

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

DECEMBER 29, 2008

The Pastor's Pen

By the time you read this we will have ushered in a new year, year 2009. The new year is a time when people traditionally make resolutions, and you may have entered into that tradition this new year already having made some resolutions.

When it comes to the new year and the making of resolutions, we ought not omit the spiritual. In fact, John Wesley would lead what was known as a Covenant Renewal Service at midnight on New Year's Eve. The Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition found on page 607 of our Methodist Hymnal is a prayer that Wesley used in that "Watch Night Service" to lead in just such a renewal for the people called Methodist. That prayer starts out, "I am no longer my own, but thine. Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be employed for thee or laid aside for thee. " This prayer leads in a re-commitment to the Lord.

During this time of the ending of the old year and the beginning of a new year, may I suggest that we as God's people think in terms of spiritual renewal. I would like to suggest some specifics for that spiritual renewal and re-commitment based on a passage found in Luke's Gospel (2:21-38).

In Luke's continuing story of the circumstances that surrounded Jesus' birth and Jesus' birth itself, Luke tells about Mary and Joseph taking the new born Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem eight days after his birth. They go to enter into the rites of purification for Mary and to make the appropriate offering. In going to the Temple at this time and making this sacrifice Mary and Joseph are being faithful to the traditions of their faith, Judaism. They are being obedient to the faith, their faith.

While Mary and Joseph are there at the Temple, Luke tells of them meeting an old man named Simeon. Simeon stayed around the Temple. Simeon had received a promise from God. Simeon had wanted to see God's Messiah come, and so God promised Simeon that he would not die until he saw the Savior with his own eyes. When he saw Mary, Joseph, and their baby, Jesus, Simeon knew that God had kept his promise to him. Simeon was seeing God's Messiah, the Savior, and after seeing Jesus, Simeon said, "Now, Lord I can die in peace." He had been waiting a long time. Simeon had become an old man while waiting, but God had kept his promise. Simeon had been patient.

When Simeon saw Jesus, he also made some predictions about what Jesus as Messiah would do. To paraphrase Simeon's words, he basically said that Jesus would bring judgment to the lives of many and the result of that would be that many would accept Jesus as Messiah while others would not, and there would be pain to be endured because of that non-acceptance. Simeon at that point could see the outlines of a cross. Simeon was sensitive to the work of the God's Messiah and that it would bring pain not only to Jesus himself but to Mary as well. Simeon was sensitive to the difficulty that would come to Mary as the result of her being the mother of Jesus, the Savior.

Then while at the Temple Mary and Joseph met another person. This other person was a woman named Anna. Anna had known great tragedy. Anna had been married in her youth, but only for seven years before her husband had died. Anna became a widow after seven years of marriage, and in those days that would have meant life would have been hard for her. But Anna was now 84 years old, and in that time since becoming a widow she had never left the Temple. She served God there. Anna was faithful. She never gave up on God, and on that day there he was, the Savior. And Anna got to see the Savior, Jesus.

As we think about the new year, resolutions, and spiritual renewal, may I suggest to us these resolutions for our spiritual life based on the story above. Let us resolve to be **obedient** to the faith. Let us resolve to be **patient** in our Christian living. Let us resolve to be **sensitive** to those around us because a life of faith is not always easy. And let us resolve to **never, ever give up** on God.

Just something to think about. Happy New Year. Until next time, **Bro. Jim**

CONFIRMATION CLASSES

In the early part of next year, we will offer a Confirmation Class, if there is enough interest. The class will be for 6th grade and up. If your child is interested, please contact Alecia Fischer or the church office.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT STUDY

Our Wednesday night study, beginning January 21st, will be "Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations" by Bishop Robert Schnase. The study will include a devotional book that each participant will need to read daily. We would encourage as many adults as possible to join in this study on Wednesday nights, and we need to know who might be interested so we know the number of books to order. Please let us know at the church office if you plan to participate in the study.

WARMTH IN WINTER

All youth 7th-12th grades are invited to attend the Tennessee Conference annual Warmth in Winter, January 30th - February 1st in Nashville. We will be taking a group and if you are interested, please contact Alecia. Deadline to sign up is December 31, 2008. The cost is \$60.

ACOLYTE MEETING

There will be a meeting for children and their parents concerning the acolyte program on January 14th, at 6:30 p.m. All those interested in participating (grades 3 - 6) and those currently serving as acolytes are asked to attend.

CHRIST BELL

I KNOW WHO I AM

I am God's child (John 1:12)
I am Christ's friend (John 15:15)
I am united with the Lord (1Cor. 6:17)
I am bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:19-20)
I am a saint (set apart for God). (Eph. 1:1)
I am a personal witness of Christ. (Acts 1:8)
I am the salt & light of the earth (Matt 5:13-14)
I am a member of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27)
I am free forever from condemnation (Rom. 8:1-2)
I am a citizen of Heaven. I am significant (Phil 3:20)
I am free from any charge against me (Rom. 8:31-34)
I am a minister of reconciliation for God (2 Cor. 5:17-21)
I have access to God through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:18)
I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realms (Eph. 2:6)
I cannot be separated from the love of God (Rom. 8:35-39)
I am established, anointed, sealed by God (2 Cor. 1:21-22)
I am assured all things work together for good (Rom. 8:28)
I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit (John 15:16)
I may approach God with freedom and confidence (Eph. 3:12)
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil. 4:13)
I am the branch of the true vine, a channel of His life (John 15:1-5)
I am God's temple (1 Cor. 3:16). I am complete in Christ (Col. 2:10)
I am hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3:3). I have been justified (Romans 5:1)
I am God's co-worker (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor 6:1). I am God's workmanship (Eph. 2:10)
I am confident that the good works God has begun in me will be perfected (Phil 1:5)
I have been redeemed and forgiven (Col 1:14).
I have been adopted as God's child (Eph. 1:5)

I belong to God

And so do you!

WITH ONE ANOTHER

David Robertson
Freddie Mae Jackson

Oscar and Agnes McCarter
Bill Evans
Edythe Edwards
Robert White
Elmer Hackney
Scottie McMackin
Rev. Clifton Johnston
T. J. Moore
David Shaw
Meredith Nordin
Norman Marston
Evelyn Gallaher
El James
Scott Dean
Willodean Grinnell
Elmer Cooke
Roger Farr
Rosie Coleman

A NOTE OF THANKS

Dear Church Family,

I greatly appreciate all the cards, prayers, phone calls and "The Night in Bethlehem" program. All 3 of the children enjoyed the hands-on experience. It was especially nice that members picked my children up from the funeral home to take them and then brought them back. It was very effective in keeping them pre-occupied in a Christian atmosphere. Thank you all again and God Bless you this Holiday Season.

Love and Thanks,

Mary Ellen Giles Douglas

I Will Be Loyal

To The United Methodist Church And

Support It With: My Presence:

Sunday, December 28, 2008

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

Sunday school Attendance.....80

10:30 a.m. Worship Attendance.....95

My Service: Sunday, Jan. 04, 2009

Acolytes: Katie Rochelle & Lucy Benson

Nursery Helper:

Loaves and Fishes: Tues. & Thurs.

Tues. Jan. 6 : Linda Newton & Ray Price

Thurs. Jan. 8: Jean Robertson & volunteer needed

COOKBOOK CORRECTION

It has come to our attention there is a recipe with wrong directions. Please correct this in any cookbook you purchased for yourself or for gifts. On page 104-105m the recipe for Forgotten Cookies, the degree is **350**, not 500. After the word immediately, add "**turn off the oven**".

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

This should come as no surprise to anyone, but the number one New Year's Resolution (from a survey of over 300,000), is to **Lose Weight and get in better Physical Shape.**

