

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - March 02, 2009

The Pastor's Pen

One of the fruits of the Spirit that Paul names in Galatians is generosity. Probably the first thought that comes to our mind when we hear the word generosity is being giving with our money. Certainly giving of our means has to be a big part of generosity.

Christian people tend to be very giving people when it comes to helping people in difficulty. The amounts of money given by churches and by Christians in times of natural disaster are often more than generous. Our country is very generous when it comes to giving. America has given much to help other nations and people in other parts of the world. And certainly we as a church are more than generous when it comes to the way we support just our Loaves and Fishes ministry alone, not to mention all of our other mission and benevolent giving. Christian people and the church are marked by a generous spirit.

Generosity is reflected in the stories that come to us from Scripture. The story of the widow giving her only two coins at the Temple treasury is a story of generosity. The parable Jesus told about the laborers who were hired near the end of the day being paid the same wages as those who started early in the day is a story of generosity. The story of the Good Samaritan is a story of generosity, and in The Book of Acts when Barnabas sells a piece of property and brings all the money to the church, we see generosity in action. And in all these instances generosity is blessed. It is pronounced a good thing, the example to follow.

Likewise the failure to be generous is looked upon in Scripture as something not to be blessed. The story of Ananias and Sapphira in the Book of Acts is a story that tells us that lying and failing to be generous cannot be countenanced by the church. Ananias and Sapphira wanted to look generous, as had Barnabas when he sold the property and gave the proceeds to the church, but in their hearts and in actual practice they were not generous. And they paid a severe price for their lack of generosity. They died when confronted by the Apostle Peter about what they had done.

So being generous has to do with being liberal in sharing our substance with others, and yet I think there are other ways we can be generous. When Jesus says in his Sermon on the Mount, "Do not judge, or you too will be judged," I think he's talking about generosity. Jesus goes on to say, "For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Matthew 7:1-2 NIV). If we are generous in our opinions of others, more than likely they will be generous in their opinions of us.

Generosity can also have to do with giving others the benefit of the doubt. It has to do with not being too terribly strict in our approach to others. Generosity is willing to take into account that there may be circumstances of which we are not aware. Generosity is willing to let people off the hook. Generosity is not being too terribly legalistic about things. Generosity doesn't say, "I told you so."

So there are other ways in which we as those who belong to Christ can be generous. Generosity then, it would seem, is having a liberal spirit toward others in various and sundry ways. Generosity is then an attitude we take toward others that is gracious in our judgments and very giving in our loving, our kindness, our mercy, and our sharing with others.

And by the way it would surely seem that those persons who are the most generous seem to be the happiest. They always seem to be receiving amply. Remember what Jesus said about that. "Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap" (Luke 6:38 NRSV). And as was the case with the one-talent servant in the parable of the talents, those who are stingy often get what they have taken from them. Generosity then, practiced in a variety of ways, would seem to lead to blessing while stinginess leads to always living from a point of view of scarcity. Just something to think about.

Until next time, **Bro. Jim**

[In my column in last week's Newsletter there was an error. The line that reads, "And in

one of my favorite songs of all time Gentle on My Mind there is a line that pays homage to a lack of unfaithfulness..." The word should be *faithfulness*, and the sentence should read "homage to a lack of faithfulness."]

The stories behind Easter symbols...Easter colors
(From Associate Pastor - Alecia Fischer)

The colors most often used in Easter decorations, white, yellow or gold, and delicate shades of green and purple, are the colors of springtime too. They are the colors of new leaves and grass, spring flowers, flowering shrubs and trees. **White** stands for light, purity, and joy. We see it in Easter candles, in the fragrant Easter lily, and combined with the pastel colors of Easter. **Yellow** stands for sunlight and radiance, and is also the color for April, the month in which Easter most often comes. Radiance was a symbol of earthly kings as well as of the divine or heavenly one. Light seemed to shine on the royal person and to radiate from his golden crown. And Jesus is often called prince. **Purple** is a royal color too. And in the language of religious symbols it stands for mourning. Purple draperies cover the statues and pictures in some of the Christian churches during Lent to show sorrow over Jesus' death. The purple dye of the ancient world came from a certain shellfish in the Mediterranean Sea. Since each fish gave but a speck, it was a dye only the wealthiest could afford. No wonder that purple garments and the color itself became the mark of kings and emperors. **Green** stands for nature and for hope of eternal life. When green colored the bare tree branches and spread over the fields in spring, early pagan peoples took hope. A new year was beginning for all living and growing things. In some countries the Thursday before Easter is called Green Thursday. Priests of the Middle Ages wore green robes on this day. Wrongdoers who were being pardoned at this time also wore green or carried sprigs of green plants. At home people had their own customs for the day. They ate green foods, herb soup, spinach, served with eggs, and green salads. Not to do so was bad luck, they came to believe. Among German people an old saying warning that a person who refuses to eat the green salad may turn into a donkey. And while no one today believes such a thing, the custom of green foods for Green Thursdays still goes on in a large part of Europe.

DON'T FORGET TO SET YOUR CLOCKS UP 1 HOUR AS WE "SPRING FORWARD" THIS WEEKEND AND ADD AN EXTRA HOUR OF DAYLIGHT TO OUR DAYS!

Noon Lenten Service Schedule:

March 11 - Solid Rock Christian Church

March 18 - Sacred Heart Catholic Church **March 25** - First Presbyterian Church

April 01 - Immanuel Baptist Church **April 08** - Calvary Hill Church of God

CROSSES & EGGS

It's that time of year, Easter is just around the corner and our annual Easter egg hunt is on Sunday, April 5th. We need YOUR help. The children's ministries would like you to donate plastic eggs and goodies to fill them up with. All candies must be individually wrapped. Please bring your donations to Alecia's office by Sunday, March 22, so we can get them prepared for the Easter Bunny to deliver.

CHRISTIANS CONNECT - SUNDAY, MARCH 8TH

Join us for Christians Connect, Sunday, March 8, following the 8:15 a.m. service. This month's gathering will be hosted by the Wesley Class and will meet in the Friends & Fellowship class.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT MENU FOR MARCH 11th

Chicken Pot Pie, Fruit salad, Chocolate cake w/cream cheese icing

Workers: Volunteer group

Cost of meal is only \$5 (adults) and \$3 (children)

WINTER JAM

All youth are invited to attend Winter Jam 2009 in Nashville, Sunday, March 15th, 2009.

Tickets are \$10 for 5 Christian Bands. For more information contact Alecia Fischer.

NOTES OF THANKS

First UMC,

Many thanks to all those who helped to host the Lenten luncheon last Wednesday. The dishes were clean and the meal was delicious, even the lemonade. We received many compliments from our guest. What a blessing to be a part of a church family that has such a willing spirit and such a strong work ethic.

Mary Ann Clayton

To Everyone at First UMC,

The Outreach committee sends a big **THANK YOU** to everyone who helped in making the Sock Hop such a fun time. Over \$500.00 was raised and will go towards bringing five members of our sister church in Amatitan to Lawrenceburg in October.

UMW READING PROGRAM

For those who participate in the UMW reading program, the new books for 2009 have been processed and are ready to be checked out. New updated book lists are also in the library for you to pick up.

LAWRENCE COUNTY LAITY CLUB

The Lawrence County Laity Club will meet on Monday night at the New Prospect United Methodist Church at 6:30 p.m. A program will follow the meal.

TRUSTEE'S MEETING

There will be a meeting of the Trustee's committee on Sunday, March 15th at 4:00 p.m. Members of the Trustee committee include: Dean Erwin-Chairman, Gracie Henson, Brenda Benson, Steve Wright, Dave Hancock, Herb Magee, Dan Jennings, Nancy Nelson and Mark Brewer.

LOAVES AND FISHES MINISTRY

In the month of February, the Loaves and Fishes ministry served 87 families and 222 individuals. A total of \$1,439.00 was donated to the pantry in addition to toiletry and cleaning items. We are seeing more and more people with the rising rate of unemployment. In addition, we have seen women who have left abusive homes and are trying to set up their own household and many persons with terminal illnesses who are struggling to pay for medicine *and* food. The persons we are helping express over and over how appreciative they are of your generosity. Thank you all for your continual support of this ministry.

FIFTH SUNDAY SINGING - MARCH 29TH

We will have a Fifth Sunday Singing, on Sunday evening March 29th, at 6:00 p.m. Please join us at Coleman Memorial United Methodist Church and enjoy the musical talent of our church choirs as well as individuals. A time of fellowship will follow the program of music.

SWAMP JOHN'S IS COMING TO FIRST UMC

The UMW is hosting a Swamp John's to benefit T. J. Moore. We **NEED** your support. Tickets are now available (see Martha Jo Gibbs, church office or any UMW member). Please help us make this benefit a huge success for T. J. Stop by and pick-up a sheet of tickets to sell to your family, friends and neighbors or co-workers. **Let's get the WORD OUT!**

LAITY TRAINING WEEKEND - APRIL 4-5

Laity Training weekend is April 4-5, 2009 at Ardmore UMC. The Basic course will be offered by Rev. Brad Smith and the Advanced course which is "Lay Speakers Create Disciple-Making Faith Communities" will be offered by Rev. Richard Garlen. The church office has information/registration brochures or you may register online at: www.pulaskilayspeak.com. If you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth at **** or via email at EkayeubanksATaolDOTcom

WITH ONE ANOTHER

David Robertson
Freddie Mae Jackson
Oscar and Agnes McCarter

Bill Evans
 Edythe Edwards
 Elmer Hackney
 Scottie McMackin
 Rev. Clifton Johnston
 T. J. Moore
 Meredith Nordin
 Norman Marston
 Jean Cone
 Gracie Henson
 Scott Dean
 Georgia Childress
 Tommy & Joanna Milford (Tommy's father recently passed away)
 Rosie Coleman
 Willodean Grinnell

AN INVITATION

*You are invited to a tea for
 Heather Rutherford
 Bride-elect of Ryan Edwards,
 March 15, 2009, from 2-4 p.m.
 In the Christian Life Center-Parlor
 of the First United Methodist Church
 in Lawrenceburg, TN
 Selections at:
 Dillard's
 Pampered Chef
 Bed, Bath, and Beyond*

NEW MEMBERS

Recent additions to our membership roll include Dan and Jane Jennings. If you would like to update your church directory address list, their address is 251 Stribling Rd.- Lawrenceburg, TN. Please join us in extending them a welcome to our church family. Since some of our newer members addresses are not in the last directory, we will provide them as needed so you may update your church directories.

**I Will Be Loyal
 To The United Methodist Church And
 Support It With: My Presence:**

Sunday, March 01, 2009
 8:15 a.m. Worship Attendance.....18
 Sunday school Attendance.....36
 10:30 a.m. Worship Attendance.....40

My Service: Sunday, March 08, 2009
Acolytes: Lucy Benson & Maggie McKnight

Loaves and Fishes: Tues. & Thurs.
Tues. March 10: Loulie Brown & Anita Marston
Thurs. March 12: Joan Cochran & Pam Shaffer

JERRY THOMAS CLASS BREAKFAST

The Jerry Thomas Sunday school class will have a breakfast on Saturday, March 7th, beginning at 8:00 a.m. at the Square Forty Restaurant on the square. All current

members and spouses, former members and spouses and spouses of former members are invited to attend.

BLUEBIRD BOXES FOR SALE

Bluebird boxes for sale - \$20 each

Money goes to the Nicaragua Transportation fund See: Sid James.

ADOPT - A - HIGHWAY - MARCH 14TH

The next Adopt - A - Highway is scheduled for Saturday, March 14th. We will meet at the church at 7:30 a.m.

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