

***Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany***  
**January 31, 2021**

(If you are home read the prayers and scripture readings and recite the Creed aloud, even if you are by yourself, in order to hear with the ears each one. Sing or read the final hymn aloud. If you are worshiping in person, please follow along silently.)

**Prepare for worship:** Sit in silence or with soft music for a few moments

**Call to Worship:**

*Make Us One*

Make us one, Lord, make us one;

Holy Spirit, make us one.

Let your love flow so the world will know  
we are one in you.

From *The Faith We Sing*, Copyright 2000, Abingdon Press, 2224.

**Centering Words:**

If someone loves God, they are known by God. Love God, and trust that you are known by God.

From *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2020*. Copyright 2019, Abingdon Press, Used by permission, 26.

**Prayer of the Day:**

When we cry out with words that hurt, silence our cries and speak gently through our words. When we act in ways that hurt, even when help is intended, transform our hurtful actions with your grace. When we forget that we are loved and called to love, love us back into your likeness, that your love may flow freely through us and bring your love to the world. In the holy presence of love we pray as Jesus taught us to pray:

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**The Lord's Prayer:**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

**Affirmation of Faith:** Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

**Prayer of Illumination:**

Open our ears that we may hear and our hearts and minds that we may receive your word O Lord our rock and redeemer.

(After each reading take two to three minutes to reflect upon the meaning of the passage to you today.)

Old Testament Reading

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

Psalm 111

Gospel Reading

Mark 1: 21-28

Special Music

New Testament Reading

1 Corinthians 8: 1-13

Sermon

*Liberty Becoming a Stumbling Block*

**Hymn:**

*All Praise to Our Redeeming Lord*

1. All praise to our redeeming Lord, who joins us by his grace,  
And bids us, each to each restored, together seek his face.
2. He bids us build each other up; and gathered into one,  
to our high calling's glorious hope, we hand in hand go on.
3. The gift which he on one bestows, we all delight to prove,  
the grace through every vessel flows in purest streams of love.
4. E'en now we think and speak the same, and cordially agree,  
concentered all, through Jesus' name, in perfect harmony.
5. We all partake the joy of one; the common peace we feel,  
a peace to sensual minds unknown, a joy unspeakable.
6. And if our fellowship below in Jesus be so sweet,  
what height of rapture shall we know when round his throne we meet!  
From *The United Methodist Hymnal*, Copyright 1989, The United Methodist Publishing House, 554.

**Benediction:**

Let us go forth, not to be a stumbling block to others, but to build others up and bring them closer to the Lord in all we do and say. Amen.

**Response:**

*God Be with You till We Meet Again*

God be with you till we meet again;

by his counsels guide, uphold you,

with his sheep securely fold you;

God be with you till we meet again.

From *The United Methodist Hymnal*, Copyright 1989, The United Methodist Publishing House, 673.

### Leading in Worship Today

Pastor: John D. Jordan AV Assistant: K. C. Warble  
Choir Director: Christopher A. McCroskey  
Church Musician

**“AS MEMBERS OF THIS CONGREGATION, WE WILL FAITHFULLY PARTICIPATE IN ITS MINISTRIES BY OUR PRAYERS...”**

Pam Hook Oren Edwards Patsy Shuler John Ballentine Steve Aiello  
Jimmy Grahl Steve White Esther Carter Latson Lewis George Taylor

**Shut-Ins:** Shirley Butler; Carolyn Hardee; Francis & Gillett Hipp; June Hutto; Georgeann Pace; Shirley Padgett; Jean Raynor; Claudia Sineath; Wayne Tallon; Irvin Wells

**Family and Friends:** **Donna Walker** (coworker of Jack Stevens); **Gil Merrick** (friend of Laurie Knapp); **Kelly Knapp** (wife of Laurie Knapp's nephew); **Paul Kidney** (son-in-law of Charles & Jackie McNeill); **Ruby Pennington** (friend of Laurie Knapp); **Sara Krisnow** (niece of Marty Johnson); **Rick Baldwin** (nephew of Tommy Johnson); **Judy Bauer** (cousin of Marty Johnson); **Iris Turlington** (aunt of John Zeigler); **Billy & Betty Jean Newton** (brother and sister-in-law of Mary Kamoroff); ; **Jimmy Brooks** (Brother-in-law of Boots Morgan); **Tonya Spires** (friend of the Derricks); **J. B. & Stephanie Martindale** (cousins of Christopher McCroskey); **Linda Hargett** (stepmom of Christopher McCroskey); **Ollie Shelly** (friend of the Derricks); **Brenlee Carnes**; **Danielle Spotts** (co-worker of Kathy White); **Vickie Edwards** (neighbor of Kathy White); **Greg Ammer**, **George Duke**, **Debbie Ranck**, **Vicki Beatty**, **Connie Mason**, **Brenda Grier** (friends of Lynn Martin); **Erma Ruff**, **David Price & Family**, **Mark Leonhart**, **Ty Moore**, **Julie Stroud**, **Fran Huck**, **George Dorn** (friends of Kay Jordan); **Teddy Derrick** (uncle of Arvan Derrick); **Haidee Baehr** (friends of Ruth Frady); **Dianne Schmotzer** (sister-in-law of Gale Frady); **Dan Connor**, **Denise Paul** (cousin of Gale Frady); **Billy Johnson**, **Max Johnson** (friends of Gale Frady); **Ray Culbreth's Group House**; **Nellie Gantt** (mother of friend of Ray Culbreth); **Amelia Zinski** (great-niece of Linda Maloch); **Wayne Blair** (son of Dot Johnson); **Xavier Crane** (grandnephew of John Ballentine); **Janet Beck** (friend of Jo Ann Heiting); **Vera Von Glahn** (sister-in-law of Jo Ann Heiting); **Michael Carter** (son of Esther Carter); **Adam Lavender** (son of Phil Lavender)

If you have a friend or family member on the Prayer List, we ask you to please keep us updated. If no word is received, we will trust that our prayers have been answered and remove the name. To update us, please call the office or e-mail us at [trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com](mailto:trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com).

#### OUR PRESENCE ...

In-Person Attendance 01/24 Worship: 17

#### OUR GIFTS ...

General Fund 01/24 \$ 4,378.00

#### OUR SERVICE ...

OUR WITNESS.”

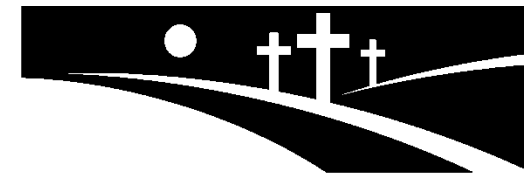


<b>Ministers</b>	<b>The Congregation</b>
<b>Pastor</b>	<b>John D. Jordan</b>
<b>Resident Bishop</b>	<b>Jonathan Holston</b>
<b>District Superintendent</b>	<b>Rev. Dr. Cathy Jamieson</b>

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***Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.***

***Our vision is to Connect, Nurture, Inspire and Transform***



THERE IS BUT ONE  
LORD  
*Jesus Christ...*

1 CORINTHIANS 8:6, NIV

1201 Mohawk Drive  
West Columbia, SC 29169

Telephone: 803.794.7777

E-mail: [trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com](mailto:trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com)

Website: [www.trinityumcwc.org](http://www.trinityumcwc.org)

1 Corinthians 8: 1-13

One of the issues the church in Corinth asked Paul to address was if Christians could eat meat that had been sacrificed to idols. Is this a sin? The meat that was sold in the market was often leftover from meat that had been sacrificed to the images of Greek deities. Also, members of the church might have to attend pagan rites and banquets due to their position in the city. For example, as a city council member you would be expected to attend a city council meeting held at the temple of Athena. Then could you eat the meat that had been sacrificed to the image of Athena?

Paul answers that there is only one God. Idols are only man-made images of gods that really do not exist. Therefore, the meat is not really being sacrificed to a real deity. It seems Paul is saying that it is permissible to eat meat sacrificed to idols.

Ok, in Corinth two thousand years ago it was determined that eating meat sacrificed to idols was not a sin. So what? I don't think that is an issue for us today. I don't think the kid flipping hamburgers at Burger King is sacrificing those hamburgers to some pagan god. How is this relevant to us 2000 years later in West Columbia, SC?

Where this passage becomes relevant for us today is that Paul addresses an issue that goes beyond simply eating meat sacrificed to idols. Paul recognizes that each person has a different moral consciousness; one's warning buzzer about the propriety of one's considered actions. This moral consciousness differs according to where an individual is in their faith and understanding. Also, Paul considered sin to be more relational rather than behavioral. Sin is what leads to broken relationships between an individual and God plus between an individual and others. Sins are what leads to broken relationships, not necessarily specific acts.

Paul is saying to those people with a strong moral consciousness who understand and possess the knowledge that idols are not real gods, that eating meat does not really matter. However, there are those in the congregation that have a weak moral consciousness. They may not fully understand that eating meat sacrificed to an idol is not worshipping the god that idol represents. They may be recent converts who not long before were making sacrifices to that idol. These brothers and sisters may see one eating meat sacrificed to an idol and question if it is permissible to worship other gods. Thus, your liberty to eat meat may become a stumbling block which causes someone else to question the faith. Your liberty may cause someone else to sin, to break their relationship with God.

But notice how Paul makes this point. He sets himself up as an example. Even though he knows that it is permissible to eat meat that has been sacrificed to idols, if there is a brother or sister that might be led astray from God by his action, he won't eat meat. He won't let his action, even though it may be permissible, become a stumbling block to a brother or sister. Paul is challenging those people with a strong moral consciousness to be an example to those who are weak in their relationship with God.

We all have our individual moral consciousness. We may differ in our opinions of what constitutes sin according to our experience and understanding of our relationship with God. We may believe from our experience and understanding of God that certain actions are permissible. However, there may be others whose experience and understanding of God may not be as strong. Our actions could become a stumbling block to their relationship with God.

Therefore, we are an example to others. I remember Charles Barkley saying that he did not want to be a role model. But like it or not Charles Barkley was a role model for many kids. Like it or not we are the role models for others as we re-present Christ to those around us. People look at us and decide about their relationship with Jesus by our actions.

Nothing is more devastating than seeing someone who you admired and respected as a Christian do or condone something very un-Christlike. I had always admired and respected Joe Paterno as a football coach, a man, and a Christian. When the whole Jerry Sandusky situation broke, and the evidence showed that Paterno tried to cover it up, I was shocked and to a degree heartbroken. Ashton immediately dropped Penn State from her list of law schools. Now that did not impact me in regards to my faith for it was well established, but consider the impact that might have had on someone who was seeking God that looked to Joe Paterno as an example. Would they want to follow a god that condones child molestation?

We have liberty for our moral consciousness to be set according to our experience, understanding, and relationship with God. But when we let our liberty become a stumbling block to others in their relationship with God, we sin against Christ for we do not show love and consideration for our brother or sister.

We show love and build others up when we do not exercise our liberty when our actions may become a stumbling block to others. When we say, "I believe this is OK but I won't do it because you do not believe it is OK." We show love and consideration for the other. Our respecting where they are in their experience and understanding of God may lead them to a better experience and understanding of God.

We may use the liberty of our experience, understanding, and relationship with God without restraint, and become a stumbling block to others. Or we may restrain our liberty, showing love and consideration for those whose moral consciousness may differ from ours and be an example of Christ for them.