Trinotes

July 24, 2024

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.

The Church Family

From the desk of... The Rev.

In lieu of writing my own article for this week's newsletter, I wanted to share the following article, written a few weeks ago for MinistryMatters.com by one of the newest members of our family of faith at TUMC, Rev. Allen Stanton. I'm sharing this as an encouragement to the long-time Trinity members who will read this, as well as those who have recently found a home in the Center. I pray they encourage you in the ways they have encouraged me.

Many blessings,
Rev. Sara

Several years ago, a friend of mine questioned whether or not it was a good thing to call a congregation a family. His fear, with which I empathize, is that calling a congregation a family limits its capacity to add new people. After all, it is exceedingly difficult to join a family.

I've long been an advocate for the small-membership church, and when I sought out a new church after a recent family move, I sought out a small congregation. One of the challenges of smaller congregations, though, is that they can be hard to really break into. I remember parishioners of mine telling me that they still felt like new members nearly a decade after they first started attending. Perhaps, I reasoned, my friend was on to something.

But if I am not willing to call the church a family, I am also uncomfortable with calling the church something as nonspecific as a "community." We have all sorts of communities in which we participate, and usually there is some sort of utilitarian justification for being welcomed into them. My job is a community, but if I do not perform and meet key metrics, I will soon find myself without that community. It is also not a community with which I can bring my whole self, whether in my current role as a pastor in extension ministry or when I was a parish pastor. Sometimes, you have to stuff your own feelings deep down to be adequately present at work, whether that's in a church or in a university.

Sports teams are a community, but my acceptance into my high school cross-country team was predicated on the fact that 1) we won a lot, and 2) I was contributing to those wins. I suspect that if I had not contributed to our victory, I would not have been quite as welcome into the camaraderie of the team.

Civic institutions are a form of community, but usually require some dues and some obligation of effort. I can't keep showing up at Rotary if I haven't paid any dues for a few years or skip meetings.

When we moved to a new city, my family and I quickly embraced the rhythms of our new location. My oldest daughter fell into the culture of a new school, our youngest started new a new preschool without missing a beat, my wife and I dove into our new jobs, and our family found new spots to spend time together. Finding a new church was important, but it was a daunting task. We spent most Sundays instead at whatever church I was guest preaching at or consulting with.

We finally found a new church, a small-membership congregation that we had seen in passing and heard great things about from our friends. I will admit that I was terrified on my first Sunday, though we soon found ourselves wanting to dive deeper into the congregation.

The church is what I lovingly describe as delightfully messy. A few years before, the congregation sold the building which housed their sanctuary. These days, we meet in the fellowship hall. There is no high church liturgy, but the service is steeped in scripture. Every part of the service, each prayer, responsive

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(continued from page 1 - by Rev. Allen Stanton)

reading, blessing, and transitional moment is derived from one of the lectionary passages. No one minds when my three-year-old daughter disrupts the service by dancing in back of the church. The sermons are thoughtful and theologically rich. Our Sunday school conversations are unstructured, deep conversations on scripture. It is exactly what I had craved in a church.

Still, for the last several months, I have found myself hanging back, so as to not intrude on this congregation of which I want to call myself a part. I bite my tongue in Sunday School, so that I don't become the person that talks too much. When I emailed the pastor to express my thanks for a sermon that brought me a great deal of healing and comfort, I signed off by apologizing for sending the email.

Part of that is my own insecurity. I am always eager to not be a burden or an intrusion. But part of it, I find, is my assumption that church is like most other communities. Can I really email the pastor of my small-membership church and request her prayers when I've only been attending for a few months? Or do I need to volunteer for a few more activities and give a bit more money before I have earned that right?

But then, we had communion Sunday. During the liturgy, as the pastor broke the bread, she silently made eye contact with each member of the congregation, holding the bread silently towards us. Her head bobbed and ducked to make eye contact with us in the back row. After the adults had communion, the pastor realized that the children hadn't made it up from the children's church. She sent her son to retrieve them, the pianist kept playing, and the congregation waited for several minutes for the kids to receive the elements, even though the service was now running over time.

For years, I've held to the idea that church shouldn't be family. It's too hard to join a family. But is it? Because really, joining a new family is a matter of adoption. What the congregation was asking me for was not some grand contribution or proof of allegiance. They were simply asking me to be willing to place myself up to be adopted by them. To be cared for by them, and to care for them. To serve and be served by them. It is a much deeper commitment, without the failed utilitarian imagination. It is a demand to bring my full self – to bring my gifts when I have them, but also to bring myself for others to care for and love.

After church, I took my oldest daughter, who just turned seven, into the vestibule, where nametags of all the regular attendees are stored. I showed her where her nametag was hanging. "You're a part of this church," I told her, "So they made you a nametag." She gave a big smile and ran off to talk to someone who was handing out peaches. It was already obvious to her that she belonged.

Church is not an abstract community, with social dues and performance demands. It is a place to bring ourselves and learn what it means to love and be loved in a way that no other community will allow. It is a place of adoption. And that is what makes it beautiful and unique.

Vacation Bible School 2024

Have you ever eaten an octopus? Well, we did at Vacation Bible School this year! It was absolutely delicious, tasting very similar to a hot dog, believe it or not!

Have you ever crawled inside of a big fish with a group of friends? Well, we did this, too, at this year's VBS! If you weren't there with us, you really missed something. Watching Ms. Irene try to get out of that big fish was quite entertaining, too! Thank goodness she made it out, with the help of other adult leaders; we thought we might have to call 911 to accomplish that feat!

Have you ever tried to corral a crowd of preschoolers in the early evening? Well, the Bible storytellers, along with the preschoolers' adult and youth crew leaders, tried – and found the experience to be something like herding cats. But they were all such cute kids!

Did you ever print a fish shape on a t-shirt, using a REAL FISH?!? Well, the VBS kids accomplished this amazing feat in art/science this year, and they had a great time doing it!

Did you ever solve a mystery? Well, we did this, too, at VBS this year. In fact, we solved "The Mystery of the Empty Tomb." And we rejoiced that Jesus conquered death and offers us eternal life!

Did you miss Vacation Bible School this year? If so, you missed a week full of exciting adventures, delectable eats, new friends, and fun faith-learning opportunities all around! We hope to see you at next year's VBS!

Calling All Bakers!

It's almost time for another **ELECTION DAY BAKE SALE**! This one is on **Thursday, August 1st**! All of Trinity's seasoned bakers know that Election Day is a special day to which our neighbors always look forward with anticipation, mainly because of the delicious home-baked treats, both sweet and savory, that await them in our Trinity Church lobby. The few times we have missed these events, some of our neighbors, as well as the dedicated poll workers, were extremely disappointed.

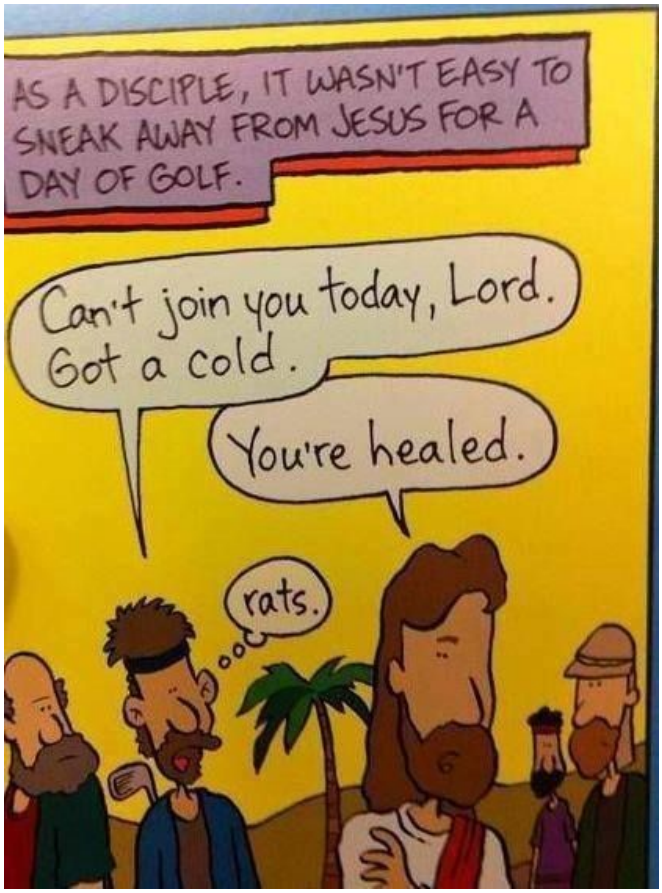
So, ladies and gents (hint, hint, Sam!), get out those recipes and start making your plans to make a huge batch of goodies for that day. The United Women in Faith have adopted this as a special project, but we need ANY AND ALL BAKERS to help. As usual, we are asking each family in the church to bake one or more items to sell. An "item" is a cake, a batch of cookies, a pie, a loaf of bread, a batch of muffins or cupcakes, etc. Please identify what each baked item is (examples: "chocolate chip cookies" or "banana nut bread"). If you want to leave a special note, such as "made from scratch," please do so. However, do NOT put prices on your baked goods ahead of time. We will price all items after you bring them to the church. All sale items need to be delivered to Trinity Church no later than 3 p.m. on Wednesday, July 31st. Smaller items such as cookies and brownies should be packed in zip-lock bags, 4 to a package if large ones and 6 to a package if smaller.

In addition to bakers, helpers will be needed at the sales tables between the hours of 7 a.m. and 3 p.m. We will need two volunteers to be on duty at all times throughout the day.

To volunteer your services as a baker or as an Election Day salesperson, please contact Irene Dycus (phone: 652-1105 or email: irenebdycus@hotmail.com). Proceeds from the bake sale will go towards our large Food Pantry and our Tiny Pantry, through which we will be helping feed our less fortunate neighbors.

July Birthdays

Sara Goff	July 6
Julie McMahan	July 7
Helena Landrigan	July 8
Joey Hopper	July 9
Laura Finch	July 11
Elizabeth Hopper	July 12
Maggie Comes	July 13
Aiden Tate	July 15
Kyle Dearen	July 18
Krissi Moore	July 22
Rod Maddox	July 23
Mike Potter	July 27
Sam Goff	July 28



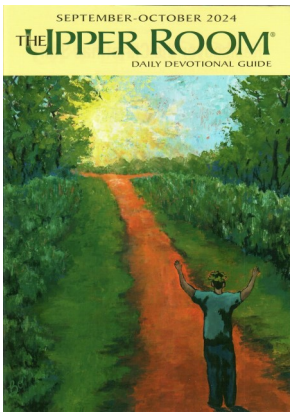
Help needed!

Hopefully you have read about our new arrangement for getting good food for our **Food Pantry**: Catholic Charities is providing 20 pound boxes of mixed foods for $5 a box! This is much more food than any of us can buy at retail outlets, even with careful bargain hunting. So a cash donation is the best way to support our ministry in this area.

Here's where we need help: The two volunteers who are presently working on distribution days (fourth Monday of each month, 9-11 am) are barely able to lift the 20 pound boxes. (We're little old ladies!) Even using the church two-wheeler, we are having a hard time. Is there anyone who can help, two hours a month? Call or text Kay Jordan, at 901-299-2624, if you are available on the fourth Monday from 9-11 am. Thanks!

United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith will gather at noon on Friday, July 26th, at Madison Tavern for lunch and a scarf exchange. A very short business meeting will also take place to discuss a few financial issues, but the purpose of the get-together is primarily social. If you are a woman and interested in involvement in a group of women who enjoy Christian ministry and each other's company, join us!



New *Upper Rooms* Available Soon

The September/October *Upper Room* devotional guides have just arrived! We will be putting them out on the counter in front of the reception desk in the next week or two. In order to ensure that our homebound members receive their copy, we plan to mail the *Upper Rooms* in early August.

If you know of anyone who would benefit from this important resource—a neighbor, co-worker, family member, or friend—we are happy to include them in the mailing. Just email your request to office@trinityumcmemphis.org. Be sure and include the name, address, and font size preferred (regular or large).

Celebrating Our Children & Youth

On Sunday, August 4th, we will celebrate the promotion of our children and youth to new grade levels at school. Pizza and ice cream sundaes will be served following worship. Parents are welcome to participate, and we will need an RSVP from each family so we will know how much food to purchase. (Email Irene Dycus at irenebdycus@hotmail.com or call her at 901-652-1105.)

In this small way, we want to recognize the hard work our children have done in school in order to move forward with their academic education.

The Backpack Project

The Backpack Project has been a resounding success, with a total of 40 backpacks donated by members and friends of Trinity. Aldersgate and La Puerta United Methodist churches partnered in heading up this effort. The Rev. Dr. Goyo de la Cruz originally requested that Trinity collect 20 backpacks for children K-1st grade, 2nd-5th grade, and middle/high school. Pastor Sara was confident that we could reach a goal of 25, so that was our "unofficial" objective. As it is, we doubled the originally requested number.

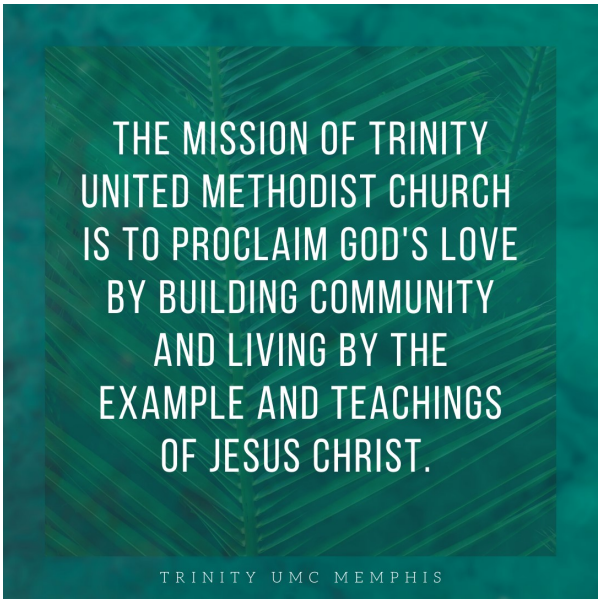
Living Word Christian Church donated 12 backpacks for K-1st graders. Another four were donated by Trinitarians, for a total of 16 for that age group. Eight 2nd-5th grade backpacks were donated by members/ friends of our congregation, with another four put together by volunteer shoppers working with money donated for that purpose. That's a total of 12 full backpacks for children in grades 2 through 5. Middle school and high school students had eight backpacks donated, with another four paid for by donation. Again, our volunteer shoppers filled those last four backpacks.

As one who does not enjoy shopping as a rule, I actually had a good time touring the Super Walmart on Raleigh-LaGrange, looking for bargains in school supplies. Sara Goff was with me, making the experience a lot more fun. The nicest part of the experience was the helpfulness of Walmart employees, who went over and above the call of duty. One young manager opened the customer service desk (at 9:30 p.m.) in order to create a tax exemption card for us. After taking everything home and doing an inventory, I made a list of missing items and went back to Walmart twice more. (Okay, so I'm not so hot at doing inventory.) Joan Smith and Sue Taylor met me at Trinity on Saturday morning, July 20, and we finished filling backpacks missing odds and ends and the extra eight backpacks donated by the congregation.

More money, earmarked for backpacks, came in via the offering plate on July 21st. The cash contributions have helped purchase backpacks and their contents, making the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year a lot better for 40 Hispanic/Indigenous students who otherwise would not have had the necessary school supplies.

Thank you, Trinity, for coming through in a big way!

Wishing you enough,
Debby Marston



Prayer Concerns

Our country and the world - 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 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 race related violence; for President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris—pray for their wisdom and that of all political leaders; pray for civility during upcoming Presidential campaigns.

The United Methodist Church - for our Pastor, Rev. Sara Corum, her husband, Rev. Josh McClurkan, and their five children; for our Bishop, the Rev. Bill McAlilly; and 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:

Andy Gienapp, hospitalized at Methodist University after emergency appendectomy for perforated appendix
Sharman Murley, recovering at home from hip replacement surgery; doing well & thankful for prayers!
Reid McClurkan, recovering from snakebite; on a walker, but doing well (She's camping this week—again.)
Adam Hill, serious vein ruptures in legs, much pain (friend of Joan Smith)
Linda Stoltz, recovering from brain surgery for subdural hematoma
LeeAnne Vamantee, Amelia's mother-in-law, fell & broke her hip
From Heather Jacoby-Keller: friend's husband **Eddie** just diagnosed with cancer. Heather's sister **Faith** also fighting cancer (for the past year). Please pray for healing!
Melba Abraham's cousin **Lydia Melton**, cancer in new site
Joan Foley's daughter-in-law, **Marilynn Hawkins**
Joan Smith's cousin, **Douglas Robbins**, aggressive cancer, and his wife **Ash**
Kaelyn Wright, wife and mother of two young children, has aggressive thyroid cancer. (Friend of Joan Smith)
Chris Glover's sister **Carol** is in hospice care at home and heavily medicated.
Olivia Dunn, 29 year old receiving treatment for uterine cancer (Katy Spake's request)
Gene Archer, diagnosed with stomach cancer; his wife **Julia** has MS; **Lauren Crews**, diagnosed with ALS
Gwen Dodson, bladder cancer, COPD, and osteoporosis; IV cancer treatment ongoing every 3 weeks
Maggi Comes' niece, **Katie Pendleton**, diagnosed with Tumefactive MS
Kanyon Glover has had issues with his heart & continues physical therapy.
Jacob Foreman, chronic back pain and nerve damage in left leg
David Harrison, Carol Miller's brother, on dialysis; paralyzed on one side after stroke; asthma; COPD; has moved to a nursing home; having a good spell right now
Don Culpepper, Carol Miller's brother-in-law, liver cancer returned, receiving radiation and chemotherapy
Val Coates, lots of physical pain
Eddie Ramsey, in hospice care at home; **Sally**, macular degeneration
Pray for **Jonathan Goff**.
Lyle Klein, family member of Amelia Strickland, diagnosed with Parkinson's, cancer, and heart disease
For **Living Word Christian Church;** for **The Lab School**; for all our Scouts and leaders of **Pack 13**, **Troop 13G**, and **Troop 13B**; and for those in the **NA** groups who meet at Trinity

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