

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost
July 30, 2023

Welcome and Announcements		
Prelude		Christopher A. McCroskey
Call To Worship	<i>“Blessed Assurance”</i>	Choir
Greeting		
*Hymn	<i>“I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord”</i>	540
Opening Prayer		
The Lord’s Prayer		895
Proclamation of the Word		
Prayer of Illumination		
Old Testament Reading	Genesis 29:15-28	Pages 25-26 (O.T.)
Psalter	Psalm 105:1-11	828
*Hymn	<i>“Seek Ye First”</i>	405
Epistle Reading	Romans 8:26-39	Pages 149-150 (N.T.)
Anthem	<i>“Victory in Jesus”</i>	Choir
Gospel Reading	Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52	Pages 19-20 (N.T.)
Sermon	<i>“The Kingdom of Heaven”</i>	Rev. John Jordan
*Affirmation of Faith	<i>“The Apostles’ Creed”</i>	881
*Gloria Patri	<i>“Glory Be to the Father”</i>	70
Pastoral Prayer		
Presentation of Tithes & Offerings		
Offertory		Christopher A. McCroskey
*Doxology	<i>“Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow”</i>	95
*Hymn	<i>“I Am Thine, O Lord”</i>	419
*Dismissal With Benediction		
*Benediction Response	<i>“May the Lord, Mighty God, Bless and Keep You”</i>	Choir
	May the Lord, Mighty God bless and keep you forever, Grant you peace, perfect peace, courage in every endeavor. Lift up your eyes and see God’s face and God’s grace forever, May the Lord, Mighty God, bless and keep you forever.	
*Postlude		Christopher A. McCroskey
	*The Congregation May Stand	

Leading in Worship Today

Pastor: *John D. Jordan* AV Director: *Marie Stiles*
 Choir Director: *Christopher A. McCroskey* AV Assistant: *Chris Derrick*
 Church Musician: _____ Time Together: *Wayne & Charlie Hooker*

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.

A GIFT TO TRINITY is given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of **Chuck Martin** on his birthday August 2nd and **George Hardee** on his birthday August 4th, by **Lynn Martin and family**.

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

Patsy Zeigler Becky Derrick Carlis Edwards Dale Wells Patsy Shuler Christopher McCroskey
Jimmy Grahl Latson Lewis Kaye Floyd John Ballentine Jack Stevens

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

Family and Friends: **Bob Bohnstengel** (spouse of Jo Ann Heiting's cousin); **Judy Spence** (former member); **Anne Piercy** (former member); **Missy Abrams** (stepdaughter of Lissa Abrams); **Mary Davis** (daughter of Bob & Libby Strickland); **Kathleen Braun** (sister of Mark Lewis); **Lauren & Leah Grace Edwards** (granddaughter & great-granddaughter of Hilda Edwards); **Gloria Erd** (friend of Lynn Martin); **Pearl Geddens** (mother of Tom Geddens); **Beverly Lipscomb** (sister-in-law of John Jordan); **Ross Deal** (grandson of Mary Kamoroff); **Nancy Wilson** (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); **James Boggs** (father of Claire Boggs); **Stacy Coggins** (daughter of Steve Aiello); **Dan & Leslie White** (brother & sister-in-law of Steve White); **Paula Milhouse** (friend of Marty Johnson); **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); **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**, **Teddy Derrick** (uncle of Arvan Derrick); **Haidee Baehr** (friends of Ruth Frady); **Denise Paul**, **Scott & Karen Nelson** (cousins of Gale Frady); **Dan Conner**, **Max Johnson** (friends of Gale Frady); **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.

OUR PRESENCE ...

In-Person Attendance 07/23 SS: 13 Worship: 36

OUR GIFTS ...

General Fund 07/23 \$ 1,227.67

OUR SERVICE ...

OUR WITNESS."

Upcoming Events

07/31 Exercise, 10:30 a.m.
08/02 T.a.G., 7 p.m.
08/03 Exercise, 10:30 a.m.
08/04 Office Closed

Readings for August 6

Genesis 32:22-31
Psalm 17:1-7, 15
Romans 9:1-5
Matthew 14:13-21



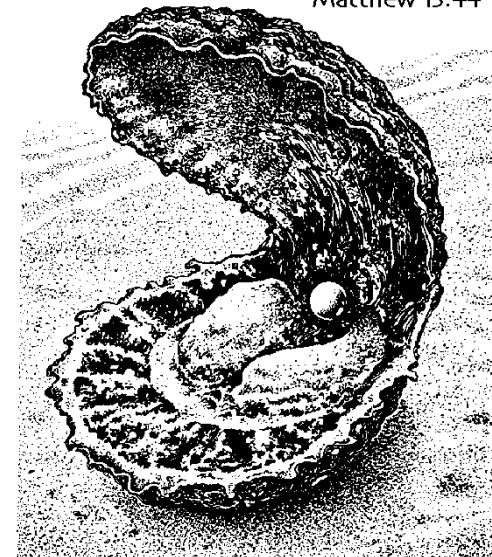
Ministers	The Congregation
Pastor	John D. Jordan
Resident Bishop	Jonathan Holston
District Superintendent	Rev. Fran M. Elrod

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

Our vision is to Connect, Nurture, Inspire and Transform

The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden.

Matthew 13:44



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**Wednesday, August 9
6 p.m.**

The Staff-Parish Committee will meet on Wednesday, August 9, at 6 p.m. The members of the committee are Tom Geddens, Chairperson, Daphne Branham, Becky Derrick, Brandon Jones, Ruth Frady, Chris Derrick and Jeff Portwood.



**Tuesday, August 15
11 a.m.**

The Grief Support Group will meet on Tuesday, August 15, at 11 a.m. in the Conference Room.



**Sunday, August 20
4 p.m.**

As a summer surprise, we will once again be showing a movie in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, August 20, at 4 pm. Join us as we watch the inspiring movie *Jesus Revolution*, which is based on the autobiographical book of the same name co-written by Greg Laurie. The film follows Laurie, Christian hippie Lonnie Frisbee, and pastor Chuck Smith as they take part in a counterculture movement in the 1970s that becomes the greatest spiritual awakening in American history. Gale Frady and friends will be preparing delicious food for you to enjoy as you watch the movie. We look forward to seeing you and your family on August 20th at 4 p.m.!



Sunday, August 27

Taste of Trinity, our church-wide covered dish luncheon, will be held on Sunday, August 27. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to share great food and great fellowship!

Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52

We hear the phrase the Kingdom of Heaven and envision a city in the clouds with pearly gates and streets of gold. I hate to disappoint you, but Matthew is not talking about a city in the clouds.

To understand the Kingdom of Heaven, we must break down the phrase. The Greek word for kingdom is *basileia*. *Basileia* is a noun that has a verbal quality. In this context, it is the reign of heaven, not the place. Heaven does not refer to the sky but was commonly used in Jewish circles at the time to avoid using the divine name. The Kingdom of Heaven is best understood as God's reign or God's rule.

The phrase The Kingdom of Heaven evokes the story of the world. God is the creator and sovereign over all. Anti-God forces, sin, usurp God's rulership. God's will is entrusted by revelation to a community that enters into a covenant to do God's will. The overthrow of the anti-God forces began with Jesus and will be consummated in the future. The Kingdom of Heaven is a dynamic process that is moving through history.¹

Now, let's look at what Jesus says about the Kingdom in these parables. The first is the parable of the mustard seed. A mustard seed is quite tiny. Mustard grows into a shrub about 3-6 feet high. It takes 85-90 days to produce seeds for harvesting. The one who sows the seed must wait for it to produce.

A mustard bush may grow to 9-10 feet but it never grows into a tree. A tree is symbolic of kingdoms, but the Kingdom of Heaven is like a common garden herb. The presence of the Kingdom is in a carpenter's son and common folk like Jesus' disciples. The Kingdom may be overlooked due to its ordinariness.

The second is the parable of the yeast. Ironically, yeast is often symbolic of corruption, as in the yeast of the Pharisees. The woman hides the yeast in three measures of flour, which would be enough flour to make bread to feed 100 people. The yeast permeates the flour until all the flour is leavened. The Kingdom may be hidden working in unseen ways. Even that which may be considered corrupt may be used in the Kingdom. The woman must wait for the yeast to leaven the bread before it can be baked.

These two parables tell us that the Kingdom of Heaven is in the ordinary. The Kingdom comes in ordinary ways that may not be obvious. The coming of the Kingdom is a slow process and one needs to be patient and faithful. By remaining faithful and patient we may see the ways the Kingdom is coming.

In the show, *Finding Your Roots*, Henry Louis Gates traces the ancestry of celebrities, often finding surprising ancestors. Tuesday the show featured Queen Latifa. One line of her ancestry descended from free Blacks dating back to 1770. However, the ancestor they found in the 1770 census as a free Negro was found in the 1765 will of a tobacco plantation owner listed as property to be given to his wife. This ancestor had been enslaved. They found the 1766 Certificate of Manumission, freeing the ancestor from slavery. The certificate read that the owner could not in good moral conscience hold a fellow human being in bondage.

¹ M Eugene Boring, "The Gospel of Matthew," In *The New Interpreter's Bible, Vol. VIII*. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995) 291-292.

Over 250 years ago, one person went against the rule of society and did the right thing. One person followed her moral conscience and followed God's will over society. According to these two parables that is how the Kingdom of Heaven works. The Kingdom is working through ordinary people who defy the norms of society and follow the will of God. The Kingdom will not come with a trumpet sound but through ordinary people letting God reign in their lives.

Let's see what the next two parables tell us about the Kingdom of Heaven. Both have a similar theme. In the parables, the plowman and the pearl merchant find a great treasure and a perfect pearl. What they found was so great, they sold all they had to obtain it.

The Kingdom of Heaven is a great treasure. We find living under God's reign the most wonderful way of life. But to enter into God's reign, we must give up all that we have. We must give ourselves completely to God's will. We cannot live in the Kingdom of Heaven on Sunday and live by the world's rule Monday through Saturday.

The Kingdom of Heaven may be revealed to us in different ways. The plowman was not looking for treasure. He was just doing his job, plowing the field. The plow turns over some dirt and there is a great treasure. What a surprise! The pearl merchant is searching. He is looking for pearls. He finds the perfect pearl, the priceless pearl. He found the pearl he was searching for.

The Kingdom of Heaven may be revealed to us in unexpected ways. We are just going about our everyday business and God's Kingdom is revealed. An offer to teach a Sunday School class began my journey to ordination. We may be searching for God's will or acting in our lives when the Kingdom is revealed to us. Queen Latifa was searching her past and found a monumental moment of God working in her family, the moment her family went from slave to free. The Kingdom of Heaven may be revealed when we look for it or when we are not looking for it.

The Kingdom of Heaven continues to move through history. The Kingdom continues to grow as ordinary people give themselves completely to God's will. We participate in the Kingdom by submitting completely to God's will. As we say in The Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." We pray for God's will to be done in us and the world so God's heavenly kingdom will be on earth, not in the clouds.

The last parable describes the culmination of God's Kingdom. There will come a day when God will once again be sovereign on Earth. God will cast a net over the earth like a net being cast into the sea.

The net being cast is a specific type of net, a dragnet. A dragnet looks like a tennis net. It takes at least two people to operate. The net has weights on the bottom and floats on the top. Two operators take the net out, then stretch it out to its full length. Other operators may help untangle the net if needed. Once the net is completely stretched, the operators drag the net back to shore. Anything that is between the ends of the net is caught. Upon getting the net to shore the fishermen sort the fish in the net. The edible fish would be put in a basket. The others would be tossed back, burned, or buried.

At the culmination of the Kingdom of Heaven, God will cast a net. Those who have been faithful and obedient to God's reign will be welcomed into the Kingdom. Those who were not faithful and obedient to God's reign will be tossed out and burned.

God reveals the Kingdom unexpectedly and as we search. We enter the Kingdom by giving ourselves completely to God's will. We follow God's will in understanding and action. We work as God calls us, to bring the culmination of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Thus we can be placed in the basket of the Eternal Kingdom of Heaven.