

God's Love In Action

**GLIA: the essential element, or glue,
which connects the tissue found in the nerve centers of the body**

Trinity United Methodist Church, 1201 Mohawk Drive, West Columbia, SC 29169

Pastor: *John Jordan*

Office Manager: *Jackie Eitel*

Music Director: *Christopher A. McCroskey*

Office Hours: 8:30 - 4:30 M-F

Sunday School 9:45 a.m. **Worship Service** 11:00 a.m.

The mission of Trinity United Methodist Church is to:
To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Phone: (803)794-7777

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Website - trinityumcwc.org

MARCH 2023



On Souper Bowl Sunday, February 12, the youth collected \$372.55 in donations to benefit God's Helping Hands. Our thanks to all for your generous donations.



The Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee will meet on Wednesday, March 15, at 6 p.m. in the Conference Room.



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

The Grief Support Group will now meet on the third Tuesday of every month. For March, it will be on Tuesday, March 21, at 11 a.m. in the Conference Room.



Instead of purchasing lilies this year, we ask that you give an honorarium or memorial for a loved one. All money given in lieu of lilies will go to **United Methodist Committee on Relief Advance # 982450 Turkey/Syria**. It will provide assistance to those in Turkey and Syria recovering from the earthquakes. **We would like to have all donations in by Monday, April 3.** A special insert listing memorials and honorariums will be in the bulletin on Easter Sunday.



Sunday, March 26

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



Sunday, March 26

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

April Events



All Holy Week Services will begin at 6 p.m. Holy Week Offerings will go to God's Helping Hands.

Sunday 04/02 Mt. Hebron UMC

Monday 04/03 Cayce UMC

Tuesday 04/04 Brookland UMC

Wednesday 04/05 Shiloh UMC

Maundy Thursday Service at Trinity, 6 p.m.

Good Friday Service at Trinity, 6 p.m.

Easter Sunrise Service at Trinity, 7 a.m.



George Taylor, Jr.
Ray & Gale Frady
Lynn Martin
Jeanette Hornsby

Carolyn McDonald
Jim & Marie Stiles

Amber Kirby
Wayne & Charlie Hooker

Melton Martin
Lynn Martin
Linda & Bryant Lindsey
Addie Jo Thomas
Lynn Scott
John & Patsy Zeigler
Shirley Roof
Jeanette Hornsby
Joyce Robinson
I. D. & Mary Hook
Jean Raynor

Jackie McNeill
Jo Ann Heiting
Tom Geddens
Jeanette Hornsby
Lynn Martin
Marty Johnson
Joyce Robinson
Pam Turner
Wayne & Kay Johnston
John & Patsy Zeigler
I. D. & Mary Hook
Jean Raynor
Ray & Gale Frady
Wayne & Charlie Hooker
Mary Kamoroff
Bonnie Ramsey

June Hutto
Mary Kamoroff
Wayne & Charlie Hooker
Jo Ann Heiting
Bonnie Ramsey



WE EXTEND OUR CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY to:

Kelsey Tolliver and family on the death of her cousin, ***Amber Kirby***, on Friday, February 3.

The ***family of Jackie McNeill*** on her death on Monday, February 13.

The ***family of June Hutto*** on her death on Wednesday, February 22.



Each month we highlight the birthdays of those who are turning 85 or older. There are no birthdays for March.

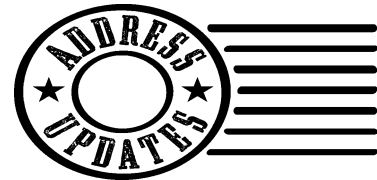


Dear Becky and everyone at Trinity Church,

Thank you so much for our Valentine Card and Candy.

Love, Bobby & Karen Snelgrove

Thank you Father for all our blessings thru Trinity UMC. Please bless all in a very special way. Amen.



PLEASE MAKE THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS CORRECTIONS IN YOUR DIRECTORY:

Jenna Driggers (previously listed as Prevuznak)
1725 Deer Path Drive
Mt. Pleasant, SC 29464

George Taylor
C/O Lewis Boatwright
131 Beck-Taylor Place
Lexington, SC 29073
(803) 359-9323

And finally, ***Congratulations to Matthew Skipper*** who just purchased his first house. His new address is:

192 Twisted Hill Road
Irmo, SC 29063

John's Jotting

Dispelling Rumors

This article is much longer and more detailed than my usual GLIA article. In light of all the “news” about what is going on in the United Methodist Church over the issue of homosexuality and disaffiliation, I wanted to present to you what The Book of Discipline and the South Carolina Annual Conference say on these issues.

Last month, I wrote about the damage done by rumors. Presently, there are many rumors about what is happening in the United Methodist Church. These rumors deal with issues regarding homosexuality and churches disaffiliating. These rumors are damaging our church's mission to make disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world. I want to present the facts to clarify these issues and dispel rumors.

We will examine the United Methodist Church's present stance regarding homosexuality, same-sex marriage, and the ordination of homosexuals. Then we will look at the disaffiliation process established by the called General Conference in 2019 and the process established by the South Carolina Conference this year. Finally, I will comment on what I think Trinity should do in response to this controversy.

The United Methodist Church is ruled by the Book of Discipline (BOD). The BOD was established by the Christmas Conference in 1789 in Baltimore, MD. Since then, a General Conference has been held every four years to review and make any changes to the BOD. Only the General Conference can make changes to the BOD. However, there are six restrictive rules (paragraphs 17-22) that can not be changed.

The 2020 General Conference has been postponed until 2024 due to the CoVid pandemic. Therefore, the present rule is the 2016 BOD as amended by the called General Conference in 2019. Nothing in the BOD can be changed until the 2024 General Conference. The United Methodist Church's stance on homosexuality is according to the 2016 BOD as amended in 2019. (From this point on the abbreviation BOD will refer to the 2016 BOD as amended.)

In paragraph 161. G the BOD states that all people are of sacred worth and created in the image of God. The paragraph continues to say, “The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers it incompatible with Christian teaching.” The paragraph ends by saying, “We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian or gay members and friends.” This paragraph is in the Social Principles section of the BOD. The Social Principles are not considered church law but are guiding principles for ministry. You do not have to agree with the Social Principles to be a United Methodist.

Regarding the ordination of homosexuals, Paragraph 304.3 reads, “Self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be considered as candidates, ordained and ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.” A self-avowed practicing homosexual means that a person openly acknowledges to a bishop, district superintendent, District Committee on Ministry, conference Board of Ministry, or in the Clergy Session of the Annual Conference. Anyone who admits to being a homosexual can not be ordained or serve in The United Methodist Church. Being accused of being a homosexual without proof or self-avowal does not keep someone from being ordained or serving. Also, a Bishop is prohibited from commissioning or ordaining a self-avowed practicing homosexual even if they had somehow passed through the Board of Ministry and Clergy Session.

Regarding same-sex marriage, the BOD states that ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions, including marriage, shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches (Para. 341.6) Conducting ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions, or performing a same-sex wedding is a chargeable offense (Para. 2702.1b). The 2019 General Conference added that the penalty for performing a same-sex marriage is a minimum of one-year suspension without pay for the first offense and termination of ministry and revocation of credentials for a second offense. Before 2019 there was no specified penalty for performing a same-sex marriage.

To sum up, according to the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, homosexuality is considered to be contrary to Biblical teaching. Self-avowed homosexuals are not commissioned, ordained, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church. Celebrations of same-sex unions or marriages are not to be performed by United Methodist Clergy or in their churches. This is the present church law and cannot be changed until the 2024 General Conference.

The 2019 General Conference added paragraph 2553 to the BOD entitled Disaffiliation over Human Sexuality. This paragraph reads, “A local church shall have limited right to disaffiliate from the denomination for reasons of conscience regarding a change in the requirements and provisions of the Book of Discipline in regard to homosexuality or the ordination or marriage of self-avowed practicing homosexuals as resolved and adopted by the 2019 General Conference or the actions or inactions of its Annual Conference related to the issues which follow.” A local church may disaffiliate under this provision if there are changes in the BOD regarding homosexuality with which they in good conscience do not agree. If the Annual Conference or Bishop allows the ordination of self-avowed practicing homosexuals or same-sex marriages, then a local church may disaffiliate as a matter of conscience.

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To disaffiliate the local church shall inform the district superintendent who shall call a church conference. A Church Conference includes all professing members of the church. A resolution to disaffiliate must be approved by a 2/3 majority of all professing members present and voting at the church conference. The church shall retain all real and personal property. The church shall pay all unpaid apportionments and an additional 12 months of apportionments. The local church shall pay withdrawal liability as set forth by the Board of Pensions. The local church shall satisfy all debts, loans, and liabilities or assign them to a new entity. The Judicial Council (the Church Court) ruled that the disaffiliation process is finalized when approved by a simple majority of the Annual Conference. In the South Carolina Conference, Bishop Holston, the Cabinet, the Board of Ministry, and the District Committees on Ministry upheld and enforced the BOD. No changes in the BOD have been made nor has the Annual Conference or Bishop acted against the BOD. To disaffiliate under para. 2553, the local church must disagree as a matter of conscience with the BOD. Some churches, in anticipation of the 2024 General Conference, have pressed to disaffiliate. Because the bishop and conference are upholding the law many of these churches agree with, they do not meet the reasons of conscience requirement para 2553 sets forth. This has led to rumors that the bishop is “holding churches hostage” by not allowing disaffiliation under this paragraph.

In response to churches desiring to disaffiliate, the bishop and cabinet developed a plan of discernment for disaffiliation. This plan is based on para. 2549 addressing church closures. The property, real and personal, of a local church is held by a trust clause to the Annual Conference. Upon the closure of a church, the property goes to the Annual Conference. The Conference may use the property for a new church or sell it for a new faith community or ministry.

The discernment process begins with the church council asking the district superintendent to call a Church Conference. Before the Church Conference, the church must complete a 30-day process of discernment to consider if it can continue to function as a United Methodist Church. The church must be able to meet the following financial obligations:

- 1-A tithe equaling 10% of the appraised value of all church property and assets.
- 2-All unpaid apportionments from the prior year and year of closure to the date of the Annual Conference.
- 3-Twelve months of additional apportionments.
- 4-All unpaid clergy salaries and benefits to the clergy appointed.
- 5-All withdrawal liability for unpaid pensions.

Other financial considerations and legal liabilities such as the dispositions of loans, debts, leases, endowments, foundations, and cemeteries must be satisfied or transferred to a new entity. At the Church Conference meeting a 2/3 majority of all professing members present is required to declare that the church can no longer function as a United Methodist church. Once the vote takes place and the terms of Separation are satisfied a Resolution to Close can be made to the Annual Conference. There is no sundown in this process, which means that a church can still disaffiliate under this provision after 2023.

What does this mean for Trinity? What action do we need to take? As the pastor, my advice is nothing at this time and to wait until the 2024 General Conference. We do not know if there will be changes in the BOD. We do not know what direction any changes may take. The Conference may go in a Traditional direction or a Progressive direction. Changes may be minor or major. We need to focus on how God is calling Trinity to carry out our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Pray for our church and denomination so we will go in the way God wants us to go and do what God wants us to do.

Shalom,

John

There have been a few other rumors floating around regarding this issue. One is that there will be a deluge of LGBTQ persons wanting to be ordained in the UM church. According to a recent Gallup Poll, about 7% of the population of the US identify as LGBTQ. Statistically, only 7 of every 100 ordinands will be LGBTQ. Given the pain, this controversy has caused over the years the numbers are probably much less.

Another is that churches will be forced to accept a homosexual pastor. Nothing could be further from the truth. The bishop and cabinet spend a lot of time and effort to match the right pastor to the right church. It would be harmful to appoint a homosexual pastor to a church that is not ready for one, both for the pastor and the church.

These are just a couple of rumors out there. If you hear a rumor about disaffiliation or anything else affecting Trinity call me so we find the truth.