

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

February 16, 2009

The Pastor's Pen

In the days of the prophet Micah some of the people of Israel had become convinced that they couldn't please God. The sixth chapter of the Book of Micah captures the sentiment that Micah believed was being reflected in Israel. "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" In other words the people were saying, "We can't give enough to please God. God requires too much of us."

Micah's response to the people was that God really didn't require of them all that they had come to believe God required. Really all God asked of them were some quite simple things, namely that they do what is right, that they give themselves to being kind, and that they walk humbly with God. That's all that God required of them - do right, be kind, and walk humbly with the Lord.

In a passage we all know very well the Apostle Paul says, "If I speak with the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging symbol. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, and love is kind." (1 Corinthians 13:1-4).

What I hear Paul saying is that we really don't have to do all these great and wonderful things to be God's people. Really what we have to do is love. All God asks of us - all Jesus asks of us - is that we love, and love includes being patient and being kind.

The story is told of a retired teacher who was celebrating her eightieth birthday. Many people came. It was quite a party. Among the people who came to celebrate with her were a number of her former students. This lady had taught in a school in one of the worst sections of the city of Baltimore. But in time after this lady had begun teaching there, things began to change in that neighborhood for the better. Many of her students had noticeable turnarounds. Many of them became outstanding citizens, and some of them went on to be doctors, others lawyers, others educators, some ministers, some honorable craftsmen and others skilled technicians. This woman had obviously made a difference in a number of people's lives during her career as a teacher.

One of the newspapers in the city got wind of the birthday party for this lady and all the people who would be attending, so they sent a reporter to cover the occasion. While there the reporter interviewed the guest of honor and asked her what her secret was in impacting the lives of so many students. The lady answered, "Oh, I don't know. When I look at the young teachers in our schools today, so well-equipped with training and learning, I realize that I was ill-prepared to teach. I had nothing to give but love." [From Illustrations Unlimited].

All this lady had to give was love. As Christians we may not be

persons of eloquent speech. We may not have the opportunity to do great things for the Lord. We may not be great and gifted teachers or gifted leaders, but one thing we can do is to be kind. Really and truly that may be the very first attribute that identifies us as a Christian. Are we kind to others?

A person can profess great faith, not be kind to others and be held suspect as far as their Christian faith is concerned. A person may know the Bible quite well and be able to answer all manner of questions about the content of Scripture, but if that person fails to be kind to others, he or she may well be held suspect in terms of their Christian character. A person may spend great amounts of time and energy in serving the church, but if they fail to be kind to others, their Christian witness may well come into question. Mahatma Gandhi is quoted as having said, "I like your Christ, but it is you Christians I don't care for."

When it comes to being a Christian, being kind just may be one of the most important things. Kindness is one of those things that is "out front," so to speak, in touching lives of others for the good. And kindness will come nearer than anything else in saying to others that we know the Lord.

Kindness, like love, joy, peace, patience, and gentleness, is one of the fruits of the Spirit, and the fruit of a tree ought to be on display. In the Christian life kindness surely ought to be on display all the time. We don't have to do great things for the Lord to be a Christian. We don't have to memorize the Bible to be a Christian, and we don't have to know Christian theology forward and backward to be a Christian. But we do need to be kind in all things. Kindness will say as much about the depth of our Christian commitment as anything we are or do. Just something to think about.

Until Next time, **Bro. Jim**

NEWS FROM THE OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The Outreach Committee has discussed the possibility of opening our Loaves and Fishes Food Bank a few nights each month. This would make it possible for people that work during the day to still come to us after work for some help. Right now the pantry is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9 until 11 a.m. If we were to open up the last two Thursdays of each month from 5 until 7 p.m., we feel more people could be served. The last of the month is generally much busier than the first of the month.

We would be interested to know if there are people that would like to volunteer to work these extra shifts. We have a dedicated group that give of their time for the mornings but this could open the possibility of others to serve as well. If you have always wanted to work but couldn't because of the morning hours, this would be a good time to help serve.

We would need three volunteers for each evening shift. If enough people do volunteer their time then you probably would not need to work more than once every few months. Please let someone on the Outreach Committee know or Terri in the office if you would be willing to help.

LYDIA CIRCLE MEETING

The Lydia Circle will meet on Friday, February 27, at 9:30 a.m. in the CLC parlor. We will have our pledge service and also be discussing Lutheranism.

ATTENTION!

Two trays for the dishwasher in the CLC are missing. They are a light brown plastic. One tray is flat inside, and the other has posts for holding plates during the wash cycle. If you know the whereabouts of these trays, please call the church office. The dishwasher in the CLC cannot be

used without these trays. Thank you.

NURTURE COMMITTEE NEWS

If you know of someone who is ill, has been ill, or has missed church recently due to surgery or another reason, please see or contact **Linda Sowell at ******* (member of the Nurture committee). Linda will see that the person or persons receives a card from the church letting them know they are missed.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT MENU FOR FEBRUARY 25th

Barbeque Chicken, Macaroni Salad, Baked Beans, Rolls, Carrot Cake
Workers: Friends & Fellowship Class
Cost of meal is only \$5 (adults) and \$3 (children)

MISSION TRIP UPDATE

Those planning to go on the Mission trip to Henderson Settlement should go ahead and pay their \$185 fee as soon as possible (or no later than March 1).

HAPPY ELDERS NEWS

The Happy Elders have 14 tickets to The Renaissance Center in Dickson, TN, to see the play "Shirley Valentine", March 6, 2009. Middle-aged housewife Shirley gets tired of talking to the wall and gets her groove back on an adventure to Greece in the Tony Award-winning comedy by Willy Russell. After feeling like her life is stagnant and in a rut, Shirley drops everything and heads abroad with a friend, finding romance and what her existence can be with just a little effort on her part. This is a senior matinee luncheon and play. **They have gone up \$5.00 on the ticket and lunch, making the cost for the trip \$30 - \$25.00 for ticket and lunch and \$5 to cover gas for the van and ticket for the driver. We need to sign up and pay by the 28th of Feb.** We will leave the church west parking lot at 9:45 a.m. and usually get back by 5:00 p.m. You can sign up at the church office or call Jean Robertson at *****. First come, first served.

THE LAWRENCE COUNTY TRAVELERS

The Lawrence County Travelers have a 3-day REDISCOVER ATLANTA TOUR March 31-April 2, 2009 via a luxury motor coach with a professional driver. Five (5) meals are included, along with a city tour, the Aquarium, dinner at Mary Mac's Tea Room, Margaret Mitchell House, Lunch, New World of Cocoa Cola, Broadway musical "Happy Days", The First Emperor: China's Terracotta Army @ High Museum, 2 Deluxe Continental Breakfasts and lunch at Classic on Noble. **Price per Person: Single is \$655, Double is \$555, Triple is \$525, and Quad is \$505. Deposit of \$100 will hold seat and balance by March 10.** See Jean Robertson or phone ***** to sign up and for more information.

CHILDREN'S EVENT

Sunday, March 1st, 2009, at 4:00 p.m., First United Methodist Church will be showing the newest Veggie Tales DVD: "Abe and the Amazing Promise". The event will take place in the CLC, in the youth room. All participants will receive a poster, Veggie Tales sticker, a \$2 coupon towards the purchase of the movie and Veggie Tales activity sheets.

SOCK HOP IN THE CLC

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28TH, 6:00 - 9:00 P.M.
\$10.00 PER PERSON INCLUDES BURGERS, HOTDOGS, CHIPS AND SODA
ALL BENEFITS GO TO HELP BRING A NICARAGUAN DELEGATION
TO VISIT OUR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

CHURCH-WIDE YARD SALE

SATURDAY, MARCH 28TH, BEGINNING AT 7:00 A.M.
ALL BENEFITS GO TO HELP BRING A NICARAGUAN DELEGATION TO
VISIT OUR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY
BRING YOUR DONATIONS TO THE CLC THE WEEK OF THE YARD SALE

WITH ONE ANOTHER

David Robertson
Freddie Mae Jackson
Oscar and Agnes McCarter
Bill Evans
Edythe Edwards

FLOWERS FOR THE ALTAR

The following Sundays are available in the month of March for altar flowers: **March 15th, and 29th**. Please call the church office if you would like to place altar flowers on any of these dates.

UPCOMING EVENT

Lawrenceburg-First will host the first noon Lenten Service/Lunch on Wednesday Feb. 25th.

PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY

The Prayer Shawl Knitters group will meet Tuesday, Feb. 24, in the Youth room in the CLC.

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