

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK ... "Shelter from the Storm"

So, my prediction is that March will come in like a lion! That's the country lore about March, isn't it?

And, speaking of stormy weather and all, an old Bob Dylan song just ran through my head, *Shelter from the Storm*:

*'Twas in another lifetime, one of
toil and blood*

*When blackness was a virtue the
road was full of mud*

*I came in from the wilderness, a
creature void of form*

Come in, she said

I'll give ya shelter from the storm

(*Shelter from the Storm*, Bob Dylan, January 13, 1964.)

If you will suffer me a wee bit of a tangent here, that old Bob Dylan song came into my head because of an effort by the Nitty-Gritty Dirt Band on February 5th of this year. Are you sitting down? This band, along with Roseanne Cash and Steve Earle reprised the old Dylan song, *The Times, They are A-Changin.* ' It was a charity effort and all proceeds are going to the Feeding America project to help with hunger in this country!

Old is the new...new! Who knew? You can Google this song up right now and listen to it, if you want.

All of this confluence pointing towards *storms* opened a memory in my head that was decades old! The scene opens and I am working on a research project for a counseling and pastoral care ministry curriculum; and, I ran across a case study that broke my heart wide open! In fact, I will go so far as to say it changed how I viewed Christianity.

As we peek behind the curtain, we see a young woman who is sitting by the bedside of her dying mother who is in a

coma. Both the young woman and the mother were life-long Christians. They showed up at church every time the doors were open; and, they were enculturated with all the additional Christian bells and whistles.

In other words, they lived the Christian life, crossing every "T" and dotting every "I." They read their Bibles, prayed regularly; and, they utilized all the correct parlance such as *I thank God for my salvation*; and, they kept the requisite casserole dish handy for anybody who was hospitalized or had a death in their family.

But Houston, they had a huge problem. And, it is here that I will delve a wee bit more deeply. No one on earth needed *shelter from the storm* as badly as these two women.

The young daughter spent hours by her mother's bedside. She prayed into the wee hours of the night and morning. She repeated over and over again how much she loved the mother.

Then one morning, just before dawn the mother awakened from her coma. She suddenly opened her eyes and looked clearly and intently at the daughter.

The words began to flow, "You know," she whispered, "all my life I thought something was wrong with me. I have always felt that as hard as I tried, I just could not get things right!"

The woman shook her head and said, "What a waste."

She then closed her eyes, went back into her coma and passed from this world a few hours later. *What a waste* indeed.

And...there is Jesus. He said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. aka 'Come in,' he says, 'I'll give ya shelter from the storm (Matthew 11:28).'"

There is a term tossed about called Christology. This means the study of who Jesus was, is and will be.

...continued inside

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PASTORS DESK continued

Done incorrectly, Christianity can miss the mark by a mile, leaving us feeling in a fog. Christianity *can* make us feel oppressed, leaving us burdened and overwhelmed with the sense of *something is wrong with me. I am never good enough. I just can't get things right. I just do not measure up.*

This view of Christology is off target. It misses the mark badly. It's not even Biblical! Christ came to be for each of us that *shelter from the storm.*

For many of us, life hands us feelings of deficiency at every turn. And, it does not take much to make us feel this way...that we just do not cut it.

Our culture is highly competitive. It thrives by making others less. This is how culture becomes King of the Hill...by making others less.

Criticism flows like rainwater. Arguments arise easily nowadays. Our culture ceaselessly tracks down somebody to blame every time the wheels fall off.

We can become distracted. We can make mistakes at work. We can make a judgment call that feels right at the time but turns out to be wrong-er with each passing minute.

You can try to discuss something as benign as NASCAR on Social Media and get your head taken off. Culture seems to be intentional in making us feel *not* okay.

If we are trapped in this fog of life, we are unable to perceive the truth of who we really are. And, to be honest, I don't know how Christ could have been any clearer.

“For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him (John 3:17 NIV).”

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them (Matthew 5:17 NIV).”

Finally, I just love the way that The Message Bible spells this out, “Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly (Matthew 11:28-30 MSG).”

To say it bluntly, *Come in, he said, I'll give ya shelter from the storm.*

Let's not waste even one more second. A soul is a terrible thing to waste in the first place.

To do Christianity correctly, all we have to do is listen to his words, *keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.* This is a savior that we can get behind every single day.

**In His Love,
Jimmy**

Hello Everyone,

Since our mail out newsletter is only sent once per month, I just wanted to take one more opportunity to further express my deepest thanks for your generous and heartwarming Christmas love offering that was given to me in January. I was deeply moved by your kindness and thoughtfulness. To be honest, your gesture left me without words. Please accept my deepest and most profound thanks.

Jimmy

Just a reminder that Trinity's 2021 Bar-B-cue has been canceled. Our prayer is that we can come back bigger and better in 2022. Mark your calendars for the first Thursday in March 2022!!!



Have you Caught Someone in an act of kindness towards the church recently? If so please let the office know, we sure like to highlight any and all and say a BIG thank you!!!



The Trinity Church Family would like to express its prayers and sympathy to Marcia Knight and Family on the passing of her mother *Mrs. Nancy Jones*. Mrs. Jones who passed away on Thursday, February 18th lived in Dunbar Twp, PA. Please continue to remember Marcia and Eric Knight in your prayers during this difficult time.

The United Methodist Men are sponsoring a



FISH FRY in March. (they don't usually get to do a March Fish Fry due to the BBQ, so there is something positive about everything) We hope that you will join us for

a **Drive Thru Only** on **Saturday, March 13th** beginning at 3:00pm. The cost is \$13.00 for a plate of *catfish, shrimp, flounder with fries, homemade slaw, and hushpuppies*. We look forward to seeing you in the drive thru on March 13th!!!

THE MESSENGER

Trinity United Methodist Church

6230 Beatties Ford Road
Charlotte, NC 28216



Church—704-399-1684

9am—Rise-Up Worship Service 10am—Sunday School (online) 11am—Traditions Worship Service

answering Jesus' call to:

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

“FEED MY SHEEP”

Non-profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
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Permit No. 770



Worship Helpers and Prayer Request

RETIREMENT HOME RESIDENTS

Old Knox-David Todd
North Lake House— Mary Moore
Homebound—Kenneth Alexander, Curtis Buchanan

PRAYER LIST

Cleary Aberle, Kenneth Alexander, Donald Brown, Chet Kidd, Jamie Kidd, Mary Moore, Billy Todd

***In case of an emergency you can reach Rev. Howard by calling 704-458-8187, Ronna Privette @ 704-619-4647

Contributions have been made to the **Church Budget** in memory of *Mrs. Carolyn McLemore* by Circle #3, Margie Todd, and John & Cathryn Moreau.

A gift was given to the **Young at Heart Senior Citizens Group of Trinity UMC** in loving memory of *Carolyn McLemore* by Joe & Leslie Brigman



What is Lent ?

☞ Lent is the time of the Christian religion that reflects the 40 days that Jesus was in the desert fasting before the beginning of his ministry.

