

## FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - March 09, 2009

### The Pastor's Pen

Do you ever feel burdened for our world? Do you ever feel burdened for the people in our society that seem to suffer so many problems, many of which are self-inflicted? I do. I watch the local TV news almost every day, and almost every day there is a report of some situation in which a person has committed some wrong act. And in the process of committing that wrong act there is a victim of their wrongdoing as well as the harm their own wrongdoing causes to themselves.

Sometimes I find myself wondering how in the world our society ever got in this seemingly hopeless mess. I wonder where we went wrong. Do you ever wonder about things like that?

While drug use and abuse is not something I have to deal with on a regular basis, I do know it is out there in our world. I've seen its effects enough to know that it is a real problem for many people. And I feel reasonably certain that our youth are being tempted often to follow the way of drug use and abuse. And I think to myself, how did we get to this point?

While I've not had a lot of experience in working with the problem of alcoholism, I've seen it all my life. There is a man who lived in the community where I grew up, and would come to be a person I would appreciate very much, who was drunk the first time I ever remember seeing him. Thankfully, he was able with the help of a very loving wife, to have his life transformed. I saw the effects of alcohol when I was in college, and I've basically been around this kind of thing all my life. I have tried to work on occasion with persons who were addicted to alcohol and/or drugs, and I know the frustration of trying to help persons in this condition. And I grew up in a part of the country where "making whiskey" was a practice a number of people engaged clandestinely. And I can't help but wonder why we would ever let alcohol get such a hold on our society given the number of problems it causes for individuals, families, and the society at large.

And I see something else in our society that I wonder about. In many ways we are a society of people who are out of control. We can't turn on our television sets, seemingly, without hearing about another murder in Nashville. Of late it seems as though every time I look at the Columbia paper I'm reading about another shooting. And we read about robberies, and vandalism, and beatings. We seem to be a society out of control. And that's the illegal, criminal side of a lack of self-control.

There is a legal side of the lack of self-control. That side is parents having screaming fits at little league ball games. It's road rage and people driving too fast and recklessly on our highways. It's people spending too much on things they don't need to impress people they don't even know - as someone has said - although the current recession may be putting a damper on that these days. And there are the words that get said nowadays that would be better left unsaid, and much of this by the never-for-a-loss-for-words-of-criticism pundits on news outlets such as Fox, CNN, NBC, ABC, and CBS. And those ways of never being at a loss for words of criticism and hurt have filtered down into ordinary society such that somebody is always unhappy about something going on in our communities. It's often hard to find a positive, good, refreshing word about anything. I can't help but wonder how we got this way.

The Apostle Paul says that there is gift of the Holy Spirit called self-control. Self-control is not about controlling others or being in control of one's own circumstances. There is a sense in which we can never control things around us. We're not God. But we can control ourselves, and self-control is a virtue as well as a gift from the Holy Spirit through Christ Jesus the Lord. The reason the Bible warns against such things as drunkenness is because drunkenness renders people to a state where they cannot control their actions and such a lack of self-control can lead to all kinds of difficulty for others, for the world around those who indulge, and for themselves. We let go of control of our actions, and if we are not careful, we lose our lives - in all the wrong kinds of way rather than losing life in a positive way.

Self-control is important in the Christian for several reasons. One is that as a Christian we belong to Jesus, and whatever we do ought to bring glory and honor to Jesus. Our lives ought to reflect in miniature the ways of Jesus. And why? Because he is our Lord. He gets to call the shots in our lives. The second reason self-control is important is because we have a responsibility to and for the life God has given us. What are we doing with the precious gift of life God has given us? Are we making a positive impact on the world around us, or are we making a negative impact? Are we agents for the good or agents for bad? We do have some responsibility for the way we use the life God has given us. It is not completely ours to do with as we please, and without the practice of self-control it is hard to keep the negative impact we might have to a minimum.

And the third reason for self-control is that it just makes our world a better place to live. Wouldn't our world be a lot better place if those who would be terrorists would control their anger? Wouldn't our world be a better place if the Hitler's of this world had some hint of the destruction they were wreaking? Wouldn't our world be a better place if every citizen of this planet would think about the impact her or his actions might have on another and refrain from those actions if they will produce nothing good?

Self-control begins with each of us in our own personal lives, and for those of us who profess to be followers of the Prince of Peace; self-control is to be innate in us, automatic, because it is a gift of the Holy Spirit. And self-control can be automatic in us, if we take the time and the thought to cultivate it. Just something to think about.

Until next time, **Bro. Jim**

### **SWAMP JOHN'S IS COMING - MARCH 22!**

Swamp John's will be here on Sunday, **March 22, from 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.** Tickets may be picked up in the church office and we would like everyone to make every effort to either buy some, or take some to sell. You may also turn your ticket money into the church office or to Martha Jo Gibbs, by **Wednesday, March 18<sup>th</sup>**. We need to be able to give Swamp John's an approximate number by this date, but you may still sell tickets after the 18<sup>th</sup> and tickets can also be purchased at the door.

### **The Stories Behind Easter Symbols...Easter Candlelight** **(From Associate Pastor - Alecia Fischer)**

A lighted candle at Easter means the same things as Easter sunrise or Easter fire: After the darkness comes light, and after death, new life. If you

happened to be born into a Christian family in the United States, Easter morning might find you in a church where one tall white paschal candle glows in the dimness. In many churches the candle is lighted on Easter Eve at a ceremony called "striking the new fire." The candle takes the place of the Easter fire of earlier times.

If your family belonged to a Greek Orthodox Church, you would probably stay up all night on Easter Eve. At the stroke of midnight, with everybody else in your church, you would file out of a side door, with a lighted candle in your hand. Back at the front door, one person would knock and ask, "Is Jesus in there?" From inside would come the answer, "No, he is not here. He is risen!" Then the door would open and everyone would troop back into the lighted church.

Candle ceremonies and processions have lighted Easter celebrations through the ages. In the early centuries of the Christian religion, people preparing to become members gathered in the church the afternoon before Easter. Each one in turn stood, pointed toward the sunset in the West, and promised to have nothing more to do with Satan. Then he pointed to the East, where the sun rises, and promised to follow Jesus, "the eternal light."

#### AN INVITATION

Dr. & Mrs. Michael G. Rutherford  
Request the honour your presence  
At the marriage of their daughter  
Heather Renee to Ryan William Edwards  
Son of  
Mr. & Mrs. Bruce W. Edwards, Jr.  
Saturday, the twenty-first of March  
Two thousand and nine  
at five o'clock in the afternoon  
Riverbend Event Center  
Fayetteville, Tennessee  
Reception immediately following  
Directions: From Hwy. 64 by-pass, turn right on Eldad Road  
And in 2.5 miles turn left on Rambo Road

#### Noon Lenten Service Schedule:

**March 18** - Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
**April 01** - Immanuel Baptist Church

**March 25** - First Presbyterian 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 5<sup>th</sup>. 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.

#### WEDNESDAY NIGHT MENU FOR MARCH 18th

White beans, Mexican cornbread, Cole slaw and Strawberry cake  
Workers: Aldersgate Class  
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 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Tickets are \$10 for 5 Christian Bands. For more information contact Alecia Fischer.

### **SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE**

Scholarship applications for the Jackson-McClanahan, May Jones Memorial and UMW scholarships will be available in the church office beginning on March 2<sup>nd</sup>. High school seniors who are members of First UMC, First UMC youth group or who attend First UMC are eligible to apply. Completed applications are to be returned to the church office by April. 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **NOTES OF THANKS**

Terri/First UMC,

The family truly appreciated the use of the CLC Friday (February 27) and the buttercups in the vases on the tables were so refreshing to see. **Shirley Townsend**

To First United Methodist Church,

We want to express our appreciation to all of you for your thoughtfulness and caring at the time of Spanky's mother's death. Thank you for your prayers, notes, cards and kind words. This meant so much. Sincerely, **Annette & Spanky Green**

### **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.

### **TRUSTEE'S MEETING**

There will be a meeting of the Trustee's committee on Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup> 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.

### **FIFTH SUNDAY SINGING - MARCH 29<sup>TH</sup>**

We will have a Fifth Sunday Singing, on Sunday evening March 29<sup>th</sup>, 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.

### **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](http://www.pulaskilayspeak.com). If you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth at \*\*\*\*\* or via email at [EkayeubanksATaolDOTcom](mailto:EkayeubanksATaolDOTcom).

### **NEW PICTURES ON THE CHURCH WEBSITE**

The church website has new pictures posted of the Sock Hop, Beverly Duke's Nicaragua Trip, Christians Connect, and will soon have pictures of Brenda Gardner's "Grandmother Shower".

### **WITH ONE ANOTHER**

David Robertson  
Freddie Mae Jackson  
Oscar and Agnes McCarter  
Bill Evans  
Edythe Edwards  
Elmer Hackney  
Scottie McMackin  
Rev. Clifton Johnston

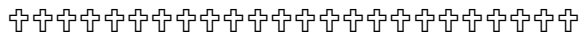
T. J. Moore  
 Meredith Nordin  
 Norman Marston  
 Jean Cone  
 Gracie Henson  
 Scott Dean  
 Georgia Childress  
 Rosie Coleman  
 Willodean Grinnell  
 Don Grimsley  
 Those serving in the military

**ATTN: HAPPY ELDERS**

**2 or 3 volunteers** are needed to be in charge of planning activities for our group for the remainder of this year. This includes continuing our Eat in & Take out meals for our shut-in members. Jean Robertson will continue to be in charge of planning trips and travel for the group. Please call the church office (762-3696) if you would like to help.

*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*



**I Will Be Loyal  
 To The United Methodist Church And  
 Support It With: My Presence:  
 Sunday, March 08 2009**

8:15 a.m. Worship Attendance.....38  
 Sunday school Attendance.....89  
 10:30 a.m. Worship Attendance.....97

**My Service: Sunday, March 15 2009**  
**Acolytes:** Katie Rochelle 7 Kamelia Wayne

**Loaves and Fishes: Tues. & Thurs.**  
**Tues. March 17** Linda Newton & Ray Price  
**Thurs. March 19** Elmer Cooke & Jean Robertson

**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 14<sup>th</sup>. We will meet at the church at 7:30 a.m.

