

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost
July 18, 2021

Leading in Worship Today

Pastor:	<i>John D. Jordan</i>	AV Assistant:	<i>K. C. Warble</i>
Choir Director:	<i>Christopher A. McCroskey</i>	Soloist:	<i>Dan Greshel</i>
Church Musician		Time Together:	<i>Dee Senn; Linda Maloch</i>

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude Christopher A. McCroskey

Centering Words

Call To Worship *“Jesus, Draw Me Close”* Dan Greshel

Opening Prayer
 The Lord’s Prayer 895

*Affirmation of Faith *“The Apostles’ Creed”* 881

Presentation of Tithes & Offerings

Offertory Christopher A. McCroskey

*Doxology *“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”*

Prayer of Illumination

Old Testament Reading 2 Samuel 7: 1-14a 276-277 (O.T.)

*Hymn *“Lead On, O King Eternal”* 580

Psalter Psalm 89:1-4, 19-37 807-808

*Hymn *“How Firm a Foundation”* (vs. 1, 2, 4) 529

Gospel Reading Mark 6:30-34, 53-56 43 (N.T.)

*Hymn *“Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us”* (vs. 1, 2, 4) 381

Epistle Reading Ephesians 2: 11-22 183 (N.T.)

Sermon *Peace for the Far and Near* Rev. John Jordan

*Hymn *“Just a Closer Walk with Thee”* TFWS 2158

*Dismissal With Benediction

*Benediction Response *“God Be with You till We Meet Again”* Dan Greshel

*Postlude Christopher A. McCroskey

VISITORS ARE WELCOME in the service of worship! Please make use of the visitor’s tags (located in the pew backs) to help us better welcome you as a visitor to Trinity this morning. We ask that you also please fill in the pew pad as it passes to register your attendance with us. **Large print hymnals** are available from the ushers.

You may join as a member into the life and work of this congregation by Confession of Faith or by Transfer of Membership from another church. If you would be interested in becoming a member, please speak to the pastor.

Today’s Lovely Flowers are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of her husband, Grover Shuler, by Patsy Shuler.

*The Congregation May Stand

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

Ruth Frady	Tom Lloyd	Daphne Branham	Patsy Shuler	Kathy Aiello
Ted Frady	Oren Edwards	Latson Lewis	Steve Aiello	George Taylor

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

Family and Friends: **Mary Collard** (daughter of Jackie McNeill); **Megan Corby** (daughter of Carlis Edwards); **Aubrey Wall** (daughter-in-law of Tom Wall); **Mitch Kelly** (Dale Wells' nephew); **Chip Hooker** (Wayne Hooker's father); **Robert Bradley** (Business Associate of Simon Ross); **Dave Burrell** (Business Associate of Tommy Gleaton); **Gary Becton** (friend of Mark Branham); **Wade Albert Payne** (friend of Mary Louise Robinson); **Audrey Cassady** (sister-in-law of Mary Louise Robinson); **Rusty Browning** (friend of Erin Derrick); **Monnie Tiller** (friend of Chris Derrick); **Donna Walker** (coworker of Jack Stevens); **Ruby Pennington** (friend of Laurie Knapp); **John Bassett** (friend of Marty Johnson); **Shannon Bassett** (daughter-in-law of John Bassett); **Judy Bauer** (cousin of Marty Johnson); **Betty Jean Newton** (sister-in-law of Mary Kamoroff); **Beth Ann Feimster** (sister of Christopher McCroskey); **Adrin & Linda Hargett** (stepfather and stepmom of Christopher McCroskey); **Danielle Spotts** (co-worker of Kathy White); **Vickie Edwards** (neighbor of Kathy White); **George Duke, Brenda Grier** (friends of Lynn Martin); **Heather Stevens, Ty Moore, 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); **Denise Paul** (cousin of Gale Frady); **Dan Conner, 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); **Vera Von Glahn** (sister-in-law of Jo Ann Heiting); **Janet Beck** (friend of Jo Ann Heiting); **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.

OUR PRESENCE ...

In-Person Attendance 07/11 SS: 14 Worship: 33

OUR GIFTS ...

General Fund 07/11 \$ 3,729.30

OUR SERVICE ...

OUR WITNESS."

Upcoming Events

7/19	Exercise, 10:30 a.m.
7/22	Exercise, 10:30 a.m.
	GLIA Articles Due
7/23	Office Closed

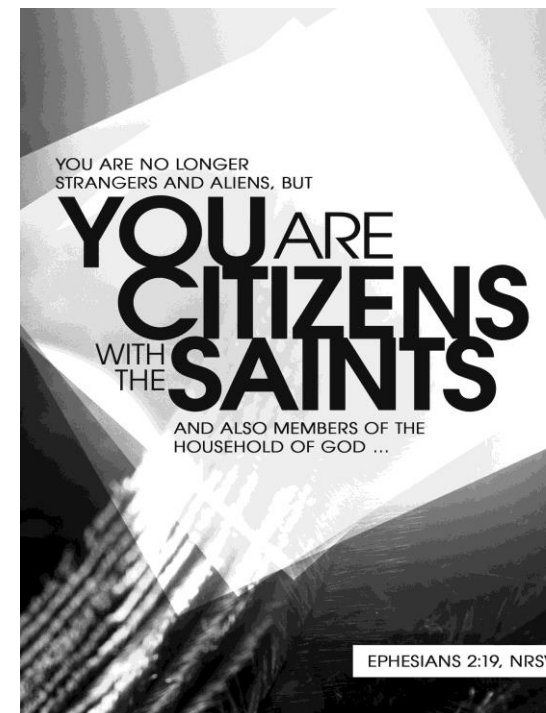


Ministers
Pastor
Resident Bishop
District Superintendent

The Congregation
John D. Jordan
Jonathan Holston
Rev. Dr. Cathy Jamieson

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

Our vision is to Connect, Nurture, Inspire and Transform



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Ephesians 2: 11-22

When we hear the words “far off” and “near,” we tend to think in terms of geography. We think of those far off as being people who live in other countries. We think of those who are near as those in our neighborhood or city. We think of distance.

This passage helped to spark the missionary movement of the nineteenth century. Missionaries were sent to far-off lands to convert the heathen. But this passage was not about geography at all.

The Letter to the Ephesians was written by a Jewish author, presumably Paul, to a mainly Gentile audience. Those who were far off were the uncircumcised Gentiles who were not people of the covenant. Those who were near were the Jews with whom God made covenants to be God’s people. The Jews were near to God while the Gentiles were far off.

This was not just a geographical division. If you enter the temple mount today, you will see the remnants of a stone wall, about a foot or so high. It is believed, with good archeological evidence, that this was the wall built to keep the Gentiles out of the temple proper. A Gentile could not go past this wall without the penalty of death. So a Gentile was far off from the inner temple precincts. They could not come close to God.

But it was not only a physical barrier that kept the Gentiles apart from the Jews, the people of God. There was also the barrier of the law. They would have to be circumcised and follow the Torah completely, including all dietary and cleanliness laws.

So those who were near were the Jews, the people of the covenant, while those who were far off were the Gentiles. We see very much an “us versus them” and an “insider versus outsider” mentality. This is the issue Paul is addressing.

Now we may want to consider who are the “near” in our context today. Obviously, it is those of us gathered here today. It is our fellow church members. It is also other Methodists and other Christians, not just here in the United States, but across the world. We are the ones who are near to God. We are the ones that know Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

But there also may be those who live according to God’s grace who may not verbally confess Jesus, but who are near to God in their own way. We do not know who God may consider close to him.

Then there is the issue of those who are “far off” in our context today. Obviously, there are the heathens. There are terrorists in the Middle East and Africa. There are the Taliban, Al Queda and Boka Haram to name a few. There are those who live in remote places that have never heard God’s word. These are those who are obviously far off.

But what about those who may be close geographically but still far off, like the Gentiles who could be just inches from the entrance of the temple, but still unable to draw closer? There are people who live in our communities but who feel on the outside, or those on the margins of society who feel that they would not be

welcomed in a church. There are people of different races or cultures, people suffering from mental illness and/or disabilities, people whose lifestyles may be different, the poor, people who speak different languages just to name a few. These are some who may be right in our neighborhood but are still far off, who may go by this building every day but feel they cannot come in.

There may even be those in our congregation who may feel far off. Perhaps some have been hurt by the church, such as a comment spoken without thought that some may have found offensive, leading them to leave the church. Some may feel a disconnect between what people say they believe on Sunday morning in church and the seemingly contradictory views they express elsewhere. Some may feel accepted to a point, but are not invited to participate fully in the life of the church. These are all people who may feel far off.

Then there are those who may be feeling far off from God. Perhaps they are wracked by grief or may be going through difficult circumstances and wondering why God, why me?

There are those who are near and those who are far off today. There are those who are near or far off geographically; those who are near or far off by human constructs which divide people, letting some in while keeping others out; those who feel near to the church and those who feel far off from the church; those who are near to God and those who are far off from God.

But through Jesus, all who are near and those who are far off have been made one. For Paul, this meant that the barriers that separated Jew and Gentile were broken down: the wall, the hostility, the law. The Gentiles were brought close to God. The Jews and the Gentiles were no longer separate people but one people.

One people, that is what we are made by Jesus. We who are near and we who are far off are made one. All the barriers that keep us from loving God and loving neighbor are broken down. The human constructs that categorize and divide people such as race, gender, social status, sexual orientation no longer exist. The emotional barriers of shame, guilt, anger and confusion that keep one from drawing near to God are overcome.

This occurs because Jesus brings peace. Jesus brings peace to those who were far off and those who were near. This peace that Jesus brings is not an end to conflicts. We just quit fighting. This is the peace that brings all people in harmony with God. All our lives harmonize with God and God's purpose for our lives. Since we are harmonized with God we become harmonized with each other. Thus all barriers are broken down and we, here in this congregation or participating online, and those far off, in our neighborhood, cities, states, and the world, become one. We become a dwelling place for God. We truly become the church.

One of my favorite things about Annual Conference is the worship services. What I like most is not the preaching, though it is excellent. It is not the singing, though it is uplifting. It is not the processions and liturgy, though I find it rather awesome. What is so great and powerful about the worship services at Annual Conference is simply looking around the congregation.

I look around the congregation and there are people of all races and ethnicities- White, Black, Hispanic, Korean, Native American- all worshipping God. I see people from large congregations like Mt Horeb and Shandon, and small congregations like Mt Pleasant and Shiloh, worshipping together. I see people from city churches like Washington Street and people from country churches like Pond Branch worshipping together. I see people who are in the Wesley Covenant Association and

people in Reconciling Ministries worshipping together. I see people from all walks of life, all political and social persuasions coming together to worship God. I see the true church, the place where all barriers are broken down and all are harmonized in the mission to bring about God's kingdom.

Can we do this at Trinity? Can we be a place where God dwells? Can we be a place where all are harmonized in the mission to bring about God's kingdom? Can we be a place where those who are near and those who are far off may be drawn closer to God?

The answer my friends is yes and no. This passage ends with Paul using the image of a house for God. The Church in Ephesus and wherever this letter was sent, was to become a dwelling place for God. But the last verse, verse 22, reads in the NIV as "And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit." It is the Spirit that draws us all, as different as we all may be, into a dwelling place for God.

So, no we cannot make Trinity a place where God dwells by ourselves, by human means. But the Spirit can make Trinity a place where God dwells, and in many ways it has. We can be further made into a place where all people, those near and far off, can find peace and can be harmonized with God by inviting people, no matter who they are, to come and let the Spirit work within them and us so that we become one people.

Let us pray for the Spirit to lead us. For those of us near, for the Spirit to lead us to those in our lives who may be far off to invite them to come. For those of you who may be far off, if you are participating online or even sitting in a pew, I invite you to come, to draw near to God and be harmonized with God. If you are participating online but do not live in the area, I urge you to find a community where you can be drawn closer to God. Let us come to be one people, a new humanity, God's humanity, to walk closer, dear Lord to thee.