**If you are looking for warm people who will love you just as you are,** consider worshiping with us. Trinity United Church of Christ has been welcoming seekers for over 250 years, and we invite you to be part of our long tradition of welcoming! Worship at Trinity is participative, held in a beautiful traditional sanctuary with inspiring sermon series and a diverse musical offering from our choir and congregation.

**Our faith is 2,000 years old. Our thinking is not.** We believe in God’s continuing testament. This is why we are committed to hearing God’s ancient story anew and afresh in our lives and in the world today. We try to remain attentive to God’s creative movement in the world. Religion and science are not mutually exclusive, and your head and heart are both welcomed into our places of worship. We prepare our members and leaders to be engaged in ministry in the present and future church, and we embrace all kinds of communities and new modes of thinking. Why? Because God is still speaking.

**Beyond Our Walls.** Trinity is committed to the community beyond our walls in Manchester, or even in Carroll County. We are involved in a variety of outreach efforts in the name of Christ**. Food Bags for Backpacks:** Food items are collected monthly during the school year for Manchester Elementary School for students who receive Free/Reduced meals.  **The Little Free Library is a shared effort between the church, Manchester Elementary School, and the town of Manchester. This Library belongs to everyone! You, your neighbors, friends, and people who pass by. Anyone may use it! This Little Free Library offers a way to share good things to read in our community. Little Free Library is honored by The Library of Congress for creating communities of literacy.What is a Little Free Library?A Little Free Library is a “take a book, return a book” free book exchange. In its most basic form, it’s a wooden box of books where anyone may pick up a book or two, or bring a book to share. Little Free Library book exchanges have a unique, personal touch and there is an understanding that real people are sharing their favorite books with their community. These aren’t just any old books, this is a carefully curated collection. The Library itself is a piece of neighborhood art that acts like a mini-town square. A Little Free Library promotes community and a sense of caring for those living in the community.**

* **TAKE BOOKS – If you see something your child would like to read, take it. You can even take two!**
* **SHARE BOOKS – When you are finished reading, return the books to the Little Free Library or pass them on to a friend. If you can’t bear to part with them, keep them and bring back different children’s books to share with others.**
* **GIVE BOOKS – Do your part and keep the Little Free Library well stocked with high-quality children’s books – share your favorites. Pay it forward! To donate larger quantities of good condition children’s books, simply drop them off at the designated boxes inside Manchester Elementary School and inside Manchester Town Hall.**

**Why Is Trinity UCC Interested in Being Part of This Effort?**

**Our church is committed to community within and beyond our walls. We are expanding the directive “Feed my sheep” to “Read to My Sheep.” We believe that by providing books to those who might not otherwise have access to them, we are demonstrating our commitment to community and helping to shine God’s light of care in Manchester.**

**Cold Weather Shelter:** We cook for the residents of and staff the cold weather shelter in Westminster, MD. We began this effort in two years ago by working at the shelter one night and have expanded to working two nights during the winter months. **Prayer Shawls** are made and blessed monthly for those needing a spiritual touch.  **Carroll County opens an overnight shelter from mid-November to April 1. It is staffed by volunteers from the community. Our congregation helps staff and provides a warm meal for the 30-40 homeless people who depend on this facility during the cold weather months.**

**We have seen people with various chronic illnesses and people lacking warm clothing. So we also donate clothing and over the counter medicines to the shelter as well.**

**Caring Committee:** The caring committee responds to emergency requests from the community. We partner with Human Services Programs and NESAP to guide individuals to resources available in the community.

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**Trinity United Church of Christ**

**3229 York Street**

**Manchester, Maryland**



**Miracles Or Metaphors:**

**Does It Really Matter?**

**A Bible Study for Inquiring Minds**

**Five Wednesdays**

 **6:45 – 8:00 p.m.**

**January 15 – February 19, 2020**

**Led by**

**The Rev. Gerry C. Hanberry**

**Interim Pastor**

pastortucc@comcast.net

**One of the Famous Healing Miracles by Jesus:**

**The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus:**

*They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart: get up, he is calling you." So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again," Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and following him on the way* (Mark 10: 46-52, NRSV)

 **What are reasonable people to make of a story like this?**

Some people might say: “In the world as we know it, in the world we live in, no measure of religious faith can reverse retinal detachment or macular degeneration or whatever else we might imagine as the medical problem of blind Bartimaeus. That's just impossible.” **And then others might say,** “this story of Jesus healing Bartimaeus, who was blind, is just one of Jesus’ many healing miracles in the gospel. It says it in the Bible; therefore, this story is real and true. Might not be a ‘medical intervention,’ per se, but Mark reports the story and I believe it.

Others might suggest these healing stories in the gospels are really more metaphorical, much more spiritual metaphor than medical science or real physical healing.

**With these varied explanations and beliefs, we might ask ourselves the ‘so what?’ question: Miracles or Metaphors? Does it Really Matter?**

In a five-part Bible Study series starting Wednesday, January 15, we will explore this dilemma, this deep Biblical and theological question. Join us; bring a friend or neighbor.

 **Five Miracles of Jesus:**



* Changing water into wine
* Healing Blind Bartimaeus
* Feeding the 5000
* Raising Lazarus
* Healing at Bethzatha

**Five Wednesdays: 6:45 – 8:00 p.m.**

**January 15 – February 19, 2020**

**Jan. 15 -- Changing Water into Wine at Cana**

* John 2: 1-11
* First of Jesus’ ‘miraculous signs’ at Cana, Galilee
* Different miracle from the first ones in the other gospels

**Jan. 22 -- Healing Blind Bartimaeus**

* Mark 10:46-52 and Matthew 20:29-34 and Luke 18:35-4
* Jesus meets Bartimaeus on the roadside near Bethsaida
* Classic story of Jesus asking one to say what they want

**Jan. 29 -- Feeding the 5000**

* John 6:1-5; Matt 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17
* Related to the *“I AM the bread of life”* statement of Jesus
* Significant because story is in all four gospels

**Feb. 12 – Raising Lazarus from the Dead**

* John 11:1-44
* In John, the last miracle before Jesus’ passion story
* Lazarus is the brother of Mary and Martha

**Feb. 19 -- The Healing at the Pool of Bethesda**

* John 5: 1-18
* Jesus heals man crippled for 38 years
* One of the ‘seven signs’ in the gospel of John