September 11, 2024

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.

State of the Church

As Trinity's pastor, I have the privilege of addressing you with joy today, and in preparation, so that I don't forget anything, as most state-of-anything gatherings go, I wrote a speech.

Eight years ago I was asked to move my family to Memphis to serve a church that had great potential, but needed to right-size its physical plant. So I moved and together we **did** right-size the physical plant. We lost a small handful of members then, but we were faithful. We needed to develop a youth ministry program, so we did. Then they all graduated, but still, we were faithful. We needed to survive (very literally) the COVID-19 pandemic. Like most congregations, we lost 20-30% of our worshiping body, but we kept our heads above water, and ministry, in as many ways as possible, continued. We still served hungry people, giving out food vouchers and engaging our community in keeping our Tiny Pantry stocked. We were still the church, loving our neighbors by limiting our exposure to and spreading of the virus. We pivoted and adjusted how we did things, along with the rest of the world — developing an online worship presence, a digital way of giving our tithes and offerings, and drive-by communion. We came back together smaller, but we were faithful. Toward the end of the worst days of the pandemic, we met in small groups and explored what it would mean to become a reconciling community of faith, vocally and visually devoted to including certain demographics we believe Jesus might consider the least, last, and lost of our community. In our being what we truly believe is faithful to the words and works of Jesus, we lost another handful of members.

It would be easy, after all of the loss, to become disheartened, and we were. Toward the end of 2023, worship attendance was low. Worship itself was quiet. There was quiet concern. We never discussed it, but the unspoken reflection was apparent.

The problem was…..well…..everything we'd done for so long was rooted in faith. We. Had. Been. FAITHFUL. We were radically welcoming, devoted to having a presence at things like Mid South PRIDE to help mend hearts that had so often been broken by the church. We were genuine and authentic about who we are — nothing was, nor has it ever been, a show. Hospitality was never motivated in false pretenses like growing in numbers for the sake of growing in numbers or putting rear-ends in seats. We spent all of last year in discernment about where we are in practical and exploratory ways — evaluating our ministries to decide if we really ARE trying to make disciples, trying to grow people in faith, and trying to include people who haven't been included before, asking, "Are we functioning like a community center or are we functioning like a CHURCH?"

When General Conference happened this year, the United Methodist Church made strides in becoming a church that would both welcome and include ALL people. After this, all the dormant seeds of faith that we'd planted for seven years together (and you for more than that), suddenly began to grow. Our attitude about our church changed — morale took a turn and all of a sudden, our seats weren't as empty. There were children making holy disturbances in worship (just like Jesus would have it). There was interest from the neighborhood to work with ministries like our new,

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full-sized food pantry. Our choir grew — and it grew with young adults! It grew with young adults, literally, from around the world! It was clear that we'd become a safe-haven, and a welcoming home to young people who have an earnest desire for community and spiritual growth. THAT is the Church — making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. All of a sudden we needed high chairs for community breakfast. We needed nursery for Sunday School and worship, and soon we'll need to ask an important question. No, not how to make you leave and go home on Sunday, because you no longer seem to want to go (hallelujah), but **what is next**.

Among our loss was a loss in ministries. Highland Heights UMC closed, and thus did our connectional church feeding ministry, Manna on Mondays. Our Room in the Inn volunteers were vulnerable adults and, with COVID-19, our partnership with Room in the Inn fizzled. We feed people in several different, mostly-transactional ways now, we engage our community in ministry when we know of needs, we host the community for the Evergreen Christmas parade, their community gatherings, and things like our annual Trunk-or-Treat and Easter Egg Hunt. But how else are we meeting needs? What other ministries have we developed to replace those that have died? How are we working, in faith, to heal a hurting world? How are we EACH being invitational? What is next?

We have new faces among us devoted to participating in committee work in the coming year. How are we, some of us who have been here very long, walking alongside them in serving this church? How are we inviting other people to participate? Do not raise your hand except in your head, but raise your mental hand if you have invited anyone to worship in the last month? To Sunday School? To work in the food pantry? To do good things with us in midtown Memphis? When was the last time you witnessed to the work that we do as a church — one of our membership vows? How are we opening the seat next to us and if we are not, WHY NOT? I will not preach (again) but one of my very favorite scriptures is Romans 10 — the ultimate guide to understanding church growth. How can they know if they haven't heard and how can they hear if not told? How beautiful are the feet that bring good news.

Church, everything we have been faithful to do for so long is finally bearing fruit and now we need, again, workers to care for the garden. Workers who will witness to the work of this congregation. Workers who will participate in and attend worship. Workers who will serve on committees. Workers who will help develop new ministries that do the work of God in our community. Workers who will give so that ministry can happen in a practical way. We are of great cheer — often excited to be here — to be a part of something that is bigger than each of us, and we are truly blessed to be able to see the fruits of our faithfulness. But it really is time to ask, what's next?

I am EXCITED, still. I am excited in Year 8, STILL, to be here at Trinity. YOU are excited — many of you who are brand new, and your joy is infectious for those who have been here and watched all of these things and many more happen over the course of many years. You new friends in faith are life-giving, and we could not be happier that you are a part of our family. YOU are excited! You who have been here longer than I have been alive, are excited. You are real. You are honest. You are authentic, imperfect, and on a journey and YOUR joy is infectious enough that others WANT to be a part of your family of faith. Invite them. In all the possible ways, invite them. That is the next faithful thing.

Trinity, thank you for your faithfulness. Thank you for the hard things we have done together. Give thanks for the ministry that was, and is now, and is to come. Like Rosemary Potter always said, God is not finished with Trinity yet.

With excitement,
Rev. Sara

Big Faith

by Irene Dycus

This September our Children's Sunday School Class started using a brand-new curriculum from Cokesbury called ***Big Faith.*** Each quarter of our teaching/learning year, we will study a different BIG FAITH IDEA. For the fall quarter, our BIG FAITH IDEA is **FAITH IN GOD**. The THEME is **MASTERPIECE**, and our FAITH FOCUS is **GOD IS CREATIVE**. Our MEMORY VERSE is Ephesians 2:10: "We are God's accomplishment, created in Christ Jesus to do good things."

Our first two lessons this month focused on the Creation Story in Genesis 1:1-2:4. We saw that God made everything out of nothing. Each day's work was built on the work from the day before. God produced a wonderful masterpiece, a great creative achievement, when He made the earth and everything in it. He acknowledged the goodness of what He had produced throughout the process. At the completion of the sixth day, after He had created humanity in His own image, ***The Common English Bible*** tells us: "God saw everything He had made: it was supremely good." (Genesis1:31)

We talked this past Sunday about what being created in God's image means. Each of us has a special part of us, our soul, that reflects God's goodness and love. We have each received that special gift from God, and because of that, we also have the important job of sharing His love and goodness with others. We practice doing that in Sunday School and with the rest of our faith community so we can go out beyond the walls of our church and do the same with others.

We have done a lot of creative work these two Sundays. The children worked collaboratively to produce a wonderful diorama that illustrates the Creation Story. We took pictures of our class members as they were involved in the process. We thought you might enjoy seeing them. We can all celebrate how beautifully our children demonstrate God's creativity as they use their own talents.

Do you want to make Eagle?

By Rob Landrigan

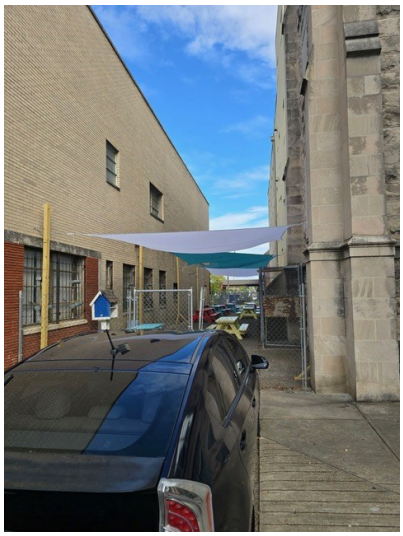
I wanted to share an email I sent to our Scouts this weekend, after two more Eagle Projects were completed. We've had kids earning Eagle starting in the 1920's, every project building back a little bit of what the rest of the world tries to wear down. Never doubt that the space we share with our Scouts is Ministry - what they do, what they find in themselves as they work together and lead others to make a change in the world - is faith in action.

- "I never had a bed that I could call my own."
- "We got to celebrate our community together and not apologize for where we were."
- "I brought my mom flowers from the beds and she smiled like when I used to bring her daisies from the yard."
- "I was able to go to bed and not worry about feeding my children in the morning."
- "No one sees these creatures, but they need love and support, and now we can give that."
- "We have a place to be safe and not have to worry."
- "It looks like a place where a man can eat and feel like a man, not a beggar."

This is why we push. This is why we ask, do you want to make Eagle?

Not for the college applications, not for cool swag - it's because, as an Eagle, you get to learn a bit more about how to make a dent in the universe. You start as Scout, a Tenderfoot, helping on projects more for service hours than for other reasons. And then you find that working together is kinda fun. Building things - building a better world - becomes addictive. So you keep helping, you keep learning, and then, you're sitting in a room trying to figure out why glue is so impossible. How to get sunshades to stay in the air, and not as tablecloths. How DO you sew a squirrel hammock?

And just as you learned how to tie that silly bowline, how to make stew, you found how to make things work.



To help other people at all times - It's the heart of our oath, the core of our promise to the world, and the manifestation of our faith - in our religion, in ourselves, and in one another.

Today Jesse finished his project, and thank you to everyone who painted, sanded, and made an alleyway a banquet hall. River finished her project today, and thank you to everyone who hauled gravel, fought gravity, and shoveled mulch to build an oasis for the hurt.

The world is better because of you.

September Birthdays

Whendy Merryman	September 3
Brad Moritz	September 3
Mike Rice	September 13
Kathy Isbell	September 14
Kate Taylor	September 16
Harper Keller	September 17
Craig Jordan	September 21
Adina Day	September 23
Kadynce Hemingway	September 28
Joe Hatter	September 30

Memorials & Honorariums

DONATIONS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED

IN HONOR OF

Marc & Sue Taylor from Doris Porter

Sam & Sara Goff from Doris Porter

IN MEMORY OF

Carol Bruce from Carey & Carol Miller

Carol Bruce from the UWF

Jim Marston from the UWF

UWF September Meeting

United Women in Faith is back from summer vacation rejuvenated and ready to roll up our sleeves and get back to business. We will meet at noon Friday, 27 September, in the Worship Center for a potluck and the first meeting of our new fiscal year. Katy has the program on the next chapter of 12 Ordinary Men. If you would like to be on the agenda please contact Joan S.

Remember, you need not be a Trinitarian; you need not be a Methodist; you need only be a woman of faith. Come, and you will be welcome.

SPECIAL NOTE: If you wish to contribute to Golden Cross Senior Ministries, "shopping lists" are at the front desk.

Thank You, SPPRC!

The staff of Trinity United Methodist Church thanks the Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee for the sumptuous feast to which we were treated on Thursday, 05 September. From the heirloom embroidered linen to the fresh summer flower bouquets to the delicious food and the personal service we felt truly appreciated. What we do for Trinity we do out of love, but it was wonderful to fellowship with each other and feel that our service is valued. Thank you.

The Tree Whisperer

On Tuesday, October 1st at 6:00 p.m., the Evergreen Garden Club is hosting a special event in Trinity's Center. The focus will be on trees, with the City of Germantown's arborist Wes Hopper as guest speaker. Mr. Hopper is said to be fluent in the language of trees. In 2020, he played a key role in securing Germantown's designation as a Tree City of the World.

Members of the public are invited to attend, and the United Women in Faith will provide refreshments as part of their fund-raising efforts to support our food pantries. (It's not a bake sale; the Garden Club is making a cash gift to support the UWF.)

Mr. Hopper will address tree ownership and who bears responsibility for trimming, damages to property and trees, and other homeowner concerns.

Do you need a name tag? Do you want your name added to the Trinotes mailing list? Do you want to start receiving the ENews? Fill out an attendance form next Sunday to make it happen!

A "Thank You" from BUMM

In the winter of 2020 when Covid was raging, several United Methodists met to talk about the growing needs of the immigrant community in Memphis. Thanks to Luz Campos at El Redentor UMC, we were in touch with families who were desperate for food, rental assistance, and medial care. We established the Immigrant Relief Fund at Trinity and began to raise funds.

Three and a half years later, this fund has provided assistance to a large number of families from Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Cameroon, Afghanistan, and Venezuela. We have paid rent for families who are in substandard housing because there was no other place for them to go. We have paid funeral expenses for families whose loved ones died from Covid. We have collected and dispersed huge boxes of food to hundreds of families. We have transported children and their parents to doctors, to school, and to work. We have connected families to folks who are giving away furniture, even appliances. We have given gift cards in December of 2020 and 2021 to over 100 families so that they could have a small sense of Christmas. Rosemary Potter was a huge part of this effort. We could not have done it without her support and the support of the church office. Even as recently as early July, I took a rent check to a mother of seven whose husband had, not one, but two strokes and was hospitalized at Methodist Hospital.

And, like the loaves and fishes, this fund has stayed solvent! I have no idea how. But I like to think that it's the witness of this church and all of you that has multiplied the fund and kept it going. And lots of prayers!

So, thank you so much. And may God continue to bless the neighbors coming to Memphis from all over the world through us.

— Blessings, Joni Laney

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. David 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:

Shirley Flint, fell at home & sustained head trauma; in Covid Ward at Baptist Hospital
Seth Norton, Raquel's son, ongoing gastrointestinal problems; waiting on MRI results
A PRAISE! **Rev. Sara**, pathology report: margins clean, melanomas GONE!
Family of **Julia Allen**, widow of Dr. Ray Allen, Sr. Mrs. Allen died recently.
Alyson Foreman is home recovering from surgery. She and **Caley** now have covid.
Josh McClurkan, kidney stones.
Adam Hill, serious vein ruptures in legs, much pain (friend of Joan Smith)
From Heather Jacoby-Keller: friend's husband **Eddie** diagnosed with cancer. Heather's sister **Faith** also fighting cancer (for the past year). Please pray for healing!
A PRAISE! Melba Abraham's cousin **Lydia Melton**, has beat cancer once again!
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** passed away August 22nd. Funeral is in Brownsville on the date of this publication.
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
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; now has pneumonia. Carol's step-mother, **Barbara Womack**, in rehab for hip replacement; fell & broke femur.
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
Jonathan Goff, lost half of right index finger due to injury and resulting infection
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.)