

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - March 23, 2009

The Pastor's Pen

The book of Genesis is an interesting book. The word genesis means beginning, and thus Genesis in the Bible is a book about beginnings.

But those beginnings in the book of Genesis don't seem to always be smooth beginnings. In the first and second chapters we read about God creating the heavens and the earth, and we read about God creating humankind, man and woman. And these are all called "good."

But then we read about God creating Adam and Eve and placing them in the Garden of Eden, a place of perfection, only to see Adam and Eve disobey God and be driven from the Garden. From there comes the story of Cain and Abel, and Cain killing his brother Abel. The genealogy that follows Cain is then given, but that genealogy ends with a man named Lamech who is vengeful, mean, violent, and brags about it. That beginning that was called "good" doesn't seem so good anymore.

Then comes chapter 5, and it seems that God is basically starting again. Adam and Eve conceive a third son. His name is Seth, and then we begin to read the genealogy that follows from Seth. In that genealogy we read a passage that goes like this. *"When Enoch had lived sixty-five years, he became the father of Methuselah. Enoch walked with God after the birth of Methuselah three hundred years, and had other sons and daughters. Thus all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty five years. Enoch walked with God; then he was no more, because God took him"* (Genesis 5:21-24).

Enoch walked with God. I think we probably read that passage and maybe a smile comes to our face as we read the words "and Enoch walked with God." Finally there is some good news in these stories of beginnings. But have you ever really stopped to think about what it means to walk with God? I really hadn't, that is, until now. Let me muse a bit about what it means to walk with God.

Walking with God it seems to me would mean that you and God are companions walking down life's road. That puts me in mind of a song I once knew that says, "My God and I, we walk the fields together." Walking with God must surely mean walking down life's road together.

Well, if that be the case, then being companions together on life's road has some implications. Being companions would imply friendship. God and I, we enjoy each other's company. We like being together. Being friends means sharing with each other. Being friends means being a support to each other. But wait! Can we really be a support to God? I think so. Aren't we a support to God when we witness to the goodness, kindness, and mercy of God?

Being companions on life's road and being friends would surely mean that each influences the other. Now, it's not difficult to think about God influencing us, but does that work in reverse? Do we influence God? Remember the story of the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai after Aaron made the golden calf. The people rose up to engage in revelry, some rather raucous partying, some rather loose partying. And God wanted to destroy the Israelites at that point. God was angry. God brought them out of slavery, and now this is the way they repay God, with disobedience. So God wants to just be done with the Israelites and destroy them, but Moses says, "Now, God you don't want to do that. You don't want other peoples saying that you brought your people out into the wilderness just to destroy them." And Moses talks God out of destroying the children of Israel. So does walking with God mean influencing God? Maybe. Quite possibly.

And walking with God may mean at times arguing with God. Certainly the Psalmist seems to do that, in some of the Psalms of lament especially. Walking with God as companions and friends I would think would mean giving gifts to each other, and certainly God gives good gifts to us as we give back to God through the church and in other ways. And I would think that walking with God as a friend would include being present to each other and listening to each other. Does God listen to us? I certainly hope so. I believe it to be so.

So while the Bible just kinda flatly says that Enoch walked with God, there was a whole lot included in that walking with God. There just had to be. Like Abraham, surely Enoch walking with God meant Enoch and God were friends, and that brought some

hope back to the world, a world that seemed through Cain to have gone in the very opposite direction, the direction of anger and violence.

So what does all this mean? I think it means that we can walk with God too. The New Testament would certainly seem to indicate such is possible through Christ our Savior and Lord. Abraham was called friend of God in the book of James. We can be friend of God too, and in so doing maybe bring some hope back to the world, just as Enoch did. Just something to think about. Do you walk with God, and does your life thus bring some hope back to the world? It would surely be nice to think so, wouldn't it?

Until next time, **Bro. Jim**

YARD SALE! YARD SALE! YARD SALE! YARD SALE! YARD SALE! YARD SALE!

SALE!

SATURDAY, MARCH 28TH

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTER (CLC)

7:00 A.M. UNTIL IT'S ALL GONE!!!

PROCEEDS TO BENEFIT OUTREACH MISSION TO NICARAGUA

YARD & GROUNDS CLEAN-UP DAY - APRIL 11

We will be having a yard and grounds clean-up day, on Saturday, April 11th, beginning at 8:00 a.m. Please bring yard tools to help. Everyone is encouraged to come out and help with the clean-up. The more volunteers we have, the sooner we can complete the job.

LAWRENCE COUNTY TRAVELERS - BRANSON TRIP

The Lawrence County Travelers have the following tour to: BRANSON - FAVORITES!!! Dixie Stampede Dinner & Show, Doug Gabriel Show, NOAH @ Sight and Sound Theatre, Branson Landing, Yakow Smirinov, Dinner at The Rails, and the Shoji Tabuchi Show. May 11-14, 2009. The tour will be on a luxury motor coach with a professional driver. PRICE PER PERSON: SINGLE \$669, DOUBLE \$589, TRIPLE \$569 AND QUAD \$549. Meals included: 3 Deluxe Continental Breakfasts, 2 dinners. See Jean Robertson or call *****. A deposit of \$100.00 will hold a seat and balance 30 days before departure.

SPECIAL SERVICES DURING HOLY WEEK

During Holy Week we will be having a special service each evening at 7:00 p.m. The schedule is as follows:

Monday, April 6 - UMYF lead service

Tuesday, April 7 - Al Hardy will preach

Wednesday, April 8 - Devotional in CLC at 6:15 p.m.

Thursday, April 9 - Drama and Holy Communion

Friday, April 10 - Bro. Jim to preach

Also on Palm Sunday the youth will be serving a salad & sandwich lunch (from 11:30-12:30), which will be followed by the children's Easter Egg Hunt.

VBS - JULY 20-24, 2009

Vacation Bible school is only 4 months away - July 20-24!! Our theme this year is Studio Go! Check out our website for more information, to register or to volunteer.

www.vacationbibleschool.com/firstumclawrenceburg

SUMMER CAMP OPPORTUNITIES

The Church office has information about summer camps as well as applications, or registration forms are available from the website www.tnumcamps.org. Those who are interested may contact the church office or Alecia.

Noon Lenten Service Schedule:

March 25 - Immanuel Baptist Church

The Stories Behind Easter Symbols...Hot Cross Buns
(From Associate Pastor - Alecia Fischer)

Every year when lent begins the delicious spicy bun with raisins inside and a shiny brown top decorated with a cross of white icing appears again. The story of hot cross buns goes so far back that no one is sure where it begins. One belief goes like this: Every year the ancient Anglo-Saxons baked small wheat cakes in honor of their goddess of springtime, Eostre. Even after they became Christians, they continued this old custom. The church looked for a way to make them give up the pagan goddess. It decreed that, in place of the cakes honoring Eostre, there would be others sacred to the Christian festival held at the same time of the year.

If this was the beginning of hot cross buns, they are really far older than Christianity itself. As for the cross on top, this was a pagan symbol long before the birth of Jesus Christ. The same mark appeared on cakes sacred to Diana, the Roman goddess of the moon and of hunting. A monk in England baked hot cross buns and gave them to the poor at the Easter season six hundred years ago, according to one old account. The monk may have been baking the first hot cross buns or he may have been carrying on a custom that had started earlier. No matter how it started, baking and eating hot cross buns as Easter drew near was a custom that everyone enjoyed.

All sorts of ideas grew up about the magic powers of hot cross buns. If you ate them on Good Friday, people said, your home would be safe from fire all year. Some of the buns they put back into the oven to harden and keep. They would grate the hardened buns to take as medicine, use them as charms against lightning, and hang them from the ceiling to bring good luck to the house. Farmers believed a dried hot cross bun would keep rats out of their cornfields. Sailors took them to sea to keep the ship from being wrecked.

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 2nd. 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 1st.

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.

AN INVITATION

Pamela Faye Roberts
&
Jon Mark Brewer
Together with their parents
Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence E. Roberts
&
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Brewer
Invite you to share in the joy
when they exchange marriage vows
And begin their new life together
on Saturday, the eighteenth of April
Two thousand and nine
at three o'clock in the afternoon
Sacred Heart Catholic Church
305 Church Street
Loretto, Tennessee
Please RSVP by March 26

WITH ONE ANOTHER

David Robertson
Freddie Mae Jackson

WEDNESDAY NIGHT MENU - APRIL 1ST

Beef Tips with Rice,
Mixed veggies, Rolls, & Lemon meringue
Workers: Fellowship class
Cost of meal is only \$5 (adults) and \$3 (children)

SEE YOU AT THE YARD SALE!!!!

