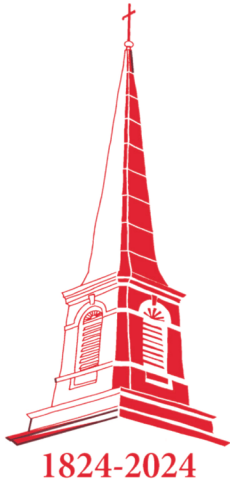


Tidings



Trinity United Methodist Church **BICENTENNIAL** *Faith of our Founders...living still*

A Monthly Publication from Trinity United Methodist Church, Tallahassee, FL

Embracing the Journey: A Call to Spiritual Renewal this Lenten Season

by Rev. Dr. Matthew M. Williams, Senior Pastor

As the crisp air whispers the nearing of spring, we find ourselves on the cusp of a profoundly sacred time in the Christian calendar. Lent, the forty-day period before Easter, beckons us from Ash Wednesday through Holy Week, offering a path to spiritual renewal and deeper communion with our faith.

This Lenten Season is not just a period; it's an invitation—a gentle call to delve into the core of our discipleship, to walk alongside Jesus on His solemn journey to the cross. It's a time for introspection and growth, a wilderness journey where we can retreat into the depths of our hearts and the soul of our community. In this season of humility and contemplation, you'll notice the echoes of this spirit in the musical selections during our services, and in the weekly prayers of confession—a communal commitment to seeking forgiveness and grace.

Ash Wednesday marks the inception of this reflective journey. Mirroring the Israelites' forty years of wandering and Jesus' own forty days of contemplation, Ash Wednesday is a poignant reminder of our own spiritual pilgrimages. On this day, from 6:00 to 7:30 AM, the church portico will become a space of solemn reflection as ashes are imposed—a sacred tradition symbolizing our devotion to prayer and penance. Coffee will be provided and all are invited to stop by on the way to work or your days activities.

As the day unfolds, we will gather in the Sanctuary at 6:30 PM for the Ash Wednesday service, a time to unite in prayer and receive the imposition of ashes. This service is not the end but

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Memorials

- In memory of **Walter B. Parramore** from Gerald Harris.

Honorariums

- In honor of **Marti Hughes** from the Joe Hughes.
- In honor of **Jessica Cloud** from Trinity UMC's Circle One.

the beginning of a deeper exploration, as it leads into the Stations of the Cross in James Chapel—a journey through Jesus’ final steps, inviting us to reflect on the magnitude of His sacrifice and love.

In this season of reflection and renewal, the Trinity United Methodist Congregation extends a heartfelt invitation to each of you. Join us in exploring the depths of your faith through our daily Lenten devotional book, written and compiled with love and prayer by our very own congregation members. It’s more than a book; it’s a companion for your journey, a tapestry of reflections,

prayers, and insights to guide and enrich your Lenten experience.

This Lent, let us walk together in faith and fellowship, embracing the stillness, the introspection, and the communal journey toward the cross. Let this season be a time of spiritual awakening and renewal, as we each embark on our own paths of reflection, devotion, and growth. Your presence, your voice, and your heart are integral parts of this journey. Join us, as together, we tread the sacred path of Lent with open hearts and hopeful spirits.

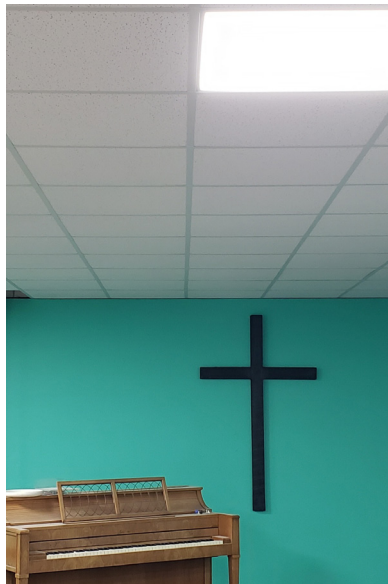
Uplifting Improvements

by Brett Ingram, Facility Director

Over the last few months there has been a lot of work done around our building as we gear up for Trinity’s 200th anniversary celebration!

In the sanctuary, there is new tile under the pews, captivating carpeting in the aisles, and a calming and classy new tile in the narthex. You may also notice that the pew cushions appear brighter and more vibrant after getting a thorough steam cleaning. In addition to the visual improvements, we have reduced the length of several pews to allow for more inclusive participation in the worship services for those with wheelchairs.

The new ornate fencing and gates in the courtyard mimic the already existing fencing on the playground creating a nice cohesive look. While an attractive addition, the gates also ensure safety and security for everyone here at Trinity.



Speaking of security, we have upgraded to a new video monitoring system that covers the exterior of every entry of the building. We have also added electronic access points on more exterior entryways as a means of additional security as well as ease of fob access to our members.

Numerous rooms and hallways in the building now feature new carpeting, including the conference room and parlor. The office wing now has new baseboards resembling those in the sanctuary, extending seamlessly to the chapel. Upon completion of painting, this area will look fresh and uniformed.

While last year’s “flood” was unforeseen and unfortunate, it also presented an opportunity to tend to the Underground: the space where our youth gather. The Underground now has new ceiling tile, new lighting, new flooring, and new paint, making it a bright and inviting space. In February, our youth will return to a renewed environment, where they will be warmly received and have the opportunity to enjoy a renovated Underground.

Come see all of these improvements and make sure to stay on the lookout for more!

Trinity Welcomes Bishop Charlene Kammerer

by Gloria Colvin, Bicentennial Publicity Committee Chair

On February 11, we're privileged to welcome Bishop Charlene Kammerer as our guest preacher at the 9:45 AM and 11:00 AM services and then greeting her and her husband Leigh at a reception following the 11:00 AM service. This will be a homecoming for the Kammerers who lived in Tallahassee when she served as District Superintendent of the Florida Conference's Tallahassee District from 1987 through 1993.

A native Floridian, Charlene Payne Kammerer was born in Orlando and grew up in Winter Park. She earned her A.B. degree from Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia, Master of Christian Education and Master of Divinity degrees from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois, and Doctor of Ministry degree from Union Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. Additionally, she is the recipient of three Honorary Doctorates from Bethune-Cookman College (Daytona Beach, Florida), Pheiffer University (Meisenhimer, North Carolina), and Wesleyan College (Macon, Georgia).

In 1977, she was ordained Elder in the Florida Annual Conference, and since then has gone on to have a distinguished career in the United Methodist Church. She served as pastor of several churches, campus minister at Duke University, and District Superintendent of the Tallahassee District. In 1996, she was elected Bishop, the first woman elected to that position in the Southeast, and served the Charlotte, North Carolina area for eight years. In 2004, she was assigned to serve as Bishop for the Virginia Conference and remained there until her retirement in 2012.

Bishop Kammerer has held many prominent leadership positions in the United Methodist Church at the national level. These include serving as Chairperson of UMCOR, the relief agency of the United Methodist Church, Board member on the Commission on the Status and Role of Women, member of the Commission on Pan-



Methodist Cooperation, Vice President of the Commission on Religion and Race, President of the General Board of Discipleship, member of the Wesley Theological Seminary Board of Governors, Secretary for the Bishops Initiative on Children and Poverty, and a member of God's Renewing Creation Task Force. She is the recipient of numerous prestigious awards and honors, including the Virginia Council of Churches Faith and Action Award, the Lifetime Ecumenist Award, and recognition as a Social Justice Maker from the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy.

Bishop Kammerer and her husband Leigh have one son, Christopher Hal, and four grandchildren – Christopher, Noelle, Elton, and Max.

She has continued to be active in retirement, serving as Co-Chair of the Lake Junaluska Peace Conference Design Team, writing, reading, preaching, and practicing the art of being a grandparent.

Trinity Reflections

Compiled by the Bicentennial Publicity Committee

"Our life together began at Trinity in 1986 through its Singles Group and subsequent marriage.

Our children were baptized and raised here, so we have always considered

Trinity as home and its members as family."

- Dan and Kathy Drake, Trinity Members

"The beauty, depth, and meaning of Trinity is its inclusive atmosphere where all of God's children are accepted and welcomed through music, education, and worship. We praise our Lord and Christ."

- Mary Ann L. Moore, Trinity Member

Bicentennial Music News

by Yuliia Billa, Director of Music

Trinity's Music Ministry has prepared a wonderful year-long program in celebration of our Bicentennial anniversary. Make sure to mark your calendars as you won't want to miss these musical events.

March 9 | 6:00 pm

Tabernacle Organist, Brian Mathias.

March 17 | 11:00 am

Orchestra Sunday will introduce "Requiem" by G. Fauré

March 29 | 12:00 pm

Good Friday, "Stabat Mater" by G. Pergolesi.



*Tabernacle Organists
at Trinity UMC*
120 W Park Ave

Brian Mathias
March 9, 6:00 pm

Andrew Unsworth
May 4, 6:00 pm

Richard Elliott
September 21, 6:00 pm

Trinity History

by Carol Dadisman; Reprinted from February 2004 Tidings

"The 1830s were the wildest times for the capital. It was during these adolescent years that Tallahassee gained and probably earned a reputation as a wide open, hell-raising frontier town, where drunken brawls, duels and a minimum of civilized influence were the general order."

That's a description of our city's second decade offered by Bertram H. Groene in his book, *Antebellum Tallahassee*. In a later passage, Groene adds; "The (Florida) territory was in the depths of...financial depression...The pressure of tight money in those worried times affected not only business but the churches. From 1837 to 1839 the Methodist Church, the oldest in the city, had almost ceased to function through lack of funds to pay for a pastor."

Moreover, the Seminole War wreaked havoc in the territory and its fledgling capital. Trinity's Norman Booth, in a church history published in the 1990's, writes: "During (Joshua) Knowles' pastorate (1836), the foremost difficulty facing Tallahassee was the Seminole War. (Knowles) reported that many Tallahassee families were driven away, and those who remained were frequently upset by stories of nearby Indian activities."

Yet even in the difficult decade, the forerunner of Trinity United Methodist Church was providing a much-needed ministry and preparing for broader service in the future. In 1837 the church managed to purchase three lots at the corner of Park and Duval streets, setting the stage for moving one block east of the Methodists' original location – and establishing the site where Trinity still thrives.

Economic and social conditions apparently delayed use of the new site for several years. But, by 1840, the national and regional

economies had improved, and Tallahassee's Methodists had regained enough strength and support to begin construction.

The Tallahassee Floridian of March 7, 1840, announced that laying of a church cornerstone would signal beginning of construction at Park and Duval. Edwin L.T. Blake's *History of Methodist Church*, quoted by Booth, picks up the story from there: "This building was located on the present church site...and faced south. It was of the same style of architecture as the First Presbyterian Church, a colonial building of brick and stuccoed with white cement. There were windows with green blinds upstairs and downstairs. A wide porch extended across the front with colonial columns supporting it. The interior contained temporary benches, men on one side, the women on the other. The large gallery which ran around three sides for the use of slaves looked down on a queer-looking semi-circular pulpit."

The new church was completed in 1841. Four years later, the Florida Annual Conference was organized there, following two decades in which Florida's Methodists had been part of the South Carolina and Georgia Conferences.

By 1851 Simon Peter Richardson was pastor of the church. In his autobiography published 50 years later, he wrote: "I was stationed at Tallahassee, the capital of the state, which had a wide reputation for many bloody feuds by the Reeds, Alstons and others. But those days, with their scenes of horror, had passed away, and peace and prosperity, religion, and morality, had taken their place."

Tallahassee's early Methodists, and the new downtown anchor they had established, could claim much credit for the 20-year transformation.

Trinity's Ministries Around the World

We invite you to learn more about Trinity's efforts beyond our doors and in the world!

Our Sister Church in Fomento, Cuba

As Trinity commemorates its bicentennial, the anticipation is high for the upcoming 120th celebration of our sister church, Templo San Pablo, in Fomento, Cuba. Templo San Pablo's Pastor Osmar Matos Vasquez has maintained a constant line of communication, graciously sharing news, needs, and updates.

In the spotlight of their anniversary and amid numerous ongoing projects, Templo San Pablo encountered a challenge – a shortage of resources for their annual Christmas dinner. Answering their call, Trinity stepped in and generously funded a dinner for 450 people! Pastor Osmar, along with his dedicated team, orchestrated a delightful feast, extending warm invitations to the entire community.

Looking ahead, a Trinity team is set to embark on a meaningful journey to Cuba later this month. Their mission: to meet Pastor Osmar, foster connections, and strengthen the bonds with our cherished sister church. As they venture forth in service, let us collectively pause and offer our prayers for the safety, success, and profound impact of this dedicated team. May their travels be smooth, and their efforts resonate with the spirit of unity and compassion.



Templo San Pablo hosted their annual Christmas Dinner on December 29, 2023, where they fed 450 members of the church and community.



Trinity Resumes Plans for Guatemala Mission Trip

As you may recall, the original Guatemala mission trip scheduled for October 2023 was postponed due to the political unrest and protests taking place. We are thrilled to have new trip dates: May 4-11! There are spaces available and we need team members with a heart for service and a little adventure. This truly is a life-changing opportunity. Please contact Jayne Mittan at jaynemittan@gmail.com if you are interested.

Introducing Living Hope Nicaragua

by Pat Striplin, Founder of Living Hope Nicaragua

I'm happy to introduce Living Hope Nicaragua (LHN). LHN is a small mission project in Leon, Nicaragua. And even though small, the mission is very large—to help bring hope to young people who want to make a better life for themselves and their families and even their country.

The major focus of LHN is teaching English. After more than 15 years of mission work there, it has become clear to me that those who are fluent in English have many more job opportunities. This lack of job opportunities is one of the biggest challenges for this small and very poor country. I made my first trip to Nicaragua in 2008. That was also the year, with the help of many other volunteers, that I began an English Language Learning (ELL) program in Gadsden County. This was about two years after my retirement during which time I had been searching for ways to contribute, to give back. There are quite a few native Spanish speakers in our area, and helping them learn English and navigate a new culture seemed so worthwhile and definitely rewarding for those of us involved in this project, which we continued for ten years.

Then, through my travels to Nicaragua at least once per year, I discovered a similar need in Nicaragua. Nicaraguans, of course, know their own culture, but they can improve their lives by adding English to their life skills. Through mission trips, I had begun working with small groups in teaching English. Then in 2018, an adjustment had to be made to further build the great opportunities afforded to the students by learning English. The students were flourishing, and the program needed expanding. After much prayer and discussion with my Nicaraguan friends, we chose to establish a new long-term ministry. This new mission was born—Living Hope Nicaragua. We felt “hope” had to be in the name since so much of the work there involves giving, reinforcing, awakening hope in these young people. And, hearing from so many of them words such as “You’ve changed my life” strengthens my belief that we ARE making a difference.

We actually launched LHN on January 7, 2019, with more than 100 students who had learned about the program through word of mouth. We began with four Nicaraguan teachers teaching the beginning levels, and I taught the top level by Skype, which within about a year became Zoom. The vast majority of the students were at a beginning level, so the teachers were mostly teaching what we considered Level 1. I continued to work with the teachers so that their skills continued to grow. And I carried on the work of advancing curriculum as our students advanced. Until the third trimester of year five (2023), we had five levels with me as the teacher of Level 5. By that time, I felt my four teachers had become strong enough in their knowledge of English that I could revamp the curriculum to four levels,



and they would be teaching all the levels. My role has become mainly teacher of the teachers as well as team teacher with the top two levels. I meet almost weekly individually with the teachers and team teach two times monthly with Levels 3 and 4. My desire has been to enable them to run the program themselves.

We had our first graduating class at the end of the third trimester of 2020; that group had successfully completed all the levels. Because of COVID that year, though, it took two trimesters to complete the last level by Zoom since only one had a computer. We weren't meeting as a group, so I struggled to connect with them individually by phone. One student even connected by her phone at a radio station; another tried to connect at a spot in Central Park where there was some WiFi service. However, all connection attempts were sporadic.

At graduation, graduates wear a cap and stole, which we furnish, receive a very official-looking diploma, and are treated to a special dinner (for which we are given a reduced price) on the evening of graduation. Graduates are able, also, to take a guest, usually their moms. So far, not a single graduate had ever eaten at that restaurant.

One of the challenges in beginning the program was having a place to hold classes. We began in a small school building beside the church of a pastor I knew. He graciously opened his doors rent-free to help us get started. It seemed as if doors continued to open to help with the launch. That welcoming pastor, who studied with us for a trimester, is no longer living, but he played a vital role in the launching of LHN. We now rent four rooms two afternoons a week in a small private school, and we do pay rent.

Another feature of LHN is what we have named our Mercy Program. With the English Program, Nica ELL (English Language Learning), we are “teaching the students to fish” (referring to the adage of “give a man a fish, and he eats for a day; teach him to fish, and he eats for a lifetime”). With the Mercy Program, we reach out to the least advantaged such as homeless people and children in very poor neighborhoods. We provide a meal for about 60 people two times monthly. The teachers cook, pack, and deliver the meals to these needy areas. Along with that food for their bodies, our teachers feed the souls by telling Bible stories and singing and dancing with the children in the neighborhoods. We have assistance with this endeavor by another mission project, Eagle's

Wings, who provide us with a big box of rice and soy each month. We've also had some U.S. visitors who have helped with funding as well as the work of preparation and delivery. Our guiding scripture is the words of Jesus who said "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40). Interestingly, too, is that quite a few of our English students have volunteered with Mercy Program through the years. These experiences have been eye-opening for them, it seems, as they have seen firsthand others who have greater needs than they.

LHN is established as a nonprofit, so donations of various kinds have assisted me in funding the project to the great benefit of our Nicaragua sisters and brothers. Being a nonprofit, donations are tax deductible. Trinity has adopted Living Hope Nicaragua as an international mission partner since the ministry aligns with our values of empowering others. Therefore, donations for LHN can be made to Trinity by designating Living Hope Nicaragua on the memo line of a check, for example. Or it is possible to simply note that a particular part of specific donations is intended for LHN. Overall, however you may be able to contribute, I know you will be a great blessing to the students in the program.

We're in beginning stages of this union, and all involved are excited about the possibilities of what we can do together. We

definitely welcome questions and suggestions. AND we invite you to get involved in some way, such as simply supporting a student. I can assure you that for me the rewards are great, and I hope they would be for you, too. Another theme scripture that truly guides us is Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Our classes always begin with scripture, and this one is the first one the students typically learn.

LHN also has a website, www.livinghopenicaragua.org, and my email address is pcstriplin@gmail.com, phone number 850 508-4497 if you'd like to know more. I have so many stories, and I love sharing.



Living Hope Nicaragua's Team Photo, 2024

Zoe Empowers

Trinity is thrilled to share its partnership with Zoe Empowers. Zoe Empowers is a three-year empowerment program focused on addressing the multiple challenges faced by orphaned and vulnerable youth-led families in extreme poverty. The goal of this program is to enable children to move from crippling poverty and dependency to economic and social self-sufficiency.

Zoe's comprehensive program begins with the formation of groups. When Zoe first enters a community to help children, they begin by engaging the local leaders. Although different from the usual relief approach, Zoe's empowerment goals resonate with leaders who want to see sustainable change in their village. Once groups are formed, the youth complete training on food security, health and disease prevention, business management, and child rights, and the children are attending school. Through Zoe, youth are provided start-up resources to begin small business and others receive grants to begin vocational training. This is just the beginning of their three-year long participation in this life-changing program.

Three years is also the length of OUR commitment to Zoe. We are sponsors and partners for "Harmony Sadziwa", a group from Zimbabwe, made up of so much hope and potential. We encourage our entire congregation to pray for Harmony Sadziwa, all Zoe Empower leaders and participants. Additionally, we ask that you pray for our Trinity team who will be traveling to Zimbabwe in April to meet this incredible group and to learn all about what Zoe will be doing in their lives.



*Harmony Sadziwa Empowerment Group, Zimbabwe
Partnered with Trinity UMC*

“The children are encouraged and strengthened by the knowledge that their partner is not only supporting them with resources, but also with prayer and in the belief that they are capable of great things. Thank you for making this journey of transformation with them.”

Note about group names: The youth choose their own group name. The first part of the name is their self-description and the second part is a reference to their location so that Zoe can distinguish between groups that may choose the same name for themselves.



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WORSHIP SERVICES

Early Service: 8:30 a.m. in the sanctuary
Contemporary Service: 9:45 a.m. in Moor Hall
Liturgical Service: 11 a.m. in the sanctuary

Contemporary Service and 11 a.m. Liturgical Service are live streamed
Please visit www.tumct.org for viewing links

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Rev. Anna Brook Opalinski, *Associate Pastor*
Rev. Wayne Curry, *Minister of Pastoral Care*

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[Melanie Gonzalez](#), *Editor*

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