



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

Patsy Zeigler    Becky Derrick    Cristen Hipp    Dale Wells    Patsy Shuler    Christopher McCroskey  
Jimmy Grahl    Latson Lewis    Steve Aiello    Kaye Floyd    John Ballentine    Hilda Edwards  
Jack Stevens

**Shut-Ins:** Shirley Butler; Esther Carter; Gillett Hipp; Linda Maloch; Georgeann Pace; Jean Raynor; Claudia Sineath; George Taylor

**Family and Friends:** **Gary Spence** (former member); **Gloria Erd** (friend of Lynn Martin); **Pearl Geddens** (mother of Tom Geddens); **Andrew Jordan** (nephew of John Jordan); **Beverly Lipscomb** (sister-in-law of John Jordan); **Ross Deal** (grandson of Mary Kamoroff); **Nancy Wilson, Jimmy Dawkins** (friends of Jeanette Hornsby); **David Turner** (brother of Pam Turner); **Chip Mixon** (friend of Tommy Gleaton); **Ron Walker** (friend of Tommy & Chris Gleaton); **Merit Takach** (friend of Joyce and Brent Robinson); **Frankie Hendrix** (cousin of Billy Pearson); **James Boggs** (father of Claire Boggs); **Stacy Coggins** (daughter of Steve Aiello); **Dan & Leslie White** (brother & sister-in-law of Steve White); **Mary Ann Rentz** (stepmother of Marty Johnson); **Alva Humphries** (friend of Marty Johnson); **Bill Areheart** (friend of Bonnie Ramsey); **Hayley Beaudoin** (niece of Edwa Meek); **Addie Kinard** (cousin of coworker of Edwa Meek); **Megan Corby** (daughter of Carlis Edwards); **Chip Hooker** (Wayne Hooker's father); **Robert Bradley** (Business Associate of Simon Ross); **Gary Becton** (friend of Mark Branham); **Florence Lee Carter, Monnie Tiller** (friends of Chris Derrick); **Adrin & Linda Hargett** (stepfather and stepmom of Christopher McCroskey); **Alexa Lookingbill, Lynn Presley** (wives of coworkers of Kathy White); **Teddy Derrick** (uncle of Arvan Derrick); **Haidee Baehr** (friends of Ruth Frady); **Dianne Schmotzer** (sister-in-law of Gale Frady); **Denise Paul, Scott & Karen Nelson** (cousins of Gale Frady); **Dan Conner, Max Johnson** (friends of Gale Frady); **Wayne Blair** (son of Dot Johnson); **Walt & Janet Beck** (friends 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](mailto:trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com).

**OUR PRESENCE ...**

In-Person Attendance 02/26 SS: 14      Worship: 57

**OUR GIFTS ...**

General Fund 02/26 \$ 1,703.10

**OUR SERVICE ...**

**OUR WITNESS."**

**Upcoming Events**

**TODAY** Service for Jackie McNeill, 2 p.m.

**03/06** Exercise Class, 10:30 a.m.

**03/08** T.a.G., 7 p.m.

**03/09** Exercise, 10:30 a.m.

**Readings for March 12**

Exodus 17:1-7

Psalm 95

Romans 5:1-11

John 4:5-42



**Ministers**

**Pastor**

**Resident Bishop**

**District Superintendent**

**The Congregation**

**John D. Jordan**

**Jonathan Holston**

**Rev. Fran M. Elrod**

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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***

Second Sunday  
in  
**Lent**

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Many New Testament writers hold Abraham as an exemplar of faith. In Romans and Galatians, Paul uses Abraham in his argument of justification by faith. Paul argues that, by faith, Abraham aligned his will with God's will. The writer of Hebrews notes that by faith Abraham obeyed God. Abraham obeyed God by going from his country and offering Issac as a sacrifice. The writer of James points out that Abraham acted on his faith in his argument that true faith is manifested by works.

We know that three religions- Judaism, Christianity, and Islam- trace their origins to Abraham. In Judaism and Islam, the basis is the promises made by God. In Judaism, the promise is traced through Isaac, and in Islam through Ishmael. However, Christianity points to the faith of Abraham. Abraham was blessed because he had faith in God and could obey what God commanded.

Before we delve into the faith of Abraham, we must define faith. Most would define faith as belief and trust. We believe in and trust God. But we also have faith in the stock market. We believe and trust that the stock market will go up eventually. We believe and trust many other things, so what makes the Christian faith different, or is it different?

Christian faith is very different from simple belief and trust. John Wesley related, "It (faith) is not barely a speculative, rational thing, a cold, lifeless assent, a train of ideas in the head; but also a disposition of the heart."<sup>1</sup> To Wesley faith was not an intellectual belief, but a condition of the total person- intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. Faith takes us beyond ourselves and our capabilities. According to Paul Tillich, " Faith means being grasped by the sense of the unconditional which is beyond man. In faith one is lifted out of himself; he is gripped by a power not his own."<sup>2</sup> By faith, we receive the power to do what we never thought possible. The Christian faith is an all-or-nothing proposition. It is the giving or commitment of one's whole life.<sup>3</sup> Soren Kierkegaard defined faith as "a leap in the dark and a gamble that there is a God. Faith means betting one's life upon the God in Jesus Christ"<sup>4</sup> Faith is giving oneself over to God completely and without reservation.

Abraham gave himself completely over to God. Abraham's faith was not an intellectual belief. It was not an emotional draw. Abraham was lifted out of himself and gripped by God's power. In the grip of this power, Abraham could let go of his present life in Haran. He could let go of his family ties. He could follow God's command to leave Haran and go to Caanan. He could trust the promise God gave to him even though he would not see its completion. Abraham bet his whole life on God. He let go of everything and made the leap in the dark.

With faith, we can let go. When our hearts are disposed to God and we take that leap into the dark, we must let go. We must let go of our conceptions of God. We must let go of self-control. We must let go of our intellect, our logic, and our reason. We must let go of our emotions: fears, insecurities, anger, and resentments. We must let go of everything we think we know about God and other people. We must let go of our lives and bet it all upon God in Jesus Christ.

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1 John Wesley, "Salvation by Faith" in Kenneth J. Collins and Jason E. Vickers *The Sermons of John Wesley: A Collection for the Christian Journey*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013) 128.

2 William Horden, *A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology. Revised edition.* ( Eugene, OR, Wipf & Stock Publishers: 2002) 178.

3 Ibid, 117.

4 Ibid.

Ah, this letting go is not easy. It sounds easy but it is hard. It is easy to have faith and trust what we can see, hear, taste, touch, and smell. God is beyond our senses. We cannot experience God with our physical senses.

Faith and trust in that which cannot be physically sensed goes beyond our intellect. We cannot understand the mystery that is God. As my theology professor, Dr. Yeago, always said, "If you can wrap your head around it, it isn't God." We cannot wrap our minds around God. We have trouble letting go to something we cannot understand.

We fear that by letting go we will lose. If we let go of the "good old days," we will lose. If we let go of what we had, we will lose what we have. If we let go, we will lose control and that is scary!

We will lose if we let go without faith. Letting go without faith is holding something in your hand with the palm down. When you open your hand and let go, the thing in your hand falls. If we let go without faith, without completely turning ourselves over to God, we will fall. When we try to go through life without faith, without God, we fall.

What happens if we open our hand with the palm up? The thing stays in our hands. Letting go with faith is opening our lives with our palms up. We are the thing in God's hands. God always has the palms up. By faith, we are held in the palm of God's hand. We are lifted out of ourselves and given a power that is not our own. We are given God's power.

Abraham was given God's power to leave his life in Haran and go to the land God promised. Yes, there were times when Abraham's faith may have wavered somewhat, but he never completely let go of it. Even though he did not see the fulfillment of the promise, Abraham kept his faith.

With faith, we are given God's power to accomplish whatever God has for us individually. With faith, and letting go of what Trinity has been, we can become the church God wants us to be. When we let go of pettiness and look to the future with the faith of Abraham, God will only lift us higher, individually and as a church, to accomplish the God-sized mission God has for us. God will lift us up to be what God created us to be.

Let go and bet our lives on God who holds us in the palm of his hands.