. COVID-19 had just started closing everything down, so it was a good time to step back and rethink what I was doing. I also felt like I might need a different kind of ministry for a while, something closer to what I grew up in as a Catholic. But I think the most important reason I left was that I have many beloved family members and friends who are gay, lesbian, non-binary and trans. I felt extremely uncomfortable staying in a denomination that did not recognize them completely as children of God. At that time, it no longer mattered to me that our church was open to these individuals. It felt better to have no denomination, than to tie myself to something I couldn't fully support.

Fast forward to May 2024, Jan and I had attended a few other churches over the past few years and the last one we tried for an Easter service was all praise music and people we didn't know. I thought, "What am I doing? This doesn't feel right." I already have a group of people that I love being around at Trinity. Since the 2023 General Conference vote, I no longer had a reason to disconnect from UMC. Charlotte Comes had died in February, and Rosemary Potter had died in March. I didn't want to miss any more time with the people I loved. We travel more now than we used to, so we haven't been at church every week, but I've enjoyed my time with the Trinity Singers, the United Women of Faith and with the Trinity Food Pantry. I am so thankful that this church is growing in love. Church to me is all about community—offering love to each other as Jesus taught us to do.

So, what does the future bring? For us, it will be a big move and leaving many familiar things behind. Jan retires June 27. I am only freelancing part-time as a writer/editor now. Young Jan still lives in Northwest Arkansas, and we want to be closer to him. So we are buying a house there and will be moving in a few months. I told Sara, one of my greatest impossible wishes is that I could take this church and all its members with me. Unfortunately, that won't work. I think I have found a good homeless ministry to volunteer with; I hope to get involved with that once we are settled. I am nervous about finding a new church family. Will they be as open and accepting of differences? Will they be outreach oriented? I don't know, but one thing is certain, I won't forget where I came from.

Sojourners' Loan Fund

The Sojourner's Loan Fund has just signed its first loan! Created to help families pay for lawyers when their loved ones are being detained or need legal assistance, the fund is now officially active! We signed a contract with a young mother whose husband was apprehended here in Memphis and sent to Louisiana. One of his children was in the car when he was pulled over and arrested and that experience has been traumatic for the whole family. Because their family has lost her husband's income, they are struggling, even though she has a good full-time job. She was so grateful to have a chance to pay back the money without interest, as she had researched loan funds and discovered that they not only charged interest but that there was also an application fee and no guarantee that she would be approved. She is eager to pay back the money so that someone else has the opportunity to borrow money for a good lawyer. Anything we can do to lighten the burden that these families carry is so crucial these days. And we thank Trinity UMC and your incredible hospitality for holding this fund.

Joni Laney, Binghampton UMM

Stories

I remember sitting in the front porch swing as a child on summer nights with my parents and my sister. Sometimes, it would be just Mama and Margaret and me. Often on those nights, as the swing moved gently and rhythmically back and forth, my mother would tell us stories of her growing-up years. She also told us about her young adult life, when she was her family's wage earner, the years before she and Daddy married. Through those stories she passed on values to my sister and me. They were stories that revealed how my mother had always known who she was and Whose she was. She was raised a Baptist, and the church was always an essential part of her life. She taught Sunday School to children, youth, and adults at Hays Avenue Methodist Church in Jackson, Tennessee, the church in which I grew up. But these personal stories that she shared with my sister and me were not lessons or lectures. Instead, they were treasures from her past that served as markers for the future to guide us as we lived our own lives.

I recalled my mother's telling of her stories this morning as I thought about Rev. Rebekah's method that she uses for the telling the Bible stories at Vacation Bible School and during Children's Time in our worship service. Her eyes focus on the **Godly Play** materials that physically represent the progression of each story, and she encourages the children to do the same. She tells the stories with a gentle, quiet voice, much as my mother told her stories to my sister and me in that porch swing over 70 years ago.

Rev. Rebekah follows an ancient tradition in our faith, for the stories she tells date back over thousands of years. In fact, they go back to the very beginning of time. Before they were put into writing, they were told orally, possibly at times around an evening campfire. There is a physical and spiritual intimacy to the telling of the story of our faith as we are gathered in a circle. I can envision families, perhaps whole communities, as they gathered together to hear how God had worked in the lives of their forefathers. The children who were there, gazing into the fire as they listened, would grow up to tell those stories to their own children. Each generation passed these faith stories on to those who came after them. I, too, learned them as a child and youth, and they have become more meaningful to me as I have shared them with many children over the years in Sunday School and Vacation Bible School.

The stories of our faith continued to be told this week at the third session of our "month of Tuesdays" Vacation Bible School. It's been a wonderful experience so far! We have one more Tuesday of faith learning and fun to go as we explore the theme of "Called by God." July 1st will be our last night of VBS 2025. Thank you for your prayers for all who are involved.

Peace,

Irene

Church Council Meeting

Called Council Meeting

On June 22, Trinity held a special church council meeting to consider our lease with the Lab School. The new lease would give the school access to the entire second floor, meaning the Nowlin Class would relocate to meeting in the worship center during the Sunday School hour. Because this decision impacts everyone in the church, we felt that it was important to hear not just from the members of the church council, but from all members of the congregation. As we make decisions about our church property, we are always mindful that there are several questions we have to answer:

- Who will be impacted, and have they had a chance to weigh in?
- What is the best interest of our church's mission?
- Are we making a decision in fear of losing something, or in hope for the work we've been called to do?

During the church council meeting, we had a great discussion about all of those questions. I appreciate everyone's willingness to share in this decision making process. As a result, our congregation decided unanimously that we should pursue this renewed lease. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me or Sam Goff!

--Allen Stanton

Manna House Needs

Manna House needs jeans and khakis for men, especially waist sizes 30, 32, 36, & 38 and lengths 32 & 34. Donations can be left on the front porch at 410 Garland St., Memphis, TN 38104 any day, any time.

Thanks much!
Pete Gathje

Children's Sunday School Schedule

The children WILL NOT meet for Sunday school on July 6th and 13th. They will resume meeting on July 20th.

July Birthdays

Lois Young	July 1
Paige Stanton	July 4
Sara Goff	July 6
Julie McMahan	July 7
Helena Landrigan	July 8
Joey Hopper	July 9
Elizabeth Hopper	July 12
Aiden Tate	July 15
Kyle Dearen	July 18
Krissi Moore	July 21
Mike Potter	July 27

United Women in Faith

UWF Update

UWF JUNE 2025 MEETING

UWF will meet at 11:30 on 28 June in the Worship Center. Lunch will be catered in by The BBQ Shop. The cost of the meal and the delivery fee will be prorated among attendees. Some of our ladies have volunteered to bring a dessert. Please feel free to do the same but feel no obligation to do so. In order for you to be prepared to pay Sandy for your meal, I will send a reminder email with the prorated cost. This month's auction items are plants, pots, pillows or plants in pots on pillows. Come join the fun!

Called Church Council Meeting

Church Council met following worship on 22 June with only one agenda item. The Lab School has been sold; the new owner has plans to expand to substantially more children and will need more space. Plans are to expand to the former youth rooms. The new owner proposes to pay a substantial flat fee each month for the months that school is in session with additional payment if he holds summer camps. After a question/answer period to School Liaison Sam Goff, Allen Stanton brought the item up for vote. Membership voted unanimously to empower the Trustees to negotiate a contract for facilities use with new owner Rev. Anthony Anderson.

Prayer Request Updates

Chenault will keep his leg. He still has a series of skin grafts and extensive rehab to undergo. He is still in the hospital, but he has been issued a wheelchair, walker, and cane!

Doug Robbins is improving in his fight against his "unbeatable" cancer. Ash Robbins, his wife, is in much pain and will undergo a serious back surgery in the same hospital in July.

—Joan Smith, President

VBS PHOTOS

Science!

Creativity —>

...and more Science!

Prayer Concerns

Our country and the world - for resolution of the conflict between our country and Iran; 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 struggle due to lost jobs, threatened deportation, 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 Donald Trump and Vice President J.D. Vance—pray for their wisdom and that of all political leaders.

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, especially as he grieves for death of his mother, Billie Schumpert 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:

Katy Spake's cousin, **Deb Roark** passed away last week after entering hospice care on June 11th. Deb's husband **Keith** has stage 4 pancreatic cancer, spots on liver & bile ducts. Please pray for Katy and Deb's family.
Lilly Nemenoff, 6 y.o. Idlewild kindergartener, recovering from June 3rd open heart surgery
Kiersten Cannon's baby **Stella**, born 7 weeks early with extra chromosome; developmental problems expected
Sharman Murley & Frank Cantrell's son, **Frank, Jr.**, heart issues
Rev. Sara's son **Cooper** dislocated his knee June 2nd: knee brace & on crutches
Pam Stafford battling liver disease, surgery planned for June 13th; husband **Jim Stafford**, dementia
Joan Smith's friend **Donna Brewer**, hospitalized with fluid on her lungs
Elizabeth Hopper, for healing following surgery for thyroid cancer
Continue to pray for **Marshall Selvidge** and family as they grieve his mother's passing.
Continued prayers for **Sally Ramsey**, daughter **Sandi**, and the Ramsey family
Bobby Glover, Chris's brother, in care for early Alzheimer's
From Joan Smith: pray for **David Chenault**: undergoing skin grafts; leg will be saved; rehab next; pray for **Doug Robbins**, aggressive kidney cancer, treatment progressing well; wife **Ash Robbins** facing serious back surgery
Kate and **Neil Ostenrude**, as she continues to recover; strength to persevere in life's trials
For Sharman Murley's grandsons **Asa** (improved behavior!) and **Eli** (high performing autism diagnosis)
Chris Glover's sister, **Sherry Carruthers**
The family of **Mac Gardner** and his spouse, **Marty Acree** (friends of Elizabeth Hopper)
Seth Norton, Raquel's son, ongoing medical concerns
Gwen Dodson, bladder cancer, COPD, osteoporosis; cancer treatment
Kanyon Glover, heart received as baby checks out okay; receives PT for arm damaged by stroke
Jacob Foreman, for new part time job to go well; nerve damage & back pain continues
Gene Archer, stomach cancer, scan last week doesn't look good: awaiting final report. His wife **Julia** has MS.
David Harrison, Carol Miller's brother, leg amputated below knee June 3 after persistent infection delayed surgery
Val Coates, medical concerns
Jonathan Goff, back injury; **James Goff**, Sam's brother, abdominal issues; **Karen Barker**, Sara's sister, lung issues; **Laura Carruthers**, Sam's friend, has cancer.
Vacation Bible School

(Please contact the church office to make changes to prayer concerns, to add new ones or to remove any.)