

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Lawrenceburg, TN - OCTOBER 20, 2008

What is heaven? Many of us have been hearing about heaven all of our lives. For many of us the word heaven brings to mind the descriptions we've heard from past preaching, teaching, and verse, verse primarily in the form of songs. Heaven is that place where the streets are paved with gold. Heaven is the place where we'll inherit and inhabit a mansion. Heaven is a place of extraordinary beauty. Heaven is that place where we will find our home in God's home. That's the connotation of the word heaven for many of us.

But as time has gone along heaven has come to be described in every more varying ways, and some that really have nothing to do with the Christian understanding of heaven. And some of the ideas of heaven that are floating around out there certainly have nothing to do with the Biblical understanding of heaven.

I remember a few years ago a fellow minister coming to a Methodist minister's breakfast we had on a regular basis. He had just heard one of the Grand Ole Opry stars giving a description of heaven. One of the members of the Grand Ole Opry had died, and on the Opry stage this particular star of the Opry had said of the man who died, "I bet he's up in heaven propositioning some woman." And my fellow minister's response to that was, "Where in the world do people get ideas like that? How could anyone have a picture of heaven like that?" My minister friend was just totally flabbergasted, and with good reason, I might add.

I came across this understanding of heaven in a "Book of Illustrations" I am currently reading. The author's name is Robert Capon, and this excerpt comes from his book The Parables of the Kingdom.

Mr. Capon says this. "*Heaven or heavenly* in the New Testament bear little relation to the meanings we have so unscripturally attached to them. For us, heaven is an unearthly, humanly irrelevant condition in which bed-sheeted, paper-winged spirits sit on clouds and play tinkly music until their pipe-cleaner halos drop off from boredom...But in Scripture, it is a city with boys and girls playing in the streets; it is buildings put up by a Department of Public Works that uses amethysts for cinder blocks and pearls as big as the Ritz for gates; and indoors, it is a dinner party to end all dinner parties at the marriage supper of the Lamb. It is, in short, earth wedded, not earth jilted. It is the world as the irremovable apple of God's eyes."

Mr. Capon's analysis is certainly an interesting one. It basically says that whether the image is *too earthly and humanly relevant* as that of the Grand Ole Opry star or as altogether lovely as the idea of an other worldly place with mansions and streets paved with gold, we miss something. Not so long ago it dawned on me that I was missing some very important words in Revelation chapter 21. Those words are, "And I saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God..." The New Jerusalem comes to us, not us to it. We pray every Sunday in our worship, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Somehow heaven is to overtake earth. Heaven in this way of thinking is about earth being transformed by the will, the grace, and the love of God.

Heaven in some sense according to Scripture and pointed out to us by Mr. Capon is about God transforming earth according to God's will and purpose for his creation and for our lives. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." Could this be what Paul is talking about? Could he be saying that in Christ right here and now we are transported into that which is heaven? Could he be saying that in Christ we help to bring heaven to earth? It is something to think about.

I will end with this closing thought. I remember my Sunday School teacher from my youth, Mrs. Emma Warf, saying on many occasions, "Our heaven begins here when we surrender our lives to the Lord Jesus Christ." If this is indeed a reasonable way to think about heaven, then heaven is both a wonderful gift and a responsibility. It is both a blessing and a calling. Indeed, this is something to think about.

Until next time, **Bro. Jim**

CHARGE CONFERENCE

Our Charge Conference is scheduled for Sunday evening, **November 2, at 6 P.M.** The following written reports will be expected at that time: Committee on Finance; Trustees; Staff-Parish Relations Committee; Parsonage Annual Inspection Report; Lay Speakers Reports; Martin Representative's Report; and Celebration of Missions Report. **The forms for each are available at the church office.**

Dear Church Members,

I hope you are as excited as I am about our upcoming B B & B (Bake sale, Breakfast and Beyond). We've come up with a different name for a different approach to our fall bazaar. The bake sale is like all bake sales; a great selection of mouthwatering breads, scrumptious cookies and candies, and delicious cakes, pies, jams, and jellies. However, its success depends on the expert cooking skills of our members. So the UMW invites everyone to cook your specialty to include in our sale. We need all of you whether you attend early or late services or just Sunday school, please share your talents.

We also encourage your attendance on the morning of November 8th. Come purchase a carryout of chili, stew or dumplings for yourself, a neighbor, or a shut-in. Buy a Christmas gift of our new FUMC 2008 cookbook. Some will be available already wrapped and ready to give as a gift. We'll have great teacher gifts of spiced tea and cocoa mix. And best of all, you can enjoy a delicious breakfast of juice, coffee, and sausage & biscuit while you shop. What could be better? Come and bring a friend. We'll be counting on your help and attendance.

Our profits will go toward the many mission activities, both local and national, that are supported by our United Methodist Women.

Yours in Christ,
Gracie Henson

*****Please remember to bring pint and quart jars with lids that can be used for Carry-Outs.**

ADOPT - A - HIGHWAY

Please mark your calendars. The next scheduled Adopt - A - Highway is Saturday, October 25, beginning at 7:30 a.m. Everyone is invited and encouraged to participate in this highway clean-up.

CELL PHONE RECYCLING

Ever wonder what to do with that old cell phone, lying around the house? Bring your old cell phones to church and the youth will recycle the phones, (and earn a little cash in the process AND help the environment!) We are collecting only phones, no cords, no chargers, **ONLY PHONES.**

NEWS FROM THE HAPPY ELDERS

The Happy Elders have 14 tickets to see the play "Tuna Christmas" on Dec. 4, 2008. We will leave the west parking lot of the church at 9:30 a.m.; have lunch at noon and then the play with dessert at intermission. We should be back in Lawrenceburg around 4:30 to 5:00 p.m. Call Jean Robertson ***** or see Terri in the church office. Sign up and money should be in by Nov. 14, 2008. Cost is \$25.00. First come, first served.

CALLING ALL TRICK OR TREATERS

Sunday, October 26, the Church is hosting Trunk or Treat. A Hotdog supper will be served at 5:00 p.m., crafts and games will follow and as soon as it gets dark, everybody gets to go outside to truck or treat!

NEWS FROM OUR UMW

This past Saturday, at the District UMW meeting, in Waynesboro, the Lawrenceburg-First UMW was awarded the Five Star Unit Award for their achievement in the five areas

of Mission Giving. They were also awarded the Mission Today 2008 Platinum award from the Tennessee Conference United Methodist Women. A special congratulations goes out to Ann Cornelius and Jean Robertson, who both received UMW lifetime service awards for their unending service to the organization. Please be sure and congratulate the ladies for these high honors.

ATTENTION ALL PARENTS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

The Church would like to send care packages to our College students, but we can't do that without their addresses. If you would like your college student to receive a care package from Church, please call the church office to make sure we have your student's current address at school.

TRUNK OR TREAT SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26TH - 5:00-8:00 P.M. CHURCH PARKING LOT

Volunteers are needed to decorate trunks and you may sign up in the church office.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT SUPPER MENU FOR OCTOBER 29

The menu for Wednesday night (October 22) is as follows: Chicken & Dressing, Sweet potatoes, Green beans, Rolls, Pecan cobbler. The children's menu is Mac. & Cheese. Look for your reservations in Sunday's bulletin, the church website, or you may call the church office.

LOAVES AND FISHES MINISTRY NEEDS WINTER COATS

The Loaves and Fishes Ministry is in need of winter outerwear. During the winter months, we see several people who do not have coats/jackets and are very much in need. We would appreciate your donations of gently used coats, jackets, sweaters, and outerwear. Children's and adult sizes are needed.

LAY LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING

The Lay Leadership Committee will meet on Sunday, October 26th, at 3:00 p.m. Members of the Lay Leadership Committee are: Bro. Jim-Chairperson, Bonnie Thigpen, Mark Brewer, Beverly Philpot, DeAnna Saliba, Leslie Hunt, Keri McMahan, Linda Newton, Judy Benson and Beth Benson

STAFF-PARISH COMMITTEE MEETING

The Staff-Parish committee will meet on Monday, October 27, at 6:30 p.m. Members of the SPRC are: Chris Thigpen-Chairperson, Rick Lucas, Barbara Brewer, Virgil Crowder, Gail Wright, Marc Lerner, Jansen Holt, Bobby Belew, Judy Brewer, Jerry Moore and Nancy Moore.

NURTURE MINISTRIES MEETING

There will be a Nurture Ministries meeting on Tuesday, October 28, at 6:00 p.m. Members of the Nurture committee are: Carol Beasley-Chairperson, Cissy Holt, Layde Ezell, Cathy Skinner, Leslie Hunt, Tony Clayton, Teresa Glover, Allen Newton, Jean Grimsley, Mary Ann Clayton and John Benson.

ST. JOHN'S UMC FISH FRY

Everyone is invited to a Fish Fry at St. John's United Methodist Church, this Saturday, October 25th, from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Plates are \$7.00 each, and includes fish, French fries, hushpuppies and all the trimmings. Drinks and desserts are extra. Sandwiches will also be available for \$4.00.

WITH ONE ANOTHER

David Robertson
Freddie Mae Jackson
Oscar and Agnes McCarter
Bill Evans

Edythe Edwards
Robert White
Elmer Hackney
Scottie McMackin
Ivene Hammond
Rev. Clifton Johnston
Ruby Lopp
T. J. Moore
David Shaw
Meredith Nordin
Elmer Cooke
Norman Marston
Ellen Crews
Jane Brawner
Ronnie Thigpen
Evelyn Gallaher

CHRISTIANS CONNECT

The Christians Connect page has been updated on the church website. Be sure and check out the latest photos from October 12th.

ADULT HAND BELLS

Adult Hand Bells will resume on **November 2nd at 5:00 p.m.** (time is due to Charge conference being at 6:00 p.m.). **Please pick up your music from the bell room on October 26th** (you may stop by before Truck or Treat).

I Will Be Loyal

**To The United Methodist Church And
Support It With: My Presence:**

Sunday, October 19, 2008

8:15 a.m. Worship Attendance.....33

Sunday school Attendance.....79

10:30 a.m. Worship Attendance.....103

My Service: Sunday, Oct. 26, 2008

Acolytes: Maggie McKnight & Kamelia Wayne

Nursery Helper: Sarah C. Trousdale

Volunteers are needed in the nursery on the following dates:

December 14

December 21

December 28

Please call Cissy Holt at ***** or leave a message with the church office (762-3696).

Loaves and Fishes: Tues. & Thurs.

Tues. Oct. 28: Linda Newton & Ray Price

Thurs. Oct. 30: Elmer Cooke & Jean Robertson

We are always in need of more volunteers in the Loaves and Fishes Ministry. If you would like to help, please contact the church office.

