

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

Marie Stiles	Marilyn Lloyd	Ruth Frady	Rhett Hook	Libby Strickland	Christopher McCroskey
John Ballentine	Diane Muszynski	Ray Frady	Latson Lewis	English Pearcy	Jeanette Hornsby
Hannah Glanz	Hilda Edwards	Fran Laska	Kaye Floyd	Jan Stamps	

Shut-Ins: Gillett Hipp; Linda Maloch; Jean Raynor

Family and Friends: **Donna Eidson** (former Trinity pastor); **Ghent Brewer** (brother-in-law of Jeanette Hornsby); **Kim & Sandra Meetze** (friends of Martha Cooke); **Dave Griffin** (husband of Chantel Griffen); **Matt Imel** (husband of Holley Gleaton Imel); **Cayla Watters** (friend of Karen Carter); **Tommy Stokes** (nephew of Joyce Robinson); **Kati Flowers** (mother of friend of Blake Kamoroff); **Berry Cochran** (son-in-law of Charlyn McNeill); **Jim Lewis** (father of Mark Lewis); **Christina Lindemuth** (daughter of Karen Carter); **James Leonard** (previous coworker of Mark Lewis); **Kathleen Varnadore** (Ted & Ruth Frady's neighbor); **Paul Frenzel** (friend of Chris Derrick); **Sissy Henry** (former member of Trinity); **Keith James, Jay Clark** (friends of Darlene Kelley); **Sean & Tucker Smith** (cousins of Darlene Kelley); **Sonny Hardee** (brother of Lynn Martin); **Colby Martin** (son of Donna Muszynski); **Lynne Powell** (friend of the Ballentines and Branham); **Bryan Collard** (brother-in-law of Mary Sue Lewis); **Michael McNeill** (brother of Mary Sue Lewis); **Mary Davis** (daughter of Bob & Libby Strickland); **Chuck Hardee** (cousin of Lynn Martin); **Bruce Beatty, Sandra Hornsby, Gloria Erd, Gwen Scott, Dana Ammer** (friends of Lynn Martin); **Nancy Wilson** (friend of Jeanette Hornsby); **David & Kristen Turner** (brother and sister-in-law of Pam Turner); **Chip Mixon** (friend of Tommy Gleaton); **James Boggs** (father of Claire Boggs); **Robert Bradley** (Business Associate of Simon Ross); **Monnie Tiller** (friend of Chris Derrick); **Adrin & Linda Hargett** (stepfather and stepmom of Christopher McCroskey); **Haidee Baehr** (friends of Ruth Frady); **Denise Paul, Scott & Karen Nelson** (cousins of Gale Frady); **Dan Conner, Max Johnson** (friends of Gale Frady); **Janet Beck** (friend 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 01/04 SS: 9 Worship: 37

OUR GIFTS ...

General Fund 01/04 \$ 2,570.00

OUR SERVICE...

OUR WITNESS."

Upcoming Events

TODAY Birthday Celebration

01/12 Exercise, 10:30 a.m.

01/13 Grieving with God, 11 a.m.

01/14 Choir, 6 p.m.

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

01/15 Exercise, 10:30 a.m.

01/16 Office Closed

01/17 The Pines, 2 p.m.



Ministers

Pastor

Resident Bishop

District Superintendent

The Congregation

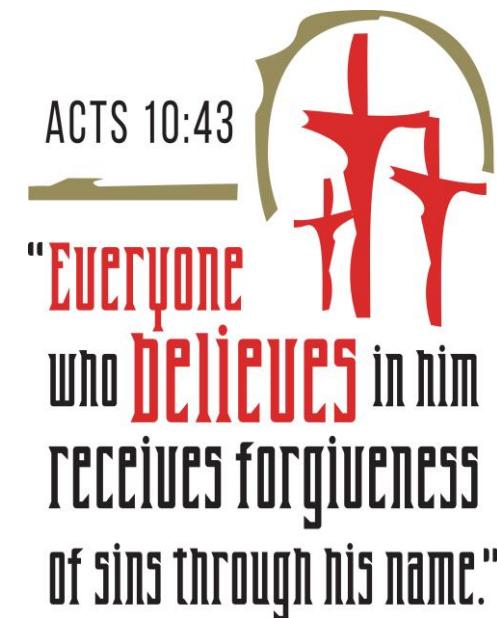
Darlene L. Kelley

Leonard Fairley

Rev. Fran M. Elrod

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

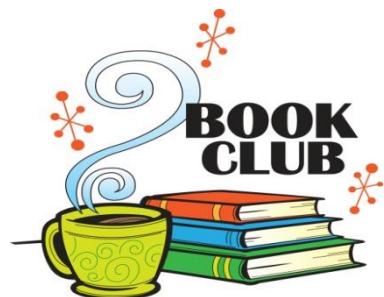
Our vision is to Connect, Nurture, Inspire and Transform





Grieving with God
Tuesday, January 13

All who are on the journey of grief are invited to join us on **Tuesday, January 13**, at **11 a.m.** in the Conference Room. Retired Hospice and Palliative Care Chaplain from Richland Hospital, Jerry Fonte, will facilitate the discussion.



Book Club Dinner
Friday, January 23
6:00 p.m.

Join us for an opportunity to share a meal and time together as we discuss Rabbi Harold Kushner's inspirational book, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. This book will give us a great opportunity to explore some of the questions that plague believers and keep us awake at night: If God is good, and God is omnipotent why does evil exist? Where is God when we feel pain and suffering? Are the bad things that happen to us our fault because of sin? How do we help one another during the difficult and tragic times we all face?

We may not have all the answers, but our Book Club gatherings have been a great opportunity to grow personally and as a community. A meal will be provided, and we will gather in the Fellowship Hall at 6:00 p.m. All you have to bring is an open mind and an open heart. Bring a friend and join us—even if all you've read is the title. What happens at Book Club stays at Book Club, and we hope to see you there!



Saturday, January 24
9:30 a.m.

The Ladies Group will resume Saturday morning breakfasts on the fourth Saturday of January through May. We will again meet at the Lizard's Thicket on Highway #1 in Lexington, at 9:30 a.m. on January 24, February 28, March 28, April 25 and May 23. Jackie will send reminders through her weekly update emails and Marie Stiles will send out an email each month to obtain your RSVP. If you are not on the Marie's group email and wish to added, contact her at 803.463.9706 or mariebstiles@gmail.com.



The Book Swap
In the Fellowship Hall
January 24
12 p.m. – 3 p.m.

For children and adults!

Bring your used books to swap! If you bring books ahead of time, please leave them on the stage. Please contact Kelsey Jones with any questions 803 460 6670.

“Whoever Believes”

(Read Acts 10: 34-43)

This is the word of God for the people of God! Thanks be to God! Let us pray: Heavenly Father: Please let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

The New Testament reading for my message this morning that I just read to you is from the fifth book of the New Testament, the Acts of the Apostles, often known simply as the Book of Acts. I will just refer to it as the Book of Acts going forward. I believe that the Book of Acts is one of the most exciting books in the Bible because it chronicles one of the most exciting chapters in the history of the Christian Church: the spread of the Christian faith throughout the Mediterranean region following the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

And I admit that the Scripture that I read is confusing for many of you because it plops you down in the middle of a scene, does it not? It begins with Acts 10: 34 saying, “Then Peter opened his mouth and said...”

Well, I can read to you again what he said, but most of you are probably wondering, “Okay: Who was Peter talking to? What was the setting?”

I will therefore give you a brief version of the backstory. God sent two of His believers, one Jewish and one Gentile, or non-Jewish, visions, and He sent these visions to them right about the same time. The Jewish believer was Peter. The vision that Peter saw was of a giant blanket descending from Heaven and on it was a scene worthy of Noah's Ark! The blanket contained many species of animals: Mammals, birds, bugs, you name it! The one thing that this menagerie of animals had in common was that devout Jews like Peter had been taught from the Books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy in the Old Testament not to eat them because they were unclean.

God told Peter in the vision to eat of the animals that were on the blanket, but Peter told Him, “No,” that he had been taught not to eat those animals because they were unclean. God corrected Peter and said, “Nothing that I have created is unclean.”

At the same time that Peter had his vision, an angel of the Lord visited another believer in God, this one a Gentile. His name was Cornelius. He was a Roman. Moreover, Cornelius was a Centurion in the Roman Army, which meant he was a high-ranking officer, someone who was battle-tested, having spent many years fighting for the Roman Empire. But the unique thing about Cornelius was that he believed in God. Most Romans at the time of the crucifixion of Christ worshipped the Roman gods. We do not know how Cornelius came to believe in and worship God, but he did.

The angel informed Cornelius that his faithfulness was not lost on God. He instructed Cornelius to have some of his men go get Peter and bring him to Cornelius's household to hear what Peter had to say.

Now we are at that moment when Peter is standing before Cornelius, his family, his servants and the soldiers who serve under him. The first verse of our Scripture Lesson this morning, Acts 10: 34, has Peter saying, “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality (or, favoritism).” Peter begins his sermon to the household of Cornelius with what will be his central theme. He goes on to say in the next verse, “But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.”

Peter now knew that Cornelius, despite being a hated Roman soldier, believed in God and had given money to the Temple in honor of God. Peter now knew what that strange and wondrous vision that God had sent him of the giant blanket with all the many animals meant and what God meant when He said that nothing that He has created is unclean. The variety of animals symbolized the variety of people. Peter, like the rest of his fellow Jews, had been brought up to believe that Gentiles- people who were not Jewish-were unclean.

God had made Peter see that God's grace is for everyone, regardless of what race you are, regardless of what country you were born in, and regardless of the color of your skin: God's grace is for everyone who believes in Him.

Peter continues in Acts 10: 36: "The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ- He is Lord of all..."

In that verse, Peter succinctly reminds us that Jesus is not only our Savior but our Lord, too. We are to not only look to Jesus for our salvation but we are to obey Him as if He is God because He is God, the second member of God's Trinity.

In Acts 10: 37-38, Peter says, "that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him."

Here, Peter briefly described what Mary Sue read to us in our Gospel reading, when John baptized Jesus in the Jordan and the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus in the form of a dove. That scene that Mary Sue read to us is a unique and breathtaking one in the Bible, for we see the coming together of God's Trinity: We hear the voice of God the Father declaring, "This is my Beloved Son," we see God's Son, Jesus, having been baptized in the Jordan, and we see God's Spirit, the Holy Spirit, descending from Heaven onto Jesus.

In Acts 10: 37-42, Peter gives his audience an abbreviated version of the Gospel. In Verse 39, he says, "And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree." There are two important points that Peter is getting across in that verse to his audience: He and his fellow disciples were eye-witnesses to all the things that they saw Jesus do and the things that were done to Jesus. Peter is lending authenticity to the Gospel story. "We saw it all," Peter is saying. "These are not cunningly devised fables," as Peter would later write in 2nd Peter 1: 16. And the second point is that Jesus was killed by crucifixion.

Peter goes on in Acts 10: 40-41 to point out that God raised Jesus from the dead three days after He had died. Peter points out that Jesus revealed that He had risen, although not to everyone, just to those who had been chosen by God: The disciples and the women who went to the tomb. They were the witnesses of Jesus's Resurrection. In Verse 41, Peter points out that Jesus even ate and drank with them, a direct reference to Luke's description in his Gospel of Jesus dining with His disciples after He had been resurrected. This is not an insignificant detail that Peter shares. He is stressing that this was not a ghost whom he and his fellow disciples saw. Peter is stressing the fact that Jesus had been resurrected in both body and in spirit. Jesus was hungry and He was thirsty following His resurrection. A ghost neither hungers nor thirsts. This reinforces the fact that Jesus is 100% God and 100% Man.

Then Peter proclaims in Acts 10: 42 that Jesus commanded Peter and his fellow disciples to spread the word that Jesus is risen, which is the main theme of the Book of Acts. Moreover, Peter says in that verse, "...and to testify that it is He (meaning Jesus) who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead." Peter reinforces here the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

And then in Acts 10: 43, Peter's last verse in his brief sermon circles him back to the theme of his first verse. Peter says, "To Him (that is Jesus) all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him, will receive the forgiveness of sins."

Peter opened his sermon to Cornelius by stating that God shows no favoritism. He finishes his sermon by stating that whoever believes in Jesus will receive the forgiveness of sins.

Let those two words sink in for a few seconds: "Whoever believes." That is what Peter meant when he said that God shows no favoritism. God does not favor Jew over Gentile, or Gentile over Jew. God does not favor one race, one skin color, or one nationality. He does not

favor the rich over the poor, nor the poor over the rich. What matters to God is that you believe in Jesus's Name, and when you do, you receive the forgiveness of your sins.

It does not matter how broken you are. It does not matter if you feel as though you have hit rock bottom. It does not matter how little you have sinned nor how much you have sinned. It does not matter if you feel unworthy. Whoever believes in Him, Jesus Christ, the Son God, receives the forgiveness of sins. As Peter said: Whoever believes.

When Peter and Cornelius met, it marked an important turning point in the history of our fledgling Church. Although old habits would prove to die hard for some of the early Jewish Christians, going forward the emphasis would not be on your nationality or your race or how you were raised. The emphasis would be on what you believe. Do you believe in the Name of Jesus Christ? Do you believe that He came to save you from your sins and that He took the penalty for your sins on the cross? And that after He died, God raised Him three days later and He appeared in the flesh before many of His original followers? And that He will return again?

Whoever believes in Him, said Peter, receives the forgiveness of sins.

Do you believe in Him, Jesus Christ? If you do, your sins are forgiven.

In Jesus's Name. Amen.