

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - NOVEMBER 09, 2009

(From the Pastor's Pen)

Last week I wrote about being thankful for my family. As we continue in this Thanksgiving Season of the year I want to continue to count my blessings, and so I continue to name things for which I am thankful.

I am thankful for the educational opportunity I have had. When I started to school in the first grade (Kindergarten was for city folk when I started to school), I would rather not have had to go to school. I was shy, and I didn't want to be away from home. I didn't like school, and so I would rather not have gone. But thankfully my parents believed that education was important. School was important, and I went.

During the time we were growing up, my dad would say to us, "I want you to have an opportunity to go as far as you want to go in school." After graduation from high school it was up to us to pursue a college education if we wanted that, but he helped instill in us the desire to go farther than high school. Daddy loved farming, being a farmer, and the farm life, but he was well aware that his opportunities for employment and an occupation were rather limited, and he wanted his children to have more choices about their chosen profession than he had. So he did his best to encourage us to think beyond high school, and he made sure that he and mother laid the proper foundation for us to go beyond high school. And I am grateful for that.

As I think about my educational experience I am grateful in a number of ways. I am grateful for the political climate in this state that brought about Columbia State Community College at the right time for me. I was in the second class to enter Columbia State, the first class to start on the present campus when there were only five buildings on the campus. And I am grateful for the educational experience I had there. Some of the professors I had there have continued to be good friends across the years. Three in particular are the late Dr. Lewis Moore, Dr. B. I. Naddy, and Mr. Monte Bayless. As a Pre-Pharmacy student they really wanted me to succeed, and I will never forget that. And Dr. Naddy in time would become a friend to our whole family. It meant so much to all of us that he came to see Daddy in the hospital during his last illness.

I am grateful for the opportunity I had to attend The University of Tennessee College of Pharmacy. At UT I learned not only how to be a pharmacist, but they taught us how to be a professional. Education is always more than just learning the content of your particular field of study. Brenda and I, along with a number of Santa Fe High School students recall a saying that one of our high school teachers was fond of quoting. "The purpose of an education is to train the mind and the will to do what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, whether you want to do it or not." I thought that saying was kinda corny the first time I heard it, but over the years I've come to realize just how much truth there is in it.

And I am grateful for the opportunity I had to attend Vanderbilt Divinity School. As I wrestled with my call to pastoral ministry, one of the things I prayed about a number of times was the seminary I should attend, but I never seemed to get a direct answer to that prayer. I think it was because the answer was obvious. With a family and Brenda's work, staying close to home was the best option, and I am grateful for my education at Vanderbilt.

The Divinity School at Vanderbilt has long been given the designation of being "quite liberal," and I wouldn't argue that point. While I was there, there were professors as well as students with whom I disagreed when it came to some of their theological positions, but I never had my theological position, though more conservative, dismissed. As long as I could make an adequate defense of why I believed the way I believed, it was accepted, and I find myself being grateful for that all these years later. It stretched me. It helped me grow. It taught me to articulate my beliefs, and that, I believe, has made me a better minister.

So I am grateful for the educational opportunity I have had, from first grade all the way through two professional degrees, a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy and a Master of Divinity. These educational experiences have made my life richer, these educational experiences have afforded me the opportunity to engage in two great professions, and these educational experiences have helped prepare me to serve my Lord in a way that allows me to give my very best in that service.

Blessings indeed come in a variety of ways. Just something to think about.
Until next time,
Bro. Jim

NOVEMBER HARVEST COUNTDOWN

The annual UMW November Harvest is this Saturday, November 14. **We are counting on your support.** Bake sale items may be brought to the CLC on Friday, November 13, from 2:00 until 5:00 p.m. or early Saturday morning. Remember, please label your items so we will know what kind of cake, bread, pie, candy, etc., we are selling. If you have been asked to bring chili or chicken and dumplings please do so Friday afternoon or Saturday morning. It goes without saying that the CLC will be the place to be on November 14, from 8:00 - 12noon. Come early and enjoy the fellowship. Eat breakfast while you shop. See you there!

UMW NEWS

How do you survive a crash in the desert? Come learn about Desert Survival Training at the UMW Spiritual Growth Retreat, on Saturday, November 21, from 9:00 a.m. until noon in the Friends and Fellowship Classroom. Bring your bible, note pad and pen and a sack lunch. Drink and dessert will be provided.

NOVEMBER - FIFTH SUNDAY COLLECTION FOR FOOD PANTRY

Please mark your calendars. November has a Fifth Sunday, which is a Sunday designated for collecting non-food items for the food pantry. Suggested items are:

Toothpaste	Diapers	Soap
Toilet Tissue	Washing Detergent	Diapers
Dish washing detergent	Shampoo	Razors/shaving cream
Deodorant		

We will collect these things (**Nov. 29**) with a special emphasis on Fifth Sundays, but you may bring them by any time.

FIFTH SUNDAY SINGING - NOVEMBER 29TH

Please mark your calendars. We will host the Fifth Sunday singing on November 29th, beginning at 6:00 p.m. Please join us as we enjoy the music of other Methodist choirs and individuals. Our choir will also be singing for the program. There will be a time of fellowship following the program.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

The Trustees will meet on Tuesday, November 17, at 7:00 p.m. Members of the Trustees are: Dean Erwin-Chairperson, Gracie Henson, Brenda Benson, Steve Wright, Dave Hancock, Herb Magee, Dan Jennings, Nancy Nelson and Mark Brewer.

A NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM - 2009

December is just around the corner and we are gearing up for our 2nd annual "A Night in Bethlehem." This year we are going to be open for three nights in December, Friday, December 4th (6-9 p.m.), Saturday, December 5th (6-9 p.m.) and Sunday, December 6th (3-6 p.m.). Re-creating the town of Bethlehem is no small feat and we need lots of help. We need people behind the scenes to help set up the town, which will take place the week of December 1-3. We need shopkeepers, soldiers, beggars, shepherds, Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus to interact with our visitors. We also need behind the scenes help during the three nights, with parking, food for our volunteers, and keeping the shops supplied with materials. It certainly takes a Church to raise a village, in a matter of speaking. We had over two hundred visitors last year that experienced Christmas in a new way and I hope we can create that magic for many families this year as well. If you can volunteer in any way, please let the Church office know, or email Alecia at youth911AThotmail.com.

CONFIRMATION

Anyone in 6th or 7th grade interested in Confirmation, there will be an informational meeting on Tuesday, December 1st at 6:00 p.m. for parents and students.

Rev. Alecia Fischer

BEYOND THE TURKEY - PART 3

(Submitted by Associate Pastor-Alecia Fischer)

Serve Up a Memory

The primary focus of Thanksgiving tends to be on the meal itself. But even this celebration can be planned to bring an eternal perspective to the table. Consider adding some of these touches to the family feast:

- Let the children make a place card for each place setting. On one side, put names of guests and family members; on the other side, write a Scripture verse that refers to giving thanks. Let each person read his or her verse before the blessing.
- Have a brief family sharing time before or after the meal. Include everyone by placing a paper leaf with an assignment at each place: (Read Psalm 100, share a Thanksgiving memory, sing a Thanksgiving song etc.)
- Say the blessing.

One young mother shared her family's tradition of giving an unlit votive candle to each person. Her husband begins by lighting his and thanking God for specific blessings, and it continues around the table until all are lit. A candlelight thanksgiving service!

It truly is possible to move beyond the turkey and cultivate gratitude in our children. My little ones sang a chorus that summarized a better understanding of the potential for this holiday. It contained the words, "Thanksgiving Day is a happy day, and we say thank you, God!"

INVITATIONS

*You are cordially invited
To a bridal tea for
Mandy Edwards
Bride-elect of Scott Caruso,
November 22, 2009,
From 12:30-2:30 p.m.
In the Christian Life Center Parlor of the
First United Methodist Church
In Lawrenceburg, TN
Selections at:
Dillards
Bed, Bath and Beyond
Sears
Miss Millie's*

*Mr. & Mrs. Bruce W. Edwards, Jr.
request the honour of your presence
at the marriage of their daughter
Mandy Kay to Scott James Caruso, Jr.
son of
Mr. & Mrs. Scott James Caruso, Sr.
Saturday, the twelfth of December
Two thousand and nine
at five o'clock in the afternoon
First United Methodist Church
212 Waterloo Street
Lawrenceburg, TN*

*Please join us for a reception immediately following the ceremony
Providence Hall, 26 Public Square, Lawrenceburg, TN
The favour of a reply is requested before November 25, 2009
P.O. Box 70; Leoma, TN 38468, or bedwards44@hotmail.com or
852-4172 (leave message) or Tell Barbara or Bruce*

WITH ONE ANOTHER

David Robertson
Freddie Mae Jackson
Agnes McCarter
Bill Evans
Scottie McMackin

Chicken and rice casserole
Broccoli w/cheese
Salad; Rolls
Banana pudding
Workers: **Wesley Class**

*****Please note: There will not be a Wednesday night supper on Wednesday, November 25 due to the Thanksgiving holiday.**

