



TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Spire

Volume 20, Issue 2

March 2019

Praying for a Hopeful Lent

By James C. Sprouse, Senior Pastor

The General Conference voted Feb. 26 to leave the language in the Book of Discipline regarding LGBTQ persons unchanged for the next four years. Others desired what many consider offensive and hurtful language removed. This story isn't finished. It's part of our denominational struggle in our time and place. Let's learn from a struggle taking place in Jesus' day and time.

As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!" Then Jesus asked him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down." When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, "Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?" Then Jesus began to say to them, "Beware that no one leads you astray. Many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

Biblical scholars often note that the Gospel of Mark actually had two endings. One is found in Chapters 14-16 (the story of Jesus' rejection, crucifixion, and resurrection). The other is Chapter 13, which talks about a period beyond Jesus' resurrection— about the destruction of the Temple and the coming of the Son of Man.

It will be helpful for you and me to not read this scripture as a predictive message for the future, but as a word addressing the issues squeezing Mark's community of faith at the time of the Gospel's writing. The events in today's lesson don't come from some crystal ball of a divine soothsayer but are the fabric of the community's everyday life. The violence of war, the Roman impending destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, the perilous

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existence of the church under persecution, the enticing voices of false prophets and false messiahs were all urgent concerns for the Christian church about 30 years after Jesus' earthly ministry.

The initial words of Jesus' announcing the destruction of the Temple are prompted by a comment from one of his disciples about the beauty of the buildings. Jesus knows how Jerusalem will suffer in the near future, and also how much he will have to personally suffer to accomplish God's purpose for all the world's peoples and all of creation.

The modern church knows plenty about religious controversies and voices that talk a good game, use many of the right formulas, but at heart worship at a different altar. There are many churches who offer a crossless religion, a Christianity without tears; others wed faith to nation and cultural preferences and demand loyalty to some ideology; still others advocate the usefulness of religion arguing for the importance of prayer as an effective means of self-enhancement.

In spite of all that transpires within the world and the global church and the United Methodist Church, we are still invited to be hopeful. Wars, threats of wars, earthquakes, world-wide diseases and famines, denominational controversies, etc., all represent the worldly chaos in which Mark's church and ours find ourselves. The woes may have changed a little or travel under different names, but any church that remains faithful to Christ will always find itself beleaguered and vulnerable.

And yet ... all this chaos is understood to be the beginning of the birth pangs. The image is striking. It takes seriously the reality of human sin and the suffering it causes. There is no denial of life's pain from Jesus. But in the economy of God all our sufferings serve a purpose. They signal the end of a long time of waiting and the coming birth of new life. Our sufferings need not lead to despair, but to hope, to the anticipated dawn of God's new day—a new day of God that we anticipate during this season of Lent, and celebrate on another glorious Easter morning.

Membership Update

New Members

Jennifer Black
Jack & Annette Jewel

Are you moving?

Please send your new address to the church office (703-356-3312 or info@umtrinity.org). Thank you.

This will ensure that we have all the correct information to send news and contribution statements to the correct address.

Together Everyone Achieves More

By Keith Lee, Associate Pastor

Vacation Bible School is scheduled for Aug 5-9 and the theme is *To Mars and Beyond*. VBS is not just one of the large events that we sponsor for the community but a wonderful avenue of interacting, building relationships, serving, and blessing our McLean neighbors. It provides a wonderful opportunity that we should develop to its fullest potential. The biggest obstacle is lack of volunteers. We turn away ten to twenty students every year due to overcrowding. The good news is that we have the TEAM strategy: Together Everyone Achieves More. Basically, it is about recruiting friends, family, neighbors, and coworkers.

In my experience, a major bottleneck to a healthy church life is a lack of volunteers. This is true in growing a church or developing children's programs. Volunteers are difficult to recruit especially in the Northern Virginia area where over-commitment is a way of life. However, a solution might be found in utilizing a network of relationships in our lives. The effectiveness of this was demonstrated by our VBS team leaders, Marci and Jen. I noticed that one of the reasons for the success of Trinity's VBS is that they recruited their neighbors, friends and family members.

This is an excellent approach because, first of all, church members are always asked to volunteer. Many people respond gladly. We intend to keep recruiting from our members. But we encounter limitations due to a finite number of members and conflicting summer vacation plans. Reaching into relationships outside of Trinity has been fruitful; almost half of volunteers and students are non-Trinity members. We would like to continue and develop this approach.

Second, this recruitment of volunteers invites others to share in the joy of serving wonderful children. Almost all of the volunteers including myself, find VBS to be an encouraging and inspiring experience. The energy and excitement, friendly and warm interactions, fun and memorable activities, and serving with other volunteers and students make VBS not just a program but a cherished event. Therefore, it is an opportunity to receive as well as to give.

Third, inviting volunteers is an excellent way to introduce our church. Visiting a new church can be intimidating. However, asking someone to volunteer gives a person a purpose and a time frame to check out our church. It is a neutral form of invitation.

There are many other benefits of recruiting from our personal network of relationships. But the bottom line is the idea of working together, building a team, and creating a cohesive community. To extend this idea further, let us build teams when we take on tasks in life or church because Together Everyone Achieves More!

Letting the Church's Light Shine

By Eileen Gilmer, Associate Pastor

I recently took a class at Wesley Theological Seminary. It was taught a pastor from the United Church of Christ. She had us look at a writing by Marianne Williamson. Here's the passage:

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

— Marianne Williamson, *A Return to Love: Reflections on the Principles of "A Course in Miracles"*

Then, the professor invited us to look at this passage again. This time, she told us to change the subject from being about us, to being about the Church. Let's look at it again:

“The Church's deepest fear is not that it is inadequate. The Church's deepest fear is that it is powerful beyond measure. It is the Church's light, not darkness that most frightens the Church. The Church asks itself, 'Who is the Church to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' Actually, who is the Church not to be? All the members are children of God. The Church playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that others won't feel insecure around the Church. The Church is meant to shine, as children do. The Church was born to make manifest the glory of God that is within all. It's not just in some; it's in everyone. And as the Church lets its own light shine, the Church unconsciously gives people permission to do the same. As the Church is liberated from its own fear, the presence of the Church automatically liberates others.”

When you remember that **we** are the church, this writing takes on even more impact. We are called to be empowered as children of God. As Williamson writes, we were “born to make manifest the glory of God that is within” each one of us. We are liberated by the love of Christ. I invite you to answer the call and live as God's loved and confident child.



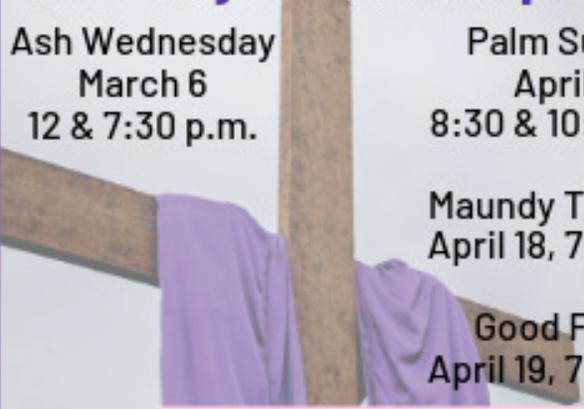
Everyone is welcome!

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper

March 5, 5 - 7 p.m.
Langley Hall

Homemade Buttermilk Pancakes (plain and blueberry), Sausage, Homemade Applesauce, Juice, Coffee and Tea.
Cost: \$5 per person, \$15 per family.
Proceeds benefit Trinity missions.
Sign up in the Fellowship Lobby to help with this event.

Contact Molly Sprouse, 703-356-4896, mollysprouse@gmail.com.



Lent-Holy Week Worship Schedule

Ash Wednesday March 6 12 & 7:30 p.m.	Palm Sunday April 14 8:30 & 10:30 a.m.
	Maundy Thursday April 18, 7:30 p.m.
	Good Friday April 19, 7:30 p.m.

Easter Sunday: April 21
6:30, 8:30 & 10:30 a.m.

What's New on Our Blog: tumcthespire.wordpress.com

Ask Henny

- Henny likes pancakes for dinner <https://wp.me/p3ZFFv-tP>

Crafts for a Cause

- March update: <https://wp.me/p3ZFFv-tU>

Book Chat

- March meeting on the 12th

Music

- Jerry Rich explores why we have choirs and the benefits of them <https://wp.me/p3ZFFv-tS>

Schedule of Events

March 3	Town Hall Meeting 9:15 & 11:30 a.m.	Update from General Conference
March 4	Crafts for a Cause 7 p.m.	https://wp.me/p3ZFFv-tU
March 5	Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper	See details on page 5.
March 6	Ash Wednesday 12 & 7:30 p.m.	
March 6	Widows' Support Group 6:30 p.m.	Meets in the Fellowship Building.
March 10	Martha's Table Sandwich Making Sunday	
March 12	Book Chat 6:30 p.m.	<i>Alone Time: Four Seasons, Four Cities, and the Pleasures of Solitude</i> , by Stephanie Rosenbloom
March 18	Crafts for a Cause 7 p.m.	https://wp.me/p3ZFFv-tU
March 19	Trustees Meeting 6:30 p.m.	
March 31	Stewardship Sunday	
April 14	Palm Sunday	
April 18	Maundy Thursday	
April 19	Good Friday	
April 21	Easter Sunday	

What Just Happened?

March 13

Clergy Session @ 10:00 a.m. & Laity Session @ 7:00 p.m.




The Arlington and Alexandria Districts will host a conversation with General Conference Delegates Tom Berlin and Martha Stokes in order to provide an update on the process and decisions that were reached during the 2019 Special Called General Conference. They will hold a session for the laity from 7 to 9 p.m. at Herndon UMC (701 Bennett St, Herndon). Register at <http://www.novaumc.org/what-just-happened/>.

Trinity United Methodist Church

Sunday Morning Worship Services

at 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School (all ages) – 9:30 a.m. (Sept–June)

Children's Education –10:30 a.m.

Wednesday Communion and Healing – Noon

Celtic Evensong & Communion—5 p.m. (last Sun. of month)

Here to serve Christ and you:

James C. Sprouse – Senior Pastor

Eileen Gilmer – Associate Pastor

Keith Lee – Associate Pastor

Jerry Rich – Director of Music

Michelle Zenk—Director of Children's & Youth Choirs

Harriet Latta – Office Manager

Jose Luis Nuñez-Ruiz – Sexton

Janine Whitfield – Director of Parents Day Out Preschool

Office Hours:

Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

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Facebook: Trinity UMC, McLean

Twitter: [UMTrinity](https://twitter.com/UMTrinity)

Blog: tumcthespire.wordpress.com

Youtube: [UMTrinity](https://www.youtube.com/UMTrinity)

The Mission of Trinity United Methodist Church is to be a vibrant, growing church home for all who seek companionship, direction and inspiration in their lives as they develop a personal, relevant relationship with God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

We are anchored in Scripture and energized by congregational commitment. Trinity Church fosters the Christian values of joy, faith, service, hope and love.



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