

**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.**



## SCOTUS and Doing No Harm



*"Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth."*  
1 John 3:18

I woke up Monday morning with a message in my inbox on Facebook from a friend in Atlanta who served as the children's minister of the church where I did my contextual education in seminary, St. Mark UMC. The messenger asked if I mentioned the ruling from the Supreme Court in my Sunday message. She was outraged that her pastor did not. I told her that I did not either and explained why I did not think that was the best avenue to address this particular social issue for the context in which I serve. One thing I did say in worship, though, when it came to the "love of money" taking too much precedence over the way we choose to live, is that I was meddling. Those present giggled. It's always been a joke that pastors telling parishioners how to spend their money is meddling. Then I said, in all seriousness, "but that's my job." Consider that today's article is requisite of the prophetic calling to which I feel both bound and blessed.

Friday's ruling from the Supreme Court did not come as a surprise, though my visceral reaction to it did. Configuring what this ruling will mean to many people in our country has been a process. If one is a chess player, and I am, one thinks of how moving one piece on the board might put many other moves into motion. That has been my process for understanding most anything in life. It has been my process for understanding this decision. It was also my process for considering why worship was not the place to speak to this matter. At the risk of isolating someone who passionately feels opposed to my own beliefs (and I have no problem admitting that I am personally pro-life **because** I am politically pro-choice), and understanding the ultimate harm (or further harm) that could do, and that doing harm is not of God, I chose to abstain from mentioning this Sunday. However, because the UMC has, in our Social Principles (that can be found in the UM Book of Discipline or a quick Google search) said what we believe, I feel it important to speak words to this event in our world.

I will begin by sharing with you some theological thoughts from a friend I attended seminary with. Rev. Ryan Young is a UMC pastor in the Atlanta area and has two small children. Where I would not have imagined sharing the thoughts on this decision from a cis-gendered, young, white man, it has actually provided hope for me that he is the one who shared these reflections.

"...Christianity is not univocal in its understanding of when human life begins. There is not now, nor has there ever been Biblical or theological consensus on when human life begins. The idea that life begins at fertilization is one belief among many, and one that stretches the biblical witness to find support. One of the earliest and most common [thoughts] is that life begins with a first breath—echoing the divine breath/wind (*ruach*) that hovered over the formless depths and provided life to the first humans in Eden. Exodus 21 places fetal life on the level of property law — quite beneath human life. Numbers 5 seems to prescribe a procedure for abortion in cases of suspected infidelity, undertaken by a priest no less...Certainly, there are sections of scripture that speak of God having plans for and taking part in the creation of someone in utero. In Isaiah 49, this refers to the nation of Israel rather than an individual. Jeremiah 1 similarly seems to be a wider call to Israel than just a call to the individual prophet. Scriptures like God's promise to Sarah in Genesis 18, God's promise to Hannah in 1 Samuel 1, and most notably God's promise to Mary in Luke 1, speak of God calling and caring for individuals

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before they are conceived, yet they are no basis to claim that life begins at conception. The Psalms speak beautifully of God taking part in forming life in the womb, but I am hesitant to make God the active agent in fetal formation.”

Ryan goes on to explain in depth why it is harmful to place God’s agency in fetal formation because, very really, things can go horribly wrong. That is something his family experienced. That is something I have personally experienced, and I have a better opinion of the work of God in our creation than to think that those moments where things go wrong, God is at the helm.

We have done our society a disservice in placing at the forefront of many of our sweeping policies over the years, the issue of abortion and not the paths that lead to it — home insecurity and desperation, ill-investigated allegations of rape and incest, inexcusably expensive pre-natal, natal, and post-natal healthcare for women and expensive healthcare for children (heaven forbid something go medically wrong), inflated prices on things needed for mothers or families to help their children flourish, childcare that far rivals the cost of a mortgage when half of all U.S. children are being raised in homes with one income, and the list goes on. The U.S. has the highest rate of maternal mortality in the developed world, with emphasis, here, on those deaths being substantially higher for those impoverished and persons of color. If the matter at hand were actually about reducing the number of abortions in our country, there were many other places we could’ve begun, and the fact that those in power, for 50 years, could’ve worked to make these situations better and didn’t, loops us back to the “love of money” and a sickeningly gross need for power.

Moving ahead now is like wading into treacherous waters, but these are waters we are called to wade into as Christians who’ve committed our lives to walk alongside those who are hurting and those who are afraid. As Ryan puts it, we have a non-negotiable call to love our neighbors as God loves us. Now there may be even more need to put our beliefs into action. To support agencies that offer affordable care for expectant mothers and small children, to advocate for paid parental leave and affordable childcare, to donate newborn supplies to agencies that distribute them, to support agencies that partner with foster families to make sure that children can flourish and so that the foster system might become a better option than it has been in the past, to foster if you are able, and to offer loving support to expectant mothers who feel as though they are in an impossible place, understanding that the place might actually be impossible for them.

Personhood should be amplified by flourishing, not just breathing, because that is how God, the ever-present loving parent of us all, wants God’s children to live. Everything in scripture points to a God who is for us and a Christ who saw fit to make life better for those who suffered. It falls on the shoulders of his disciples, this responsibility to ‘act’ and ‘do,’ but that is a cross we vowed, in our baptism, to bear.

In the days to come, I am hopeful that we might share other, tangible, ways of being agents of positive change and loving support in our community, as things unfold in the wake of this decision. I pray that we can find ways to do good while also doing no harm, and that a Spirit of justice, mercy, and love might prevail in the choices we make and motions we adopt, as we find new ways to love our neighbors.

In Great Hope for Loving Mercy  
Rev. Sara



## **FAITH CHALLENGES**

Beginning Wednesday, July 6, a small group discussion experience on Faith Challenges will be offered at Trinity. Given the national and international issues of violence, war, the Covid Pandemic, polarization, financial constraints, and personal and corporate mental health difficulties, faith questions and resources are important for us.

We will explore faith challenges in six sessions. The group will meet each Wednesday from July 6 through August 10 in the 2nd floor Youth Room from 10:00– 11:15 a.m.

Faith challenges will be examined through the following session topics: “Beliefs and Trust,” “Division and Unity,” “Brokenness and Forgiveness,” “Violence and Peace,” “Despair and Hope,” and “Time and Eternity.”

Please join us as you are able. Call or email Craig Jordan with your questions about the group experience (662-429-0158 or [jordanck2@gmail.com](mailto:jordanck2@gmail.com)).



## Back in Action!

We are so excited about once again having Children's Sunday School in our classroom in Trinity's Worship Center! We will be back in action this Sunday, July 3<sup>rd</sup>! As Ms. Alyson and I have been preparing our classroom after two years of not meeting in person, we have found that time helps put a different perspective on what to value, especially regarding "things." We have been cleaning out and throwing away or recycling lots of paper – mainly old posters, Sunday School lessons, and artwork – all things that we had hung onto, thinking we might use them again at some point. Of course, "might" never happened, and we had accumulated piles of stuff in different parts of the room in the process. In the beginning, our classroom will be somewhat barren-looking in terms of wall decorations because we will be creating new banners and bulletin boards with the children as we go along in our study. All these things that are happening in our classroom mirror what is happening to us and our children as we return "home" – letting go of the old so something new and exciting and maybe even better can take its place. There is a huge spiritual and emotional cleansing and renewal that is occurring within us while we are working on practical and functional things. It feels good to let go and to move on; that's always an essential part of our spiritual journey.

The church's lectionary reading for last Sunday included this scriptural passage: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." This passage from Galatians 5:22 (CEB) is our **KEY SCRIPTURE** for our first two lessons this month. Our **FAITH WORD** is **SPIRIT**, which in our study means "the feeling that God is with you." This week's lesson will focus on Pentecost Sunday, what we call "the birthday of the church," the day that Jesus' disciples received the gift of the Holy Spirit. Next week, we will focus on the fruit of the Spirit, meaning the feelings, actions, and values that are prompted in us by the Holy Spirit. These lessons were from the June curriculum, which we missed during our hiatus. They are essential to our children's understanding of who we are as Christ's church and how we witness to our faith in the living of our lives, so we're playing a little catch-up before we move into the "official" July lessons.



And now for YOUR HOMEWORK (better known as HEART-WORK). Each month our curriculum has a Spiritual Practice for Adults, and we invite you to join us in this month's practice. First, find a quiet place to sit. Place your feet on the ground and place your palms down on your knees. Take a deep breath and let it go. This time as you breathe in, think, "Spirit, guide me." Exhale and think, "All my days." Repeat this several times. Afterwards, send up a prayer for our children and for us as their teachers; your prayers mean so much to all of us.

Peace and love,  
Irene and Alyson



After a bit of a slowdown in work being done, you will see a lot starting to happen beginning this week. The panels will be going in below the chair rail. The parking will be re-sealed. New chairs are being ordered.

The Lab School has moved in! Please honor the screen they have placed in the hallway and do not wander past it. We are so fortunate to have them with us, and are looking forward to a great relationship.





## THE BACKPACK PROJECT WITH TUMC

Help us prepare backpacks for Indigenous and Hispanic Children in Memphis. It is our goal to buy and stuff (at least) 25 backpacks by July 28th. Can you help?

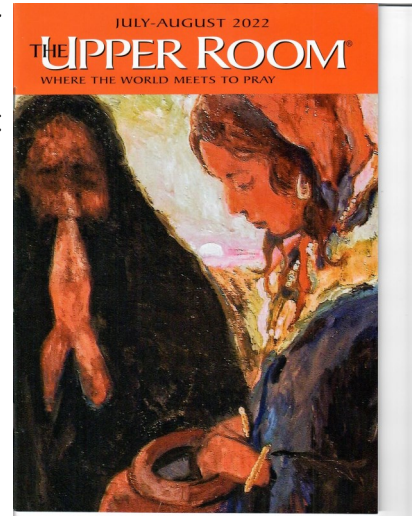
### YOUR BACKPACK SHOULD INCLUDE:

For Middle or High School: college-ruled notebook paper, 3-pronged folders, no. 2 pencils, Extra Erasers, ruler, pencil bag/box, highlighters. May also include colored pencils, markers, scissors, protractor, calculator, binder.

For Elementary: wide-ruled notebook and/or composition books, scissors, crayons, markers, or colored pencils, no. 2 pencils, glue sticks, 3-pronged folders, extra erasers, pencil box/bag. May also include, 3-ringed binder, highlighters, ruler.

## THE UPPER ROOM

The July/August *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 e-mail to [office@trinityumcmemphis.org](mailto:office@trinityumcmemphis.org) or call the church office at 901-274-6895 or with your request. Be sure to specify the font size: regular or large print.

Happy  
Birthdays!



July 1	Jamie Skjoldager
July 2	Julie McMahan
July 10	Joey Hopper
July 11	Laura Finch
July 12	Elizabeth Hopper
July 13	Maggi Comes
July 15	Aiden Tate
July 16	Ron Raybuck
July 18	Elaine Amis
July 20	Connie Johns
July 22	Krissi Moore
July 23	Ron Maddox
July 26	Madeleine Edwards
July 26	Steve Humbert
July 27	Mike Potter

THE MISSION OF TRINITY  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
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BY BUILDING COMMUNITY  
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EXAMPLE AND TEACHINGS  
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TRINITY UMC MEMPHIS

## TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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

TRINITY UMC MEMPHIS



# LIVING WORD CHRISTIAN CHURCH

I want to take a minute to introduce those of you, who don't know us, to the family we call Living Word Christian Church.

A very dear friend and myself started Living Word Christian Church in August 1995. Her name was Pearl Thompson. God put on both our hearts to start a ministry for all people to come and feel they are welcomed to worship the way God wants and not necessarily the way they always had. It was definitely a leap of faith for both of us, since neither one of us had ever done anything like that before.

I was 34 years old and Pearl was 49ish (I never did find out exactly how old she was). Pearl passed away in February 2001 and left a huge whole in all our hearts, and I wondered if I should carry on without her, but felt in my heart she would want us to continue, and God gave me no word to end there.

It has always been our greatest desire to reach out to those who didn't feel they had a place to go or who were asked to leave the churches they had grown up in for being who they are.

## **Our mission has always been:**

To reach the world with the redeeming love and restorative power of God. To use every effective means of bringing as many people as possible to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ that they might enjoy:

1. The eternal life which comes from knowing Him
2. The abundant life that comes from knowing and applying His Word.

As we proclaim Jesus, the Christ, as head of the church and the manifested Word of God, our goal is to teach the Word of God with simplicity and understanding so that it may be applied to our everyday lives in a practical and effective manner; thereby being transformed into His image. Therefore, changing our immediate world and all those with whom we come into contact, ultimately making a mark that cannot be erased.

At Living Word Christian Church we believe in new beginnings. Living Word is a church of second chances for individuals and families. People — just like you — are discovering their new beginning in every area of life: spiritually, emotionally, physically, financially and in their family. This is a place where your dreams can come true, and your full potential can be achieved. At Living Word, we believe you were born to win. We believe in you!

We want to thank the family of Trinity United Methodist Church for allowing us to share space and be a part of an amazing family of believers.

Until He Comes,  
Pastor J. Kyle Dearen



## Message from Our Lay Leader

Thank you for the opportunity to represent you at the Annual Conference for Western Kentucky/Tennessee! It was my first conference and I was unsure of what to expect. I had thought there might be some dissension over churches leaving. Instead of dissension, there was much unity and a sense of hopefulness and excitement over the new, combined Conference. Much good work was done, and many new friends were made. I came away feeling the leadership were intent on following the path of Jesus, and to helping us make an impact in our community.

I have no doubt that we will be stronger, and better able to reach others through our missions as we move forward. The caveat is that we, as Trinity United Methodist Church, need to all play our parts, large or small. If you know of a need that needs filling, please bring it forward. The acorn that was the idea for Coffee on the Terrace, has grown into a healthy sapling that is connecting with our neighbors. Not only are we reaching neighbors, but we are activating members and helping them be part of our ministry to others. Won't you join us?

May His Blessings Be with You!  
Sam Goff

## 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.

**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 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:

**Maggi Comes'** niece, **Katie Pendleton**, diagnosed with Tumefactive MS

**Bryce Sellers**, fighting Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy; just graduated from high school and making plans for college.

**Kanyon Glover**, pray for his speech therapy and the use of his left arm (due to a stroke)

Chris Glover's sister, **Carol**, still in physical therapy following a fall in her yard

**Bobby Glover**, experiencing difficulties with housing

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

**Gene & Irene Opel**, for their continued enjoyment of their life together and for their general health; expressing thanks for cards, and especially the children's artwork

**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**, 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, but heart function improved

For **Living Word Christian Church** and their pastor, **Rev. Kyle Dearen**, as they worship and do ministry here on the campus of Trinity UMC.

**Elaine Amis** broke her hip in a fall, followed surgery, then rehab. She is now in hospice care following a second fall.

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