

Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost
October 31, 2021

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude		Christopher A. McCroskey
Call To Worship	<i>“Surely the Presence of the Lord”</i>	Choir
Centering Words		

Opening Prayer		
*Hymn	<i>“There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood”</i>	622

Prayer of the Day		
The Lord’s Prayer		895

Proclamation of the Word

Prayer of Illumination		
Epistle Reading	Hebrews 9:11-14	213 (N.T.)
Psalter	Psalm 146	858-859

*Hymn	<i>“This Little Light of Mine”</i>	585
Gospel Reading	Mark 12:28-34	50 (N.T.)

Anthem	<i>“Sweet, Sweet Spirit”</i>	Choir
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Old Testament Reading	Ruth 1:1-18	236-237 (O.T.)
Sermon	<i>At the Crossroads</i>	Rev. John D. Jordan

Response to the Word

*Affirmation of Faith	<i>“The Apostles’ Creed”</i>	881
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Presentation of Tithes & Offerings		
Offertory		Christopher A. McCroskey
*Doxology	<i>“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”</i>	95

*Hymn	<i>“Pass It On”</i>	572
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*Dismissal With Benediction

*Benediction Response	<i>“Three-Fold Amen”</i>	Choir
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*Postlude		Christopher A. McCroskey
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*The Congregation May Stand

Leading in Worship Today

Pastor:	<i>John D. Jordan</i>	AV Director:	<i>Marie Stiles</i>
Choir Director:	<i>Christopher A. McCroskey</i>	Time Together:	<i>Lynn Martin</i>
Church Musician			

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.

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

Marie Stiles	Bonnie Ramsey	Jeanette Hornsby	Patsy Zeigler	Dale Wells	Charles McNeill
Pauline Wenner	Bill Pearson	Latson Lewis	Irvin Wells	Steve Aiello	Patsy Shuler
George Taylor	Oren Edwards	Billy Pearson			

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

Family and Friends: **Dino & Wanda Moore** (*friends of Tommy Gleaton*); **David Wright** (*friend of Jeanette Hornsby*); **Mildred Hart** (*mother of Dee Senn*); **Bill Areheart** (*friend of Bonnie Ramsey*); **Jimmy Clark, Jonnie Clark** (*friends of Lynn Martin*); **Jane & Bob Bryant** (*sister and brother-in-law of Patsy Zeigler*); **Wessli-Ann Hardee Singleton** (*niece of Lynn Martin*); **Addie Kinard** (*cousin of coworker of Edwa Meek*); **Matthews McCormick** (*brother of Kelsey Tolliver*); **Stuart & Penny Lloyd** (*son & daughter-in-law of Tom & Marilyn Lloyd*); **Cindy Ellenberg** (*friend of Ray Frady*); **Megan Corby** (*daughter of Carlis Edwards*); **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*); **Monnie Tiller** (*friend of Chris Derrick*); **George Rentz** (*father 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*); **Katelyn Rose** (*daughter of co-worker of Kathy White*); **Vickie Edwards** (*neighbor of Kathy White*); **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*); **Walt & Janet Beck** (*friends of Jo Ann Heiting*); **Jeff DuBrul** (*son-in-law of Walt and Janet Beck*); **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 10/24 SS: 9 Worship: 22

OUR GIFTS ...

General Fund 10/24 \$ 2,848.78

OUR SERVICE ...

OUR WITNESS."

Calendar for this Week

11/01 Exercise Class, 10:30 a.m.
11/03 Choir, 6:30 p.m.
11/04 Exercise Class, 10:30 a.m.



Daylight Saving Time ends next Sunday, November 7. Remember to turn your clocks back one hour.



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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Ruth 1: 1-18

This passage is the most familiar from the story of Ruth. Most people can recognize this passage even though they may not know much else from the story. We tend to read this story as one of love and loyalty, with Ruth exemplifying perfect love and loyalty to her mother-in-law, Naomi.

While the love and loyalty of Ruth is an integral part of the plot of the story, it is not the lesson to be learned from the story. Ruth is the story of redemption, not Ruth's redemption but Naomi's. It is a story of restoring and preserving life even when restoration comes in unexpected and unusual ways.

Naomi was married to Elimelech. They had two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. They lived in Bethlehem, which means "house of bread." A famine hits, and there is no bread in the house of bread. They go to the country of Moab.

This move is the first of the unexpected turns in this story. Moabites were considered impure by the Israelites. The Moabites came from the incestuous relations between Lot and his daughters in Genesis 19. The relations between the Israelites and Moabites had always been adversarial. So it would be a shocker to the Israelite audience hearing that these Israelites went to Moab.

Elimelech dies, leaving Naomi a widow. Her sons took Moabite wives, Orpah and Ruth. They remained in Moab for ten years, but during that time, both Mahlon and Chilion died. Though not explicitly stated, one may assume that neither couple had children. Naomi was left in a foreign land with no male relatives to care for her or her daughters-in-law.

Naomi hears that there is once again bread in the house of bread, so she decides to return to Bethlehem. Orpah and Ruth go with her. But Naomi realizes that she has nothing to give her daughters-in-law. She is too old to marry and have children. She is unable to provide any security for Orpah and Ruth. Also, Orpah and Ruth may face hostility and prejudice since they are Moabites.

She tells Orpah and Ruth to return to their homes where they could find husbands and security. Three times Naomi tells them to return home. Finally, Orpah relents and turns back, but Ruth insists on going with Naomi.

At this point, we need to note something. While there is a tendency to look at Orpah as a "bad" daughter-in-law, the writer did not judge Orpah's decision. Likewise, the writer does not put a positive spin on Ruth's decision. There was no cultural or societal mandate that the daughter-in-law remain with the mother-in-law. So, each one's decision was neither good nor bad. Each, in their way, showed their love for Naomi: Orpah by returning to her home, and Ruth by going with Naomi.

Both Orpah and Ruth had to let go to be able to move forward in the story. Orpah had to let go of the relationship she had developed with Naomi and Ruth. For ten years, Naomi and Ruth had been her family. Her day-to-day life was with Naomi and Ruth: grinding grain for flour, baking bread, cooking meals, doing household chores, and gossiping. Her life revolved around these two women. These were women who also knew the grief of losing a husband. To leave Naomi and Ruth,

Orpah had to let go of the strong bond that developed between the three women. By returning to her family, Orpah gained security but lost her relationship with Naomi and Ruth.

On the other hand, Ruth had to let go of the security she would have by remaining in Moab with her family. The Moabites were her people. She could have found a nice Moabite man to marry and be with people who knew her culture and ways. To go with Naomi, Ruth had to enter an unknown land where she might face prejudice and hatred because of her race. Ruth maintained her bond with Naomi but lost security.

Each woman made a decision based on their own experience and values. The writer does not hold Ruth as an exemplary daughter-in-law, nor is Orpah condemned for returning to her family. Neither is judged for their decision. It is simply a part of the plot of the story.

We have times when we come to a crossroads. We have to decide to go in one direction or the other. These decisions may be difficult and have ramifications for our future. Some may be life cycle decisions like what to do after graduation, who to marry, whether or when to have children. Some may be decisions made due to an unexpected crisis like the death of a spouse, losing a job, or a serious illness. We face times when we must make a life-changing decision. Some may be easy, while others may be difficult and distressing.

In making these decisions, we may read scripture and pray for God's guidance. We may read and study about the choices so that we may make the most informed decision. We may ask the advice of others. But in the end, we make the best decision for ourselves. Only we know what is best for us and which direction God is guiding us.

I once had a client questioning a decision she had made in the past regarding relinquishing custody of her daughter. This decision had made the relationship with her daughter difficult. She was beating herself up for making this decision. My question to her was, "Did you make the best decision you could at that time with the resources you had at that time?" She hesitated only a moment before replying yes. She had made the best decision she could at the time, considering the resources she had.

When we make difficult decisions, we may second guess ourselves. We think if I only knew then. The problem with that is we didn't know then. We can only base any decision on what we know and the resources we have at that moment. We have all heard that hindsight is 20-20. Well, hindsight can lead to emotional distress. We can trust ourselves to make the best decision for ourselves at that moment in time.

Orpah and Ruth made the best decision for each of them. Orpah felt it best to return to her family. Ruth thought it best for her to remain with Naomi. Neither was right or wrong. Both did what was best for them.

We must remember that each person does what is best for them according to the direction God guides them. It is easy to condemn someone for making what we may consider a poor decision. But we do not know the circumstances that led to that decision. We do not know what the person knew. We do not know that person's experience. We do not know their relationship with God. We do not know what resources they may have. We cannot condemn those we do not know.

At that crossroad with Naomi, Orpah and Ruth made the best decision for them. The writer did not judge their decision. We make the best decision for ourselves when we reach crossroads in life. We do the best we can and should not condemn ourselves for our past choices. We may learn from them as each choice adds to our experience. As others' decisions are based on their experience, we cannot condemn them. We should only love and support them and be there for them at the next crossroad they reach.