



Monthly Tidings

TRINITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH • TALLAHASSEE, FLA. • VOL. 7, NO. 4 • APRIL, 1980

A Holy Week Meditation:

A Lovely Thing

By Liz Smith

The final week of Jesus' life was so crowded with events and people of all kinds that it is difficult to single out any special one. I've chosen a rather minor happening that perhaps we overlook in the great swirl of tragedy and bitterness, intrigue and betrayal that marks Holy Week. We find it described in the 26th chapter of Matthew:

"Now when Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came up to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at table. But when the disciples saw it they were indignant, saying, 'Why this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.' But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, 'Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a lovely thing to me.'"

I think I am drawn to this brief story because it is, indeed, what Jesus called it: the account of a lovely thing. And in the days of Holy Week there were so few of those kinds of events that it stands as a light in the darkness, and I think has several things to say to us today.

First, it speaks of the extravagance of love. This was indeed a very expensive gift. Some accounts state that it was worth about 300 denari, a working man's wages for a full year, or in another account it is stated that this sum would be sufficient to feed the five thousand! But she gave it gladly because it was the most precious thing she had to give. Real love never tries to figure out how little it can give and still feel righteous about the gift. Rather, love motivates us to give the best that we have and still feel the gift inadequate! We have a lot to learn about giving if we are busy calculating how little we can decently give.

The second thing the account shows us is that there are those special times in everyone's life when the extravagance of love is more important than the economics of common sense. If you have ever been privileged to give or receive such a gift you know how precious and enduring it is. And these are not just gifts of material things, far too expensive, yet given with great love. The offering of our belief and faith in someone against all odds can be an enormously impractical yet priceless gift. Time, that we don't have to spare, yet given to a friend anyway, can be a treasured present. To have gone through life and never experienced the particular joy of this kind of giving would be tragic.

The third thing it teaches us speaks the most forcefully to me because I see it so clearly in my own life. And that is that there are some things that can only be done once, and to miss the opportunity to do them is to miss that chance forever.



Each of us can think of at least one occasion, if not several, when we had an impulse to say something to someone, or give them a gift, or do something for them. And to do it without calculating the cost; just to reach out in love in some special way, but we hesitated. And then the moment, the circumstance, the person and time were gone, and no amount of apologizing or giving in some other way later could ever make up for that lost chance to do the lovely thing.

This obscure woman didn't hesitate when her chance came; she gave everything she had in love and Jesus needed that gift at that moment. His own disciples had missed their chances all week; they were asleep when he needed them as he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. Judas, who could have given the gift of loyalty and real love, betrayed him for silver. And Peter withheld the gift of himself when his support and presence would have been an extravagant measure of his love.

But are we so different? I think that it is Holy Week so often in our experience. We let him enter the gates of our lives, waving palm branches, pledging our allegiance, seeking his favor, proclaiming him king. But then he also comes into our attitudes about things and people and we are not so sure anymore that we want him in our world. He examines the innermost temples of our hearts and sees the things that we worship, and when he throws them out we react angrily and Holy Week is enacted over and over again within us.

But as he forgave those men and women of long ago, so we are forgiven and given the opportunity to do the lovely thing. Remember that he said, . . . "inasmuch as you do it unto the least of these . . .," words that are so familiar we lose their significance. For whenever we reach out and give without calculating the cost, when we listen or care or go the extra mile we are doing a lovely thing for him, and we bring some light into the darkness of the Holy Week events of our lives and move toward the hope and newness of life that is Easter.

General Conference To Be on Cable Television

United Methodists will have an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church by watching two hour-long television programs summarizing actions of the Conference which begins April 15.

The programs will be aired locally by Clearview Cable Television on Cable Channel 11 at 5 p.m. on April 23 and 30, respectively, according to the Rev. John W. Harrington, secretary of communications for the Tallahassee District.

Trustees Endorse Plan

Trinity's Trustees on March 27 endorsed a recommendation of the Parsonage Committee to accept a proposal from the decorating firm of Bass & Bass to furnish and decorate the new parsonage on Twin Oaks Drive for a total of \$21,220.

Committee Chairman Peggy Hughes presented Trustees with a detailed list of furniture, drapes and accessories and their cost estimates. She said her committee had obtained estimates and decorating plans from five interior design firms and agreed that Trinity members Ruth and Bob Bass offered the best proposal.

The recommendations for purchase of traditional, middle price range furnishings will now go to the Finance Committee for approval and determination of how a balance of \$9,220 can be raised. Toward the total needed, the church has received a gift of \$10,000 and approximately \$2,000 was raised by the recent auction of furniture from the old parsonage on Adams Street.

For the first time, United Methodist Communications will beam the two programs by satellite. The first program will include portions of the episcopal address, the laity address and other highlights of the first week of the top legislative assembly of United Methodism.

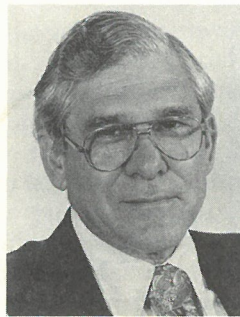
The Rev. Harrington said the programs will be a vehicle for informing Methodists about what really happened at General Conference. "Past experience demonstrates that the secular media's reports of General Conference are often inaccurate and sometimes biased. I urge you to take advantage of these programs to combat any negative publicity generated regarding General Conference," he said.

Church May Rent Parking

Trinity Trustees are negotiating with the State to lease 89 parking spaces for use by employees of the Department of Professional Regulation weekdays.

The Department is considering a move into the old Penneys Building and is considering the rental of parking spaces in the Trinity lot on the left side of Duval Street. The first two rows of spaces with room for 24 cars would not be rented but would be available for use by Trinity members. The lot by the Education Building would also be for Trinity use only.

Trustees Ernest Menendez and Gordon Rogers will talk to state officials about the plan and seek input from Trinity members relative to the daytime parking needs of the church as well as the church's financial needs.



COMMENT

By Gene Zimmerman

General Conference Meets April 15-26

The General Conference of the United Methodist Church will be meeting this month in Indianapolis, Indiana, from April 15-26. The Conference is held every four years and is attended by Methodist delegates from all parts of the world who belong to our denomination. Each Annual Conference elects a number of delegates according to its size. Florida will be sending 13 laypersons and 13 clergy. I am pleased to be one of the clergy delegates.

The conference delegates (approximately 1000) will spend the first week reading all of the petitions which United Methodists send concerning the work of the Church, the change or retention of certain programs, opinions, directions, etc. It is the place where all United Methodists can have their requests considered, for at least two delegates must read and recommend to a larger committee each request that comes before them. I shall be in the Committee on Ministry where all legislation dealing with the ministry will be discussed.

On the second week, the major petitions and requests will be presented, discussed, and debated if necessary and those items which pass will represent guidelines and directions for the church for the next four years.

For all its diversity, the United Methodist Church has great strength and cohesiveness in what we call the "connectional" system—this inter-relatedness of churches which attempt to move together in serving our Lord. Please keep the conference and its delegates in your prayers and pray that we will venture great things for God in the years ahead.

UMW Circles Schedule April Group Meetings

The Executive Board of United Methodist Women met on Tuesday, April 1, 10:30 a.m., in the Church Conference Room. Following the Board meeting the general membership met in Fellowship Hall for the regular April luncheon, with ladies of Circle 9 serving as hostesses.

At the general meeting following the luncheon, members heard Dr. Griffith Pugh speak on the subject, "Easter and Vernal Rites." Dr. Pugh is a member of the Board of Trustees and chairman of the Council on Ministries of Trinity United Methodist Church.

The following are the group meetings planned for April:

Circle 1 will meet Monday morning, April 7, at 10 o'clock with Mrs. James L. Graham at her home, 1163 Old Fort Drive, phone 877-2847, with Mrs. Royal Mattice and Mrs. George Kilner assisting as cohostesses.

Circle 2 is planning to meet with Mrs. E. E. Somerset, 2926 Shearer Road, phone 385-1894, on Monday, April 7, at 2:30 p.m. Mrs. Melvin Hancock will assist as cohostess. The program will be under the direction of Mrs. Roy Berry.

Circle 3 members will meet with Mrs. H. E. Gallagher, 1342 Terrace, phone 224-0247, on Tuesday, April 8, at 10 a.m. The program will be a continuation of the Study of the Parables.

Circle 4 will meet in the Wesley Brotherhood Sunday School Classroom, Trinity Hall, at 10 a.m., Tuesday, April 8. Mrs. Francis Black will review articles from *Response* magazine, a UMW publication.

Circle 5 plans to meet on Tuesday, April 8, at 10 a.m., at the home of Mrs. Theo Couch, 709 Piedmont Drive, phone 385-4174.

Circle 6 will meet with Mrs. W. S. Anderson, 919 Brookwood Drive, phone 877-5989, on Tuesday, April 8, at 10 a.m. Mrs. Cecil Bowers will assist as cohostess. The program will be under the direction of Mrs. Clarence Edney.

Circle 7 is planning to meet with Mrs. L. N. Brown, 1407 Randolph Circle, phone 385-1241, on Tuesday, April 8, at 10 a.m. Mrs. Eaton Burr will assist as cohostess and Mrs. Norman Leedham will be in charge of the program.

Circle 8 will meet in the church parlor at 9:15 a.m. Tuesday, April 8. Mrs. Fred Shelfer and Mrs. Palmer Williams will be cohostesses for the meeting. Guest speaker, Dr. Sharon Hartman, will discuss children's literature.

Circle 9 will be meeting with Mrs. Don Hay, 1105 Lasswade, phone 385-4221, on Tuesday, April 8, at 10 a.m. Mrs. Marshall Hamilton will be in charge of the program.

Circle 10 will meet at the Tallahassee Convalescent Home on Monday, April 14, at 3:30 p.m. Students from the Wesley Foundation will present the program.

Circle 12 will meet on Monday, April 21, at 7:15 p.m. in the Glenn C. James Chapel of the church. The program, to be presented by Miss Esther Wilfong, will be a report of the Spiritual Life Retreat held April 18-20, at Cherry Lake, Florida, for Tallahassee District UMW units.

Circle 13 has planned to meet on Tuesday, April 15, 7:30 p.m., with Mrs. H. N. Dawirs, 1902 Sharon Road, phone 385-2915. Mrs. George Foster, guest speaker, will discuss the Study of the Parables.

Roughton's Rappings

At this place in my spiritual journey I find intellectual analyses of the Easter event disappointing. Two years ago or three years from now I may have felt or may feel differently; for now I'm happier with the mystery than with the ponderous probing of abundant questions.

I suppose that's the reason I was intrigued by the simply profound story below. The story was included in the July 16, 1979, issue of *Sources and Resources*, a great little newsletter I receive and doubt you have ever seen. I've waited all this time to reprint it for you since nothing I could write could capture beauty and meaning of Easter as well. Hope you enjoy it as well as I did. Happy Easter!

His classmates noted that 8-year-old Stephen's mental retardation was becoming even more manifest. Could they continue to love him as they came to see his difference? In April, the Sunday school teacher asked all eight children in her class to hide within an empty Leggs pantyhose container one small object that represented the new life in spring. Fearing that Stephen might not have caught on, and not wanting to embarrass him, the teacher had the children place all unlabeled containers on her desk so she could open them. The first had a tiny flower. "What a lovely sign of new life!" The donor could not help but erupt, "I brought that one!"

Next came a rock. That must be Stephen's, since rocks don't symbolize new life. But Billy shouted that his rock had moss on it and moss represented new life. The teacher agreed. A butterfly flew from the third container, and another child bragged that her choice was the best sign of all. The fourth container was empty. "It has to be Stephen's," thought the teacher, reaching quickly for a fifth. But, "Please don't skip mine," Stephen interjected. "But it's empty." "That's right," said Stephen, "the tomb was empty, and that's new life for everyone."

Later that summer Stephen's condition worsened and he died. At his funeral on his casket mourners found eight Leggs pantyhose containers, now all empty. "In truth, in very truth, I tell you, a grain of wheat remains a solitary grain unless it falls into the ground and dies; but if it dies, it bears a rich harvest."

Peace, Phil

Trinity Women to Attend Spiritual Retreat

Once again the women of Trinity are anticipating with enthusiasm the annual Spiritual Retreat sponsored by the Tallahassee District United Methodist Women. This year the retreat will be April 18-20 at Cherry Lake 4-H Camp.

Those who attended last year were very pleased with the facilities there, the beauty and serenity of the lovely lake, and the good food more than made up for the disappointment in not having Camp Weed available any more. In fact, evaluations were unanimous in the desire to return next time!," Miriam Peirce said.

The theme for the retreat is: He touched me and I have grown. Leaders will be Liz Smith of Trinity, Leah Pittard, and Lillian Martell. There will be quiet time, sharing time, and Christian fellowship.

Friday evening will be book sharing time, with everyone telling about a book that has been interesting, meaningful, inspiring, or whatever. Some may wish to bring their books and lend them. Saturday night will feature a "campfire" with units preparing skits to perform. What will Trinity contribute to this? Something cute? Funny? Inspirational? Units are not limited to one presentation, so maybe several groups or perhaps circles would like to prepare something for sharing.

The cost for the Retreat is only \$20 for two nights and six meals! If you simply can't be there for the whole weekend, it will be \$15 for Saturday night, and four meals, Saturday lunch and supper, Sunday breakfast and lunch. If by some sad chance you can only come on Saturday, and not stay over, the two meals, registration fee will be \$6. You can't beat those prices anywhere, and the meals are good! After April 15, you must add \$3. to these figures.

It is hoped that a large number of Trinity women will be going, certainly a van load! Miriam Peirce, 2731-174 Blairstone Road, Tallahassee 32301, 878-4086, is taking the registrations, so let her know soon!

UMW Membership Shows Increase

UMW Membership Chairman Jeanne Hamilton reports a slight increase in membership during the past few months in Trinity's United Methodist Women's unit. The new yearbook, soon to be released for distribution, lists a total of 283 members.

The UMW statewide campaign has as its goal a 10% increase for 1980 during the ten-month period, January-October.

Mrs. Hamilton reports that recently an attempt is being made to contact all ladies who join Trinity as new members with the invitation to visit or participate in Trinity's UMW program. Because of different meeting dates and hours, as well as varied ongoing circle programs and interests, there is a place and a welcome for all who are interested in affiliating with Trinity United Methodist Women. A call to Mrs. Hamilton (Mrs. Julian) 1948 Greenwood, phone 385-5561, will be welcomed. She will supply the needed details to assist in determining group interest.

One eligibility factor of great importance is that a person does not have to be a member of Trinity United Methodist Church—neither does she have to be a Methodist—to seek membership with the UMW organization. Membership is voluntary and is based on each individual's belief in and commitment to the UMW Purpose: "... to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in global ministries of the church."

"For those of you who are presently undecided or uncommitted as to your niche in the activities of Trinity UMC, our UMW has a place for you. We need each other!" Mrs. Hamilton declared.

Florida State University
Chamber Choir and Orchestra
in concert
April 5, 1980
7:30 P.M.
Trinity Sanctuary

Circle 1 Invites Donations to Pall Fund

Trinity members have an early opportunity to bring to fruition a project initiated several months ago by Circle 1 of the United Methodist Women—the purchase of a casket coverlet (sometimes referred to as a "funeral pall") for the use of the families of the church.

Many Trinity members during each Easter season make financial donations to the church to honor a living member of the family or a beloved friend, or to remember a deceased loved one with a memorial contribution. This year you are invited to designate your gift to the "Pall Fund" and in so doing make possible the realization of the balance of contributions needed to purchase the coverlet.

As explained in earlier articles of *The Monthly Tidings*, the covering, made of a cream or white silk damask and adorned with a gold cross, can be placed over the casket during funeral services making unnecessary the purchase by families of expensive casket floral arrangements. Too, the

use of such a covering, as expressed earlier, emphasizes "that all are equal in the sight of God and provides a symbol of dignity and equality."

The use of such a cloth would not be limited to the families of UMW members; it would become the property of the church and available to all Trinity families. Circle 1 hopes many church members' interests will be quickened to make specially designated contributions for this purpose, not only during the Easter season, but at any time gifts or memorials are made to the church.

Inquiries may be directed to the church office, phone 222-1120.

Wesley Fellowship Class

The Wesley Fellowship Class has added the names of Dr. and Mrs. David Eberly (Lillian and David) to the class roll. All new members of the church are cordially invited to attend the class.

Teachers for April include Judge Ben Willis, Mr. Burke B. Scisson, and Mr. Kenneth Ballinger.

Visitors are welcome.

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