

# Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany

February 16, 2025

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

Greetings, Announcements & Prayer

\*Call to Worship  
We are children of God,  
**called to love, called to be loved.**  
We are God's church,  
**people gathering together to seek God, to praise God.**  
We are God's children,  
**yearning to be healed, yearning to be loved, yearning for peace.**

\*Opening Hymn "Praise the Lord Who Reigns Above" 96

\*Opening Prayer

**Holy God,**  
**We stand in your presence filled with regret for our many sins and failings. Though there is greatness in us, and a deep longing for goodness, we have often denied our better selves. Help us to hear your voice calling us to rise to the full height of our humanity, for there is weakness in us, as well as strength. Be with us as a strong and wise friend, and teach us to walk by the light of your truth. Amen.**

\*Psalter Psalm 1 (Response 2) 738  
\*Affirmation of Faith "A Statement of Faith of the United Church of Canada" 883

\*Gloria Patri 70  
**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.**

Passing of the Peace

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

Anthem "People Need the Lord" Choir

Scripture Readings Jeremiah 17:5-10 Page 680 (O.T.)  
1 Corinthians 15:12-20 Page 167 (N.T.)

Gospel Reading Luke 6:17-26 Paged 63-64 (N.T.)

Homily "Blessed" Rev. Darlene L. Kelley

\*Hymn "Blessed Assurance" 369

Pastoral Prayer  
The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

Presentation of Tithes & Offerings

Offertory Christopher A. McCroskey

\*Doxology 95  
**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him all creatures here below; praise him above ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen**

\*Closing Hymn "Victory in Jesus" 370

\*Benediction  
\*Benediction Response "May the Lord, Mighty God, Bless and Keep You" Choir & Congregation

\*Please Stand As You Are Able

## Leading in Worship Today

Pastor: Rev. Darlene L. Kelley AV Director: Marie Stiles  
Music Director: Christopher A. McCroskey AV Assistant: Chris Derrick  
Liturgist: Dan Greshel Time Together: Pam Hook; Joyce Robinson

**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.

**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 ...**

Hilda Edwards Patsy Shuler Marilyn Lloyd Tom Lloyd Ruth Frady Christopher McCroskey  
Kathy Aiello Diane Muszynski Latson Lewis English Pearcy Ray Frady Hannah Glanz  
Kaye Floyd Libby Strickland

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

**Family and Friends:** **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); **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 Branhams); **Bobby Johnson** (friend of Billy Pearson); **Rev. Donna Eidson** (former pastor of Trinity); **Ima Thibodeaux** (friend of Christopher McCroskey); **Keith Jordan** (nephew of John & Kay Jordan); **Ann Cullum** (friend of Bob Strickland); **Malcolm Skipper** (grandfather of Matthew Skipper); **Bryan Collard** (brother-in-law of Mary Sue Lewis); ; **Charlyn McNeill, Michael McNeill** (sister & brother of Mary Sue Lewis); **Missy Abrams** (stepdaughter of Lissa Abrams); **Mary Davis** (daughter of Bob & Libby Strickland); **Chuck Hardee** (cousin of Lynn Martin); **Bruce Beatty, Sandra Hornsby, Gloria Erd** (friends 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); **James Boggs** (father of Claire Boggs); **Bill Areheart** (friend of Bonnie Ramsey); **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](mailto:trinityumcwc@sc.rr.com).

**OUR PRESENCE ...**

Attendance 02/09 SS: 8 Worship: 30

**OUR GIFTS ...**

General Fund 02/09 \$ 7,334.83 Souper Bowl: \$121.85  
Chiefs \$81.00 Eagles: \$40.85

**OUR SERVICE...**

**OUR WITNESS.”**

**Upcoming Events**

**TODAY** Safe Sanctuary Training following Worship

**02/17** Exercise, Class, 10:30 a.m.

Hot Topics & Cold Beer, 7 p.m.

**02/19** Choir, 6 p.m.

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

**02/20** Exercise Class, 10:30 a.m.

GLIA Articles Due

**02/21** Office Closed

**02/22** Valentine's Party @ The Pines, 2 p.m.



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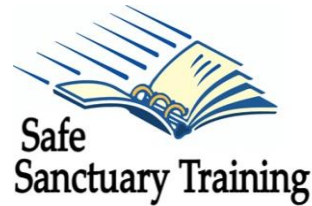
Jesus Christ

inspire and



*“Blessed are you*  
WHEN PEOPLE HATE YOU ...  
BECAUSE OF THE  
**SON OF MAN.**  
*Rejoice in that day ...*  
BECAUSE  
GREAT IS YOUR  
**REWARD IN**  
**HEAVEN.”**  
**LUKE 6:22-23, NIV**

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**Safe Sanctuary Training today right after church!**

Rev. Laurie Brandes will be with us following worship to help us update and review our Safe Sanctuary policy. This is an important opportunity, and Rev. Brandes promises to make it short and sweet! (You'll be watching sports on TV by 1:00).

There will also be brunch goodies, so come have some good food, good fellowship and gain some good information for our community.



**Monday, February 17**

The group will meet at WECO on **Monday, February 17, at 7 p.m.** If you have any questions, please see Slone Taylor or Patsy Boggs. If you are interested in attending and would like email or text message updates, please email Slone Taylor at [Slonetaylor21@yahoo.com](mailto:Slonetaylor21@yahoo.com) or text her your cell phone number to (803) 397-7294 and she will add you to her list.



**Valentine's Party at The Pines**

**Saturday, February 22**

**On Saturday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 1:45, the church bus will leave Trinity for a 2:00 p.m. party at The Pines.** We'll be heading to The Pines to spread some love and Valentine joy. Our visit will only last 45 minutes, so we will be cleaning up and leaving by 3.

We cannot bring in any homemade goodies, but we can bring store-bought items, cards and any small gifts we feel appropriate. Spread the word and lift our community and church outreach in your prayers. We can be the hands and feet of Jesus, and there are lots of folks right around the corner who could use a kind word. **See you on Saturday, Feb. 22<sup>nd</sup>!**



**Sunday, February 23**

Taste of Trinity, our church-wide covered dish luncheon, will be held on **Sunday, February 23.** Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to share great food and fellowship! **Please Note:** The Ministry Team will meet immediately following Taste of Trinity.



**COLUMBIA COMMUNITY CONCERT BAND'S WINTER CONCERT**

**FEBRUARY 23, 2025, 4:00 PM**

Our 44<sup>TH</sup> season continues as we present our winter concert on Sunday, February 23, 4 PM, in the Auditorium at Airport High School. The theme for this concert is Circuses, Dances and Galops which includes a variety of music from Cirque du Soleil, Barnum & Bailey's Favorite, William Tell Overture, movie theme from The Greatest Showman and so much more. We hope you can join us for this fun afternoon of music celebrating the sights and sounds of the circus!



**Advocate Community Listening Session**

**Monday, February 24**

**6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.**

You're invited to an Advocate Community Listening Session! Tell us your thoughts about the Advocate over pizza and help us learn how we can serve you better. Sessions are being held in every district. The Columbia District event is being held at Mr. Hebron UMC on Monday, February 24, from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Join Rev. Darlene Kelley, who serves on the Board of Trustees for the Advocate, and share your thoughts on what they can do to improve

Trinity UMC  
February 16, 2025  
Rev. Darlene L. Kelley

## Blessings

If you are hanging out with Matthew, you climb a little higher up the hill to hear Jesus share blessings with the crowd at the Sermon on the Mount. While we are traveling with Luke, we follow Jesus to a level place and hear his blessings from the Sermon on the Plain. Either way, we may want to sit a while and quiet the chatter in our souls and take in a blessing from the Son of God.

Cokesbury, the publishing house of the UMC, produces a quarterly bible study, and the one that includes this week's lesson also covers background information on these blessings, the Beatitudes, as they are called. The study defines "beatitude", stating: *At it's simplest; beatitude is a declaration of divine blessing. The words are clear-cut and straightforward, but their meaning is surprisingly breathtaking...A divine blessing is a gift of God's favor. It conveys happiness, satisfaction or pleasure that is based on who God is, not on the contingent circumstances of the person receiving the blessings.*<sup>1</sup>

That's good news. It's not about us. It is a divine gift of God's favor.

Indeed, retired pastor and author of the study, Von W. Unruh, goes on to explain that though the Beatitudes are one of the most familiar passages of Scripture in the New Testament, they are often misunderstood.

Despite their popularity in Christian circles, the Beatitudes are often misinterpreted as eight characteristics that people who want to become Christians, faithful disciples of Jesus, need to adopt. That is, if we want to be numbered among God's people, we need to hunger and thirst after righteousness or have pure hearts or be peacemakers.

In truth, like so much that Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, the Beatitudes are intended to be words of comfort and grace. It is often the case that when we entrust our lives to God, problems ensue. To persons who are living rightly but find that they are also experiencing evil or struggling with persecution, Jesus promises that God rewards faithful perseverance with incredible blessing.<sup>2</sup>

I want to take that in for a moment because it spoke to me. Rev. Unruh is telling us that Jesus wasn't making demands, he was trying to ease the pain he saw on the faces in the crowd. Jesus is offering a blessing. Can we open wide our arms to take it in?

We often interpret "religion" as a test of punishment and reward, sin and righteousness, with a finger pointing God running a system based on score keeping and ultimate judgment. Yet, in my own experience that way of thinking hinders my walk with God and cripples my ability to feel God's love and take in God's blessing.

I had a great therapist who once taught me that when you build a wall of protection to keep the bad things out, good things can't get in either.

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<sup>1</sup> Von W. Unruh, Adult Bible Studies, Vol. 33, No. 3, Spring 2025, Cokesbury.

<sup>2</sup> Von W. Unruh, Adult Bible Studies, Vol. 33, No. 3, Spring 2025, Cokesbury.

Accountability is crucial, of course, and confession is not only good for the soul, it is part of our practice in Christian life. Yet, the cornerstone of our faith is love. You have to feel worthy of God's love to see the grace and for as many reasons as there are souls, people often don't.

My good friend, Rev. English Percy, turned 90 years old on Friday, and he said something wonderful a few months ago that I'll never forget and that I've thought of several times since. Our beloved English said, "Everybody deserves a loving God."

Jesus is offering a blessing. Can we open wide our arms to receive it? Can we feel God's love?

Everybody deserves a loving God...turns out even me.

And I learned something while we were away recently in Puerto Rico. I learned how much I need that blessing, that grace, that love that is God. It is love that heals. I've learned that over and over and so often the hard way. I learn it still.

Not long ago, I learned that even in Paradise, I can struggle.

But I have to start the story by telling you that my mother was crazy and deaf in her left ear. And if you were wondering—that's not a good combination, but it explains a few things. I grew up in a house full of screamers. Everyone yelled in our family. We were loud people. So I grew up loud.

It also turns out that I talk a lot when I'm nervous, and I've been nervous for much of the past 65 years. So, that 's a combination. Loud words and lots of them. Now I'm not saying I haven't made the best of it, nonetheless.

Now, I'm pretty light hearted this morning about those character traits, but I can assure you that I've felt shame in my life...more than once...shame at being loud...shame at talking too much. Shame and shamed. And if you've ever felt shame, and it can be hard to escape...if you've ever felt shame, you know...shame can leave a little dent in your armor. Given the right circumstances, shame can wound you.

So there I was on holiday in a beautiful place, with a loving husband who is sweet to me, nothing on my body hurt, nothing to worry about...there I was in paradise, sitting next to Superman, with all to be thankful for and not a cloud on the horizon...and a family walked by and all of a sudden...I was overcome with anger and bitterness and some mix of unpleasant emotional anxiety because I heard a woman's voice, and it was a bit loud and she was having a grand time and going on a bit...and all of a sudden, I left paradise completely and took myself down a dark hole.

And I'm embarrassed to tell you that it took longer than it should have for me to figure out that the sound of the woman's voice triggered me, bumped a wound, a sore spot in my psyche that roared and bared its teeth before I knew the darkness was there lurking and ready for an opportunity. The dis-ease of my soul, was triggered, and I was momentarily soul-sick in paradise.

*They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them*

(Luke 6:18 & 19).

It may have taken me a little longer to get to a better place than I would have liked, but I know the way—the way is Jesus. When I surrender those feelings to God, when I take a moment to sit with the feeling and go beneath it to the pain...then I can open wide my arms for God's healing and God's blessing.

But I need to pay attention. I need to look at my feelings like Sherlock Holmes looks at a clue, and I may have to sit with the feeling to figure it all out, what exactly I'm feeling or fighting feeling. I have to remember it's not the feeling that will kill me—it's running from it that will.

So, I might have to sit quietly in the sand for a bit. I might have to ask myself a few questions. I may have to be honest about why the family at the beach is annoying me so much. What is it about the woman? I hear her voice. Is she loud? Is she talking a lot to her son? Would I rather feel mad at her than feel the shame of my own voice? Am I mad at the woman or mad at myself? Can I feel the pain underneath the anger? Can I surrender these feelings to God?

I may have to wait until Superman falls asleep and do a little more praying and a little more remembering and a little more weeping for the child who grew up in a loud house with a crazy mother. I may have to learn once more the hard way that healing is a process that never ends, but I am not alone because I am a child of God, and I can climb up that hill or walk to that plain and hear Jesus say, "Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh."

I can sit quietly and take a few deep breaths and surrender to God because one of the only things I'm certain of is that God is love and love heals. And I am in need of healing.

And when I can feel God's love cover my own wounds, I can move more easily toward compassion for the suffering of another. And then the whole world is healing.

As all the best mystics will tell you, prayer and suffering are both roads to God, and our suffering connects us. Our shared suffering can help redeem us.

So whether we climb the hill or walk to the plain, let us remember Jesus heals wherever he goes. So, can you sit for a minute? Can you find the silence and listen for God's voice? Can you hear your blessing?

Let us pray: God of grace,

Help us to sit with our pain long enough to learn from it.

Give us the courage and the quiet to contemplate and teach us the ways of healing, that we might help heal our community, for we surrender all in the name of the One who came to heal the world, Jesus the Christ. Amen.