

Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 5, 2024

Welcome and Announcements

Birthday Celebration

Prelude

Christopher A. McCroskey

(As the Prelude begins, prayerfully prepare your hearts and minds for worship.)

Call to Worship

"Eat This Bread"

Choir

Greeting

*Hymn

"Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing"

400

Opening Prayer

Prayer for Illumination

"Let the Children Come!"

(Those 3 years of age through 8 years of age may go to Children's Church.)

Epistle Reading

1 John 5:1-6

Page 231 (N.T.)

Psalter

Psalms 98

818-819

*Hymn

"Spirit of the Living God"

393

New Testament Reading

Acts 10:44-48

Page 124 (N.T.)

Gospel Reading

John 15:9-17

Page 105-106 (N.T.)

Sermon

"Who Are We?"

Rev. John D. Jordan

*Affirmation of Faith

"The Apostles' Creed"

881

*Gloria Patri

"Glory Be to the Father"

70

Pastoral Prayer

Invitation

12-15

Confession and Pardon

Passing of the Peace

Presentation of Tithes & Offerings

Offertory

"Let Us Break Bread Together"

Choir

*Doxology

"Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow"

95

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord's Prayer

Breaking of the Bread

Giving of the Bread and Cup

Prayer of Thanksgiving

*Hymn

Blest Be the Tie That Binds"

557

*Dismissal With Benediction

*Benediction Response

"May the Lord, Mighty God, Bless and Keep You"

Choir & Congregation

*The Congregation May Stand

Leading in Worship Today

Pastor:

John D. Jordan

AV Director: *Marie Stiles*

Music Director:

Christopher A. McCroskey

AV Assistant: *Chris Derrick*

Time Together: *Jack Stevens; Pam Turner*

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 ...

English Pearcy Patsy Zeigler Charlie Hooker Kaye Floyd Patsy Shuler Becky Derrick
Erin Derrick John Ballentine Jimmy Grahl Latson Lewis

Shut-Ins: Esther Carter; Gillett Hipp; Linda Maloch; Jean Raynor; Claudia Sineath; Jan Weaver

Family and Friends: Chantel Griffin (*sister of Erin Derrick*); Russell Eubanks (*son-in-law of Jo Ann Heiting*); Malcolm Skipper (*grandfather of Matthew Skipper*); Logan Sturkie (*granddaughter of Marty Johnson's neighbor*); Bryan Collard (*brother-in-law of Mary Sue Lewis*); 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*); Missy Abrams (*stepdaughter of Lissa Abrams*); Mary Davis (*daughter of Bob & Libby Strickland*); Gloria Erd (*friend of Lynn Martin*); Pearl Geddens (*mother of Tom Geddens*); 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*); Sweat Family (*friends 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.

OUR PRESENCE ...

Attendance 04/28 SS: 12 Worship: 40

OUR GIFTS ...

General Fund 04/28 \$ 3,794.54

OUR SERVICE...

OUR WITNESS.”

Upcoming Events

05/06 Exercise, 10:30 a.m.

05/08 Wednesday's Words, 11:30 a.m.

Choir, 6 p.m.

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

05/09 Exercise, 10:30 a.m.

05/10 Office Closed

Readings for May 12

Acts 1:15-17, 21-26

Psalm 1

1 John 5:9-13

John 17:6-19



Ministers

Pastor

Resident Bishop

District Superintendent

The Congregation

John D. Jordan

Jonathan Holston

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



1201 Mohawk Drive

West Columbia, SC 29169

Telephone: 803.794.7777

E-mail: trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com

Website: www.trinityumcwc.org



MAY 12

Mother's Day is May 12. Time Together will be in their honor.

**Epworth Mother's Day Offering
May 12**

DON'T FORGET YOUR MOTHERS OR EPWORTH CHILDREN'S HOME NEXT SUNDAY! Most of the children served by Epworth Children's Home will not be celebrating Mother's Day with their birth mothers this year. Instead, they will be surrounded by loving staff, and foster parents who walk with them daily to provide spiritual, educational, emotional, and physical support. This offering is our opportunity to support this vital ministry. For more information about Epworth Children's Home, visit them online at www.epworthchildrenshome.org.



A date and time will be announced soon for the Trinity Ladies Group. Contact Marie Stiles at (803) 463-9706 if you are interested in being added to the group email and text for notification.



**Grieving with God
Tuesday, May 14**

All who are on the journey of grief are invited to join us each second Tuesday at 11 a.m. in the Conference Room of the church. We are using the book "Good Grief" by Granger E. Westberg. Copies are available each session and in the church office. Retired Hospice and Palliative Care Chaplain from Richland Hospital, Jerry Fonte, facilitates discussion.



Sunday, May 26

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

Please Note: The Ministry Team will meet immediately following Taste of Trinity.



**Wednesday's Words
Every Wednesday at 11:30 a.m.**

Over the next few weeks, Wednesday's Words will focus on common sayings that might be harmful even though they are not intended to be. Some will be taken from Adam Hamilton's book *Half Truths*, others will be things I have heard people say during my career as a social worker, hospice chaplain, and pastor. If there is a cliché or something someone has said to you that has caused harm, let me know so we can explore what makes some of the clichés we say harmful.

This passage is in the context of the much larger story of Peter and Cornelius. The story begins with Peter in Joppa. Cornelius, a centurion in the Italian Cohort, has a vision. An angel tells him to send to Joppa for a man called Peter. Cornelius sends a soldier and two servants to Joppa.

Peter also receives a vision while he is waiting for lunch. He sees a large sheet coming down from heaven, filled with unclean animals, reptiles, and birds. A voice tells Peter to get up and eat. Peter protests that he has never eaten anything considered unclean. The voice tells Peter, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane." The vision repeats three times.

While Peter was puzzling this vision out, the men Cornelius sent arrived. They called out, asking for Peter. A voice tells Peter to go down and meet them. After hearing of their mission, Peter goes with them to Cornelius' house. He begins telling Cornelius and his household about Jesus.

Before we go any further, let's look at the characters. First, there was Peter. Peter was a good Jew. He was circumcised and obeyed the Torah. Though it is not explicitly mentioned anywhere, we may assume he was baptized. He was one of the first to follow Jesus. Jesus said he would be the rock upon which the church would be built. Peter received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Peter was definitely one God would choose to use.

Cornelius was a Roman. He was a centurion, an officer, in the occupying Army in Israel. He was an uncircumcised Gentile. But he feared God, meaning he held the God of Israel in reverence. He might be what we would call a seeker today. He gave alms and prayed to God. He appeared to be a good man, but not one of God's chosen people. He would not be one circumsied believers think God would use.

The main actor in this story is God. God directs Cornelius to Peter. God gives Peter the vision and the command to eat unclean food. God tells Peter to go to Cornelius. God is very active in this story as we will see.

As Peter tells Cornelius and his household about Jesus, the Holy Spirit falls upon all in the household! They began speaking in tongues and extolling God, just as Peter and those with him did at Pentecost. The circumcised believers with Peter were astounded! They could not believe that the gift of the Holy Spirit was given to these Gentiles. How could these uncircumcised members of the household of an officer of the Roman Army receive the Holy Spirit? They did not think God would give the Holy Spirit to these people, but God did.

Peter, recognizing the actions of God, asks, "Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have? Peter, in essence, asks, "Who are we to withhold the waters of baptism for these people? Who are we to deny this act of God?" So, Peter baptized them in the name of Jesus Christ.

The word translated as astounded in verse 45 literally means to throw out of position.¹ The circumcised believers held the position that one had to be circumcised to be baptized and receive the Holy Spirit. They probably thought they would teach Cornelius and his household about Jesus. He would repent and accept Jesus as his

¹ James Strong, *Greek Dictionary of the New Testament*, In *The New Strong's Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2001) 92.

Lord and Savior. They would circumcise the males and baptize everyone in the household. Then, Cornelius and his household may receive the Holy Spirit. That is how they thought things would go, through the proper procedure.

However, God had a different idea. God gave the Holy Spirit to Cornelius and his household while Peter was still speaking. God threw the circumcised believers completely off their position. They thought God would act one way but God did something completely different.

Peter was astute enough to recognize that God was acting. God gave these Roman Gentiles the Holy Spirit, just as he and those with him had. Later, Peter was severely criticized when he reported to the believers in Jerusalem. Peter told them what happened. He ended the report by saying, "If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God? (11:17)." Peter recognized that this was God's plan. God's grace and Holy Spirit would be given to all people, not just the Jews.

Throughout the Biblical narrative, we see God working in ways and using people that knock us off our position. God used a fugitive murderer to lead the people out of Egypt. God used a prostitute to hide the spies in Jericho. Two women, Deborah and Jael, defeated the Canaanites and killed Sisera. God used foreign rulers for his purpose. The Egyptian King welcomed Joseph's family, saving them from famine. The Persian King, Cyrus, allowed the return of the exiles to Jerusalem. God sent the Son to be crucified so the world might be saved. Now God was giving the Holy Spirit to an uncircumcised officer in the army that was occupying the Promised Land.

God works in ways that knock us off our position. God works in ways and uses people that do not fit our conception of God's chosen. Can we say who can or cannot receive God's grace? Who are we to say who God will or will not use for divine purposes?

I know many have strong opinions about the changes in the Book of Discipline passed at the General Conference. Some see it as positive, some negative. My friends, I am not God. I do not know who God will or will not use. Throughout the many years of this debate, the one question I had to ask was, "Who am I? Who am I to say who God will and will not use?" The answer to that is nobody. God is not going to ask me if I think someone can be used to spread the Gospel.

"Who are we?" is a question we must always ask ourselves. We cannot understand the ways God works. We do not know who God will use or how. We may be thrown off our position but let us be as astute as Peter who recognized, "Who am I to hinder God?"

Who are we? Who are we to hinder God?