

***Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost***  
**November 12, 2023**

***Leading in Worship Today***

Welcome and Announcements  
 Birthday Celebration  
 Prelude Christopher A. McCroskey

Pastor: *John D. Jordan* AV Director: *Marie Stiles*  
 Music Director: *Christopher A. McCroskey* AV Assistant: *Chris Derrick*  
 Time Together: *Ruth Frady*

Call To Worship "Majesty" Choir  
 Greeting  
 \*Hymn "Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory" 717  
 Opening Prayer  
 The Lord's Prayer 895

***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.

**Proclamation of the Word**  
 Prayer of Illumination

"Let the Children Come!"  
*(Those 3 years of age through 8 years of age may go to Children's Church.)*

Old Testament Reading Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25 Pages 211-212 (O.T.)  
 Psalter Psalm 78 799-780  
 \*Hymn "Seek Ye First" 405

Epistle Reading 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 Page 194 (N.T.)

Anthem "Let There Be Peace on Earth" Choir

Gospel Reading Matthew 25:1-13 Page 31 (N.T.)  
 Sermon "The Wise and the Foolish" Rev. John Jordan

\*Affirmation of Faith "The Apostles' Creed" 881  
 \*Gloria Patri "Glory Be to the Father" 70

Pastoral Prayer

Presentation of Tithes & Offerings  
 Offertory Christopher A. McCroskey  
 \*Doxology "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" 95

\*Hymn "Living for Jesus" TFWS 2149

\*Dismissal With Benediction  
 \*Benediction Response "May the Lord, Mighty God, Bless and Keep You" 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

***TODAY'S LOVELY FLOWERS*** are given to the ***Glory of God*** in honor of all ***Veterans*** that have served in the ***U. S. Military***, by the family of ***George Hardee***.

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

Patsy Zeigler    Becky Derrick    Kaye Floyd    Dale Wells    Patsy Shuler    Christopher McCroskey  
Jimmy Grahl    Latson Lewis    John Ballentine    Jack Stevens    Dolly Pearson    Steve White

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

**Family and Friends:** Charlyn McNeill (*sister of Mary Sue Lewis*); Elizabeth Kelsey & Jamie Barnett (*friends of John & Kay Jordan*); Alex Courtney (*friend of great nephew of Joyce Robinson*); Lawrence Gilbert (*friend of Becky Derrick*); 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*); 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 (*friend of Jeanette Hornsby*); David Turner (*brother of Pam Turner*); Ernie & Betsey Hendrix, Chip Mixon (*friends of Tommy Gleaton*); Ron & Janet Walker (*friends 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*); Sweat Family (*friends of Marty Johnson*); Alva Humphries (*friend of Marty Johnson*); Bill Areheart (*friend of Bonnie Ramsey*); David Grandshaw (*brother-in-law 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*); Bernardo Velasquez, 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 11/05 SS: 13                      Worship: 41

**OUR GIFTS ...**

General Fund 11/05 \$ 9,129.04

**OUR SERVICE ...**

**OUR WITNESS.”**

**Upcoming Events**

TODAY Birthday Celebration

11/13 FH Reserved, 6:30 p.m.

11/15 Choir, 6 p.m.

T.a.G., 7 p.m.

11/17 Office Closed

**Readings for November 19**

Judges 4:1-7

Psalm 76

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Matthew 25:14-30



**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***



*Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.*

Matthew 25:13

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# EXERCISE CLASS

The Exercise Class is taking a break for the remainder of the year. The class will resume on Thursday, January 4.



**Tuesday, November 21  
11 a.m.**

The Grief Support Group will meet on Tuesday, November 21, at 11 a.m. in the Conference Room. This group is open to everyone.



**Sunday, November 26**

Taste of Trinity, our church-wide covered dish luncheon, will be held on Sunday, November 26. Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to share great food and great fellowship!



Church Council will meet on Sunday, November 26, immediately following Taste of Trinity.



**Mt. Hebron UMC  
Thursday, November 16  
12 p.m.**

Mt. Hebron will have their annual Thanksgiving Lunch on Thursday, November 16, at 12 p.m. This year, they are opening the meal up to several churches, including Trinity.

Senior Adults (60+) are invited to partake of the lunch that includes Turkey, Ham, Country Style Vegetables with all the fixings prepared by Tyler Jackson. There will be a variety of desserts. The cost of the meal is \$8.00 and a sign-up sheet is on the Gathering Area Table. The deadline to sign up is November 12.



- 12/02** Decorate for Advent and Christmas, 9 a.m.
- 12/17** Christmas Cantata
- 12/24** Lessons and Carols, 11 a.m.  
Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service, 6 p.m.
- 12/25** Christmas Day  
Office Closed

Matthew 25: 1-13

A wedding is usually a joyous occasion. It is a joy for all parties: the bride, the groom, the family, the friends, and the officiant. Weddings consist of rituals and celebrations. The rituals bind the relationship and we celebrate the commitment of two persons to each other. The rituals and celebrations vary among religions, cultures, and locale.

I confess I am no expert on ancient Middle Eastern wedding customs. In this parable, it is customary for weddings to take place in the evening. The people have finished the necessary chores and preparations. The groom and groomsmen gather at the house of the groom's father. The groom's party processes by torchlight to the bride's house. The bridesmaids join them along the route and escort the men to the bride's house. There the wedding rituals take place, and the procession continues to the couple's new home, where the celebration continues.

I suspect this is the wedding custom Jesus had in mind when he told this parable. This parable is part of the Judgment Discourse (23-25). The discourse consists of warnings, woes, and laments on the present age, the time of Jesus, and the coming end-time judgment. The parable uses a common Jewish tradition of comparing wisdom and folly.

The wedding is taking place. It is evening, and the night is falling. The ten bridesmaids take their place along the route the groom will take to the bride's house. They do not know when he is coming, but they know he is coming. Their lamps are lit, ready for his coming. The night draws on, but the groom does not come, and the bridesmaids fall asleep.

Suddenly, at midnight someone shouts, "The groom is coming." The bridesmaids leap up and grab their lamps. The lamps are sputtering and going out because they have been burning. Five bridesmaids quickly refill their lamps with oil they had brought. The other five, seeing their lamps going out, beg for oil from the others. The five who brought oil are sorry, but they do not have enough to share. The other five scurry off to find some oil.

Meanwhile, the wedding procession continues without them. The five who brought oil lead the procession to the bride's house and the banquet. The door is shut, and the banquet begins. The other bridesmaids finally arrive, but it is too late; they are not admitted.

At the beginning of the parable, Jesus tells us there were wise and foolish bridesmaids. All ten had their lamps and were prepared for the procession. They were all at the appointed place to meet the groom. We may assume all were in their wedding clothes. All of them fell asleep when the groom was delayed. The difference was the wise were prepared for the unexpected delay. The foolish filled their lamps according to the timetable and did not prepare for the unexpected delay.

The wise were prepared, not for the coming of the groom, but for the unexpected delay of the groom. The foolish prepared for the expected coming of the groom, but not the delay. The wise and the foolish both had their lamps ready, but the wise had fuel to add in case of delay.

As we wait for the second coming of Jesus and the day of judgment, we want to be wise. We want to be prepared. We want to be ready when Jesus comes.

Many have scoured scripture trying to “crack the code” that tells us when Jesus is coming back, developing formulas based on a literal reading of the symbolism of the apocalyptic works. People have said, “The time is near!” for two thousand years. Many have gathered at the place and time that Jesus was to come, only to be sorely disappointed.

This course of action is foolishness. It is foolish to think creatures can figure out the creator’s plans. Trying to figure out the time and place distracts from preparing for the coming of Jesus. We do not prepare for the coming of Jesus by trying to figure out when he is coming.

Some may say that we should prepare for the coming of Jesus by withdrawing from the world. We should remove ourselves from the evil in the world and create a perfect society. We will read the Bible, sing hymns, and pray all day.

That sounds like a good way to prepare for the coming of Jesus, but that is not how we prepare for Jesus’ coming. Removing ourselves from the world to prepare for Jesus’ coming is also foolishness.

The key thing to have in preparing for Jesus’ coming is faith. We all have faith. We would not be here today or watching online if we did not have faith. Faith is the core aspect of Christianity. It is a religion based on faith. John Wesley defined the Christian faith as:

“not only the assent to the whole Gospel of Christ, but also a full reliance on the blood of Christ, trust in the merits of his life, death, and resurrection; a recumbency upon him as our atonement and our life, as *given for us, and living in us.*”<sup>1</sup>

In the parable, we see faith that is foolish and faith that is wise. All ten of the bridesmaids had faith. All had their lamps. All were ready for the bridegroom to come. The wise bridesmaids fueled their faith, and had oil to add, so their lamps would continue burning. Since they had fuel and their lamps shone brightly, they escorted the groom to the wedding banquet. They fueled their faith.

The foolish bridesmaids had no fuel. Their lamps sputtered and went out. They could not escort the groom and were shut out of the banquet. They did not fuel their faith.

We often fail to fuel our faith. We have points in our lives when our faith is so strong, it is like a blazing bonfire. But if we do not add fuel to the fire, it sputters and becomes rapidly cooling embers. If we do not fuel our faith, it sputters and cools. Trying to rekindle a cold faith is like rekindling a bonfire from just a few embers. It can be done, but it takes a lot of work, and we may miss out.

If we are wise, we continually fuel our faith. We fuel our faith by Bible study. We do not study the Bible to crack some code but to hear through the Scripture what God calls us to do. We pray to converse with God and grow our relationship with God. We pray to hear what God wants us to do, not to tell God what we want to do. We worship individually and communally. We fellowship with others to hold each other accountable, not just to have a good time. We give our gifts of money, time,

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<sup>1</sup> John Wesley, “Salvation by Faith,” In *The Sermons of John Wesley: A Collection for the Christian Journey*, Kenneth J. Collins and Jason E. Vickers, Ed. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013) 128.

and talents to God. We grow our faith. Mark Allen Powell points out, “If people of little faith are able to move mountains, what might Jesus’ followers accomplish if their faith were to grow?”<sup>2</sup>

As our faith grows, we can more precisely hear and do the will of God. We can become fully committed to proclaiming the Gospel to the world and living according to the teachings of Jesus.<sup>3</sup> We prepare by growing our faith so we may clearly hear what God wants us to do, and then we do it.

The NRSV renders verse 13 as “Keep awake, therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.” Keep awake may more accurately be rendered in this context as keep alert. As we grow in our faith, we become more alert to the presence of God in our lives. We are ready for the second coming of Jesus, but more importantly, we are alert to Jesus coming into our lives. Let us prepare ourselves wisely to be alert for Jesus coming to us.

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<sup>2</sup> Mark Allen Powell, *Fortress Introduction to the Gospels*. Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1998) 82.

<sup>3</sup> Donald Senior, *The Gospel of Matthew*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997) 164.