

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.

Choose Kindness

I was in my third year of ministry and serving a three church charge outside of Trenton, TN in an unincorporated area called Brazil. Imagine getting that call from your boss. “Sara, you’re moving to Brazil.” It was a quiet little area where everyone knew everyone else and everyone waved at you as they drove by.

Cooper had just been born and wasn’t quite walking yet, around the time for Gibson Wells UMC’s annual revival. I had

strategically lined up preachers for each of the four nights. Strategically meaning, folks I really wanted to hear and enjoyed hanging out with.

On the last night of the revival, the night no preacher wants to preach because it’s got to be really, really good preaching, a good friend, the Rev. Joey Reed, drove in from Jackson to preach. I’ve known Joey since I was in high school and he was doing youth ministry. He’d seen me through a couple of awkward teenage years as I was pursuing a call to ministry, and all of college and seminary, and is (in fact) the godfather of my children. I loved hearing him preach.

That night Joey got going, and he preached...and preached...and preached...and, after 45 minutes of preaching (and this is not the “Methodist way,” even in the rural churches), he finished. It was ‘that’ good, though. I have no recollection of thinking, “When is he going to be finished!?” And, really, I don’t remember much about what he said except for this — this one thing that’s stuck with me for the last nine years — it’s better to be kind, than right.

Last Sunday I primarily preached (a 13 minute sermon — THIS is the “Methodist way”) on the Gospel of John and Jesus being the bread of life. If you missed worship, I encourage you to catch up on our Facebook page. I skirted around touching on the Epistle reading. When Marc read the Epistle reading, however, it stung. Did it ring sharply in your ears as well? If you don’t remember what it was, here it is:

So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. — Ephesians 4:25-5:2

I was sitting pretty until about the third verse. “Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.” Then I was taken aback.

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

We all know it's been a hard year, and it's been a hard year in so many ways. Target didn't have my preferred toilet paper (Charmin Ultrasoft, friends). The kids didn't go back to school. Then the kids DID go back to school. Neither choice was good. We didn't worship in person. Then we did worship in person. Neither choice was [only] good. Thousands have suffered financial stress. People lost their jobs — people we know and love. Things have been hard and when things are hard, tensions are high. Stress levels are high. And, when that's the case, we say things we don't mean. Or, we say things we mean and maybe they're even true, but they are hurtful, mirror gossip, or cause harm.

And even when things aren't *that* hard, but are different — aren't how we'd like them, or want them — it's usually okay as long as we have someone we can blame it on. Isn't that the way? Sometimes. But, it doesn't have to be.

What do we do when we've found ourselves caught in that cycle of disgruntled-ness and worry that leads to gossip, slander, harsh words, and blame? Ephesians tells us that Christ died for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God, so the we might be imitators of him. We are called to rise above the tension, the stress, the hurt, and the disgruntled-ness in order that we can be kind (not necessarily right), tenderhearted, and forgiving as we have been forgiven.

But we're stuck. We are so very stuck.

Here's the grace. There's always grace. We may miss have missed it there in the beginning, but here it is. Ephesians also says "...we are members of **one another**."

Here's now choosing kindness can change it all. Maybe I'm stuck today, caught up in a vicious cycle of worry and stress, lashing out in unkind ways. But, maybe *you* aren't. Maybe *you* can offer words that are kind today. Maybe tomorrow I won't be so stuck and I can offer the words that build *you* up. Maybe, instead of sticking to my guns today, I can relinquish my need to be 'right,' and, instead, choose kindness for the sake of someone else — another member of the body who's stuck in the disgruntled seat. Maybe, just maybe, if we choose kindness, the vicious cycle will dissipate. There'll be no more bitterness, slander, and anger. We'll look more like those who Christ loves. We'll feel more like those who Christ loves. Those around us will know that Christ loves them too.

So, I dare you to choose kindness this week. You may not see the difference it makes in someone else, but it **will** make a difference. I promise that you'll see the difference it makes in you.

In the Peace of Christ,

Rev. Sara

MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS

MEMORIALS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED

IN MEMORY OF **JERI ASHLEY** FROM CAREY & CAROL MILLER

IN MEMORY OF **FRED MARTIN** FROM JANE WALDRIP

Don't Forget the Tiny Pantry!

We may not be using the building right now, but we still have unsheltered or needy neighbors who may come by to look for assistance feeding their families or just themselves. When you have groceries delivered or when you don your mask to brave the grocery store aisles, pick up some canned goods (preferably with pop-tops) that will fit in a backpack or duffel bag, something not requiring refrigeration, especially protein-rich foods such as tuna, peanut butter, or protein bars. Stock the Pantry!





Courageous Women of the Bible

Our FAITH WORD for the month of August in our Children's Sunday School Class is **COURAGE: choosing to act in faith, even when you are afraid**. In this unit we are studying courageous women in the Bible, focusing on three women in particular: Ruth, Esther, and Lydia. In the cases of Ruth and Lydia, we see that everyday people can be courageous and help make a big difference. Esther is often called "the courageous queen."

"Wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God." (Ruth 1:16) These beautiful words, spoken by Ruth to her mother-in-law Naomi, demonstrate both love and discipline. The Book of Ruth is a remarkable and powerful story about family, inclusion, and redemption. Both courage and kindness are themes that run throughout this story.

The dramatic and surprising story that we find in the Book of Esther demonstrates a young queen who speaks out with courage for her people and for her God. She risks her own life by telling the truth and standing up for other people. In doing so, Esther stays committed to her faith and to who she is. She's a wonderful example of doing the right thing, even when it is extremely hard.

In the story of Lydia (Acts 16:11-15), we meet a wealthy and independent woman who sells purple cloth. Unlike the heroines in the books of Ruth and Esther, Lydia has only one speaking line in this story. But she plays an important role and does amazing things, showing courage by becoming a person of faith. Her heart is opened to hearing the trusted words of Paul. She then invites Paul to stay at her house and to spread the message of Jesus to her family, and ends up starting a small church in her home. She courageously follows Jesus; because of her courage, the church grows, and many others become followers of Jesus.

We want to encourage our children to be courageous and kind. We want them to stand up for others in times of need and to do the right thing, even when it is very hard. And we want them to know that they are greatly blessed and called to share Jesus' love with others. This is a big job, right? It requires that those of us who are adults in their lives, whether we are family members or faith family members, model these things for our children and encourage them to do the same. More than anything else, they will learn by doing. May God bless our efforts and theirs.

Peace and love to all,

Irene and Alyson



Church Council Decides to Suspend In-Person Worship Until September 19th

How COVID-19 cases have changed in Shelby County

The number of new COVID-19 cases reported in Shelby County on the fourth day of each month since March 2020.

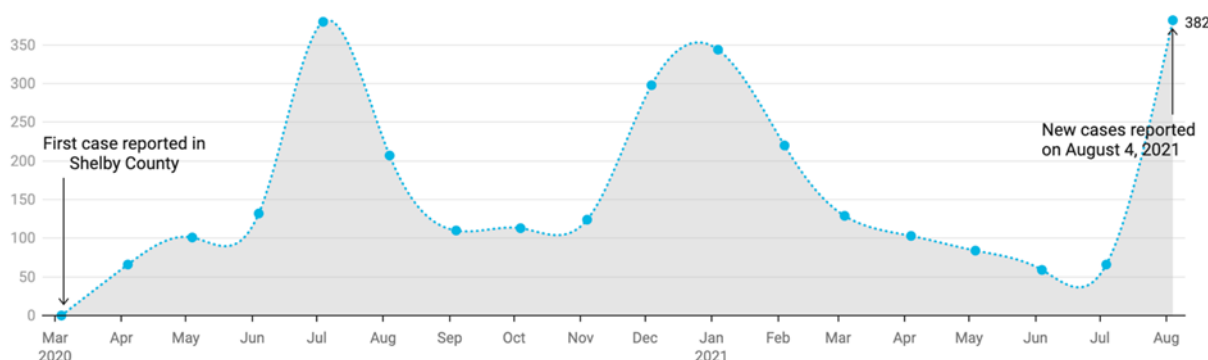


Chart: Elle Perry • Source: Shelby County Health Department data • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

The incidence of COVID-19 cases have increased dramatically over the past two months. When we resumed in-person worship in June, the trend was steadily downward and looked good . . . until it didn't. Beginning in late June, new COVID-19 cases have skyrocketed, principally due to the very contagious Delta variant. With these developments, I felt compelled to call a special Church Council meeting to discuss this issue.

The Trinity Church Council met last Sunday, via Zoom, to discuss the current state of our city and our moral responsibility as a church in regard to worshipping in person and prayerfully considered the following:

- The sharp increase in cases of COVID-19 (Delta variant) in Shelby County has become prevalent and increasingly disturbing.
- There is a cluster of the new Lambda variant of COVID-19 in Shelby County and we are uncertain, at this time, of how effective the vaccine is against it.
- The CDC has offered clarity about COVID-19 being transmissible by those vaccinated.
- The reproductive rate of COVID-19 in Shelby County is at the highest it's been during the pandemic.
- The local and area hospitals are creeping toward being at maximum capacity, including LeBonheur Children's Hospital where two children died of COVID-19 last week.
- There is an important demographic of the population ineligible for the vaccine at the time.
- We are a communal entity with communal responsibility concerning one another, our health, and our well-being.
- We have a moral responsibility to support, in whatever ways we can, our local medical professionals by not contributing to the problem.
- We believe that it is our most important calling to love our neighbor as we, ourselves, have been loved.

The Church Council, after thorough Christian conferencing, has made the following decision:

To suspend in-person worship through September 19th and reconvene, in the same manner, to study the state of the community and the state of the church and decide how we should convene for worship in the next weeks.

During this time, members of the Council have committed to reaching out to those most impacted by not being physically present for worship and to aid in overcoming technological hurdles so that everyone might continue to be connected and corporately worship, although differently. Craig Jordan will be the contact person for these efforts. If you want to be connected but are having difficulties, please contact Craig at jordanck2@gmail.com or (662) 429-0158.

(continued on page 5)

(continued from page 4 - Church Council)

Please understand that this decision wasn't easy. Multiple, often conflicting, concerns had to be taken into account. It was difficult and it doesn't come without some level of grief. Please be encouraged by how hard the Council is working to continue to bring people together, in Christian community, as we pray for an end to this pandemic. There will be more to come on the above matter as plans unfold.

Please listen to your calling post message when it comes. Please, if you are able, offer your help. There are still ways to serve. They may look different, but that's okay. Life is different, at least for now. But the good news is, God is with us and will not leave us to get through this alone.

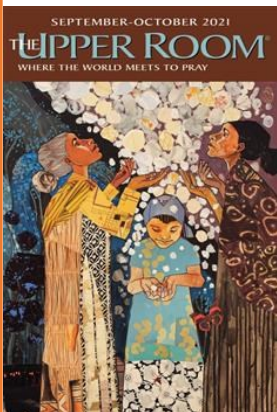
In Christ's love,



Mike Potter, Chairperson
Trinity Church Council

ENews@TrinityUMCMemphis

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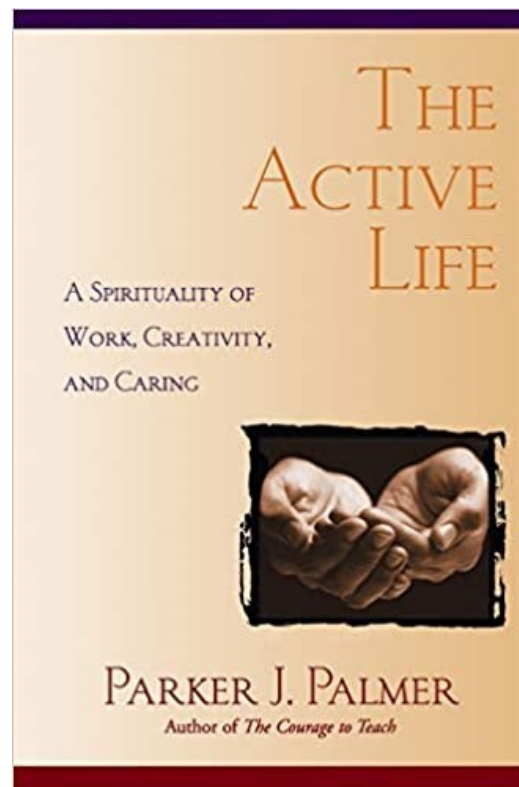
September/October

The large and regular print versions of the latest issue of *The Upper Room* can be picked up from the front porch of the church building. We can also mail you a copy if you cannot get out.

Call 901-274-6895 and leave a message on the church office voicemail or e-mail office@trinityumcmemphis.org. Please be sure to specify the print size: regular or large print. Both can be mailed out right away.



August 4	Lee Johns
August 16	Sean Booth
August 16	Rowan Booth
August 17	Phyllis Hoffman
August 18	Chris Comes
August 28	Reid McClurkan



The Nowlin Class decided that their next book to study would be "The Active Life - A Spirituality of Work, Creativity, and Caring" by Parker Palmer. It can be ordered from Amazon or a bookstore. Mike Potter will lead the study and encourages class members to read the first two chapters before the study starts on Sunday, August 15th.

PRAYER CONCERNS

Our country and the world - for all those in our country and around the world still impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Delta variant; 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 in their first year in office—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 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

Gary Owens, Alyson Foreman's father, age 85, hospitalized for a UTI and pneumonia

Alyson's aunt, **Judy Chapman**, recovering from multiple injuries following auto accident

Kanyon Glover, now 3 years old and doing well: a happy little boy, according to Chris

Donnie Glover, now on oral medication, as well as chemotherapy; needs blood & platelets weekly, but back to driving a truck. (You can't keep a good man down!)

Bobby Glover, Chris' brother, moved to assisted living; pray for his adjustment.

Jacob Foreman, son of **Caley & Alyson**, hip/leg/back and nerve damage issues

Gene & Irene Opel, ongoing medical concerns, but happy they are able to be together

The family and friends of **Jeri Ashley**, as we grieve her loss

David Harrison, Carol Miller's brother, is suffering from a broken hip, many other critical health issues.

Don Culpepper, Carol Miller's brother-in-law, has lung cancer.

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; had to sell home and store her possessions.

Charles Abraham, now at home and using his new ramp for physical therapy.

Val Coates, serious heart condition; still in pain after shoulder surgery

George Marston, undergoing dialysis for Stage V kidney disease; congestive heart failure; COPD

Nancy Rankin, pancreatic cancer, on chemotherapy at home; for **Nelda Gray** as she cares for her

For friends and family of **Fred Martin**, as we grieve his passing

John Stuart, now living with brother **Robert**, both in poor health, but have caregivers

Jean Moss, now at Alan Morgan Health Center in Trezevant View Place on Highland, Room 339

Margaret Rucker, Irene Dycus' sister, moved to assisted living

The family of **Marlon**, a young man from El Salvador who died while traveling to join his family

Phil Isbell, fighting Parkinson's Disease, and for **Kathy** as she supports him

Jim Shaeffer, hospitalized at Baptist Hospital for a broken femur and hip

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