

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

January 12, 2009

The Pastor's Pen

The story is told of a man whose car stalled in heavy traffic on a city street. The stoplight turned green, and of course when the man's car did not move all those behind him began honking their horns. The man tried everything he knew to get his car started and out of the way but to no avail. Finally, fed up with the incessant honking of car horns, the poor man got out of his car, went back to the man just behind him, and said, "I'm sorry, but I can't seem to get my car started. If you'll go up there and give it a try, I'll stay here and honk your horn for you." (From Illustrations Unlimited).

This story was included under the heading of patience, and of course when we read it we realize that it illustrates impatience. I expect that we're all familiar with impatience. We probably see it every day in some form, from our time on the highway, to the line in a store somewhere, to the deadline someone is wanting us to meet. Impatience is not hard to find in today's world. There seems to be plenty of it to go around.

Patience on the other hand sometimes seems to be in short supply, and that's too bad. Patience is a virtue, but more than that patience is one of the fruits of the Spirit that Paul mentions in his letter to the Galatians. Patience is something that every Christian needs to strive to have on display all the time. Patience tells other people something about our character, and patience most assuredly enhances our witness as those who belong to Christ.

Yet patience doesn't just necessarily happen. For some people patience may well come almost naturally, but for others patience is hard to muster most of the time. I think the latter category rather than the former includes most of us. For most of us patience is, I think, something we need to be intentional about developing. Patience is something we have to work at, but then the question becomes one of how. How do we develop patience?

One of the keys to patience I believe is faith. Yes, faith. Patience is in some measure about faith in God and in Christ. If we truly believe that God "will supply all our needs according to his riches in glory," as Paul says in another of his letters, then we don't have to be anxious about the things. We can be patient. We can wait. We can trust that God will not renege on God's promises.

Another key to patience is, I think, our attitude toward others, and by that I mean an attitude in which we think the best about others instead of the worst. For instance, in a situation like the one described in the story above, instead of sitting in your car thinking, "Why is that guy holding up traffic," as though the person is intentionally holding you up, one could think, "I wonder if that man is having some difficulty." A lot of the impatience we encounter in others and in ourselves is simply a matter of perspective. If we were to stop and think about the other person's situation, we just might not be so impatient. So one of the keys to having patience is our own attitude toward others. Do we automatically jump to the negative conclusion or do we consider the other person's situation?

And a third key to patience is, I think, gratitude. We might use the phrase "an attitude of gratitude." Somehow when we are grateful to God

for all that God has given us instead of thinking from an attitude of entitlement, we seem to just slow down a bit. Life doesn't have to run at break-neck speed. We can "be still and know that God is God." We can be still and be grateful for the blessings of the day. We can be more patient.

One of the things that all Christians ought to practice is patience. It is after all one of the fruits of the Spirit, and therefore if we don't practice patience then the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives may become suspect. So while patience is a gift of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit needs our cooperation for it to develop in us. We need to be intentional about wanting to be patient, and thus not just ignore what God wants to do in us.

And so if being patient is something that seems to more often than not elude you, may I suggest that we be more intentional about it. May I suggest that we think about our attitude toward others. May I suggest that we be more grateful each day for all that God has given us and for all that God has done in our lives. And may I suggest that we "turn our eyes" toward the Lord and believe that God wants to bring about good in our lives. We might just find the path to patience here. Just something to think about.

Until Next time, Bro. Jim

ANNUAL UNIT UMW MEETING

The annual UMW unit meeting will be this Sunday January 18, at 2:00 p.m. in the Rose Chapel. Please plan to come and hear and meet Joy Lewter, president of the conference UMW. The program will include special music plus a review of 2008. All UMW members and all ladies of the church are urged to attend this important meeting.

ATTENTION MARY-MARTHA MEMBERS -FOSTER CHILDREN PROJECT

Now will be a great time to purchase a clear plastic container to hold your stock of clothing. You might also find items on sale to build the contents of a bag. Items needed are jeans, shirt, pajamas, underwear and socks. I've recorded the sex and age of your child, so if you've misplaced this information, just give me a call. Thanks for your continued help with this project.

Gracie Henson - *****

I hope to organize the clothes and containers by our March meeting, so hopefully this will give each one of you ample time to obtain your items and leave them at church in the UMW room

WEDNESDAY NIGHT MENU FOR JANUARY 21

Hamburger soup, Mexican cornbread, Angel food cake with fruit. Volunteers will serve and clean up.

ORGANIZING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTER

Volunteers will meet on Wednesday, January 21st at 9:30 a.m. to organize areas of the CLC. We will focus on the kitchen, the pantry, and the upstairs storage area.

LYDIA CIRCLE MEETING - DATE CHANGE

The Lydia Circle will meet on Friday, January 23, at 9:30 a.m. in the CLC.

MARY/MARTHA CIRCLE MEETING

The Mary/Martha Circle will meet on Tuesday, January 20th at 6:30 p.m.

NURTURE COMMITTEE MEETING

There will be a Nurture committee meeting on Monday, January 19, at 6:00 p.m. Members of the Nurture committee are: Carol Beasley-Chairperson, Cissy Holt, Layde

Ezell, Linda Sowell, Leslie Hunt, Tony Clayton, Teresa Glover, Martha Jo Gibbs, Jean Grimsley and Mary Ann Clayton.

TRUSTEE'S COMMITTEE MEETING

There will be a Trustee's committee meeting on Thursday, January 22, at 6:30 p.m. Members of the Trustee's committee are: Gracie Henson, Brenda Benson, Steve Wright, Dave Hancock, Dean Erwin, Herb Magee, Dan Jennings, Nancy Nelson and Mark Brewer.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE MEETING

There will be an Outreach committee meeting on Monday, January 26th, at 6:00 p.m. Members of the Outreach committee are: Jerry Gibbs-Chairperson, Sonny Duke, Beverly Duke, Martha Jo Gibbs, Harlon Griffin, Frances Griffin, Sid James, Carol James, John Benson, Polly Marsh, Pam Shaffer and Jeff Shaffer.

AN UPDATE ON NICARAGUA

A new school year will be starting in Nicaragua around the first of February. Just like here, some of the children may be dreading it and some are definitely looking forward to it. But unlike here, some are wondering if they can afford school this year. This is where we can help. If you haven't given yet to the Nicaraguan Scholarship Fund or if you would like to give some more, please do this in the next couple of weeks so that we may send them a check by the end of January.

LOAVES AND FISHES - MONTH OF DECEMBER

During the month of December, we provided food for 93 families and 263 individuals (due to the holidays we were closed 2 days this month). A total of \$2,821.16 was donated to the Loaves and Fishes ministry.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Volunteers are needed for the Hispanic Ministry on Tuesday nights. First UMC currently has a ministry to provide care for children whose parents are taking ESL classes on Tuesday nights. We are in desperate need of volunteers! Volunteers will be partnered with other adults. Volunteers do not have to speak Spanish. The ministry is from 5:30-7:30 p.m. To volunteer, please contact the church office.

LAY SPEAKING/SERVANT MINISTRY SCHOOL

The next scheduled Lay Speaking/Servant Ministry School is scheduled for April 4 and 5, (Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. and Sunday 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.). The location will be Ardmore UMC. Those who are interested may contact the church office for more information.

NEW OFFICERS ASSUME THEIR DUTIES

The persons nominated for offices and committees for 2009 at the Charge Conference in November assume their responsibilities as of January 1, 2009. We want to thank all who have been serving but have relinquished the office or committee position they held this past year. Their work has been vital to the life of First United Methodist Church. We also want to thank in advance all those who are assuming offices for the first time this year. Indeed their work is vital to the life of our church. And we indeed are grateful to those who are continuing in the positions they have held. Please accept the thanks of your church and the thanks of your pastoral team for your commitment to the church and for all that you do in the church. A list of officers is available in the church office.

ANNOUNCEMENTS IN THE BULLETIN AND NEWSLETTER

Unless otherwise, instructed, announcements in the bulletin and church newsletter will appear for three weeks and then be removed.

WITH ONE ANOTHER

David Robertson
Freddie Mae Jackson
Oscar and Agnes McCarter
Bill Evans

Those who would like to place flowers on the altar (in the chapel and the sanctuary) on Sunday morning may call the church office and ask for a particular date or dates. We will do our best to accommodate everyone. Please keep in mind that flowers are not placed on the altars on the first Sunday of each month (Communion Sunday).

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

The church office will be closed on Monday, January 19, in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

