

7FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - March 30, 2009

The Pastor's Pen

"My punishment is greater than I can bear," said Cain to God. "Today you have driven me away from the soil, and I shall be hidden from your face; I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth..." (Genesis 4:13-14).

Cain had been a farmer, a tiller of the soil. He had been settled. He had a place. And evidently he liked being a tiller of the soil because he laments that God has driven him away from the soil. God has driven him away from what he loves, being a farmer, and has made him a wanderer, a nomad. Cain can no longer settle on the land he loves.

But Cain's alienation from the land is not really God's fault. Cain's alienation from the land he loves is the result of his anger. In his anger at God for refusing to accept his offering and his jealousy toward his brother Abel because God accepted Abel's offering, Cain slew his brother Abel. He shed Abel's innocent blood on the very ground that he (Cain) loved, and as a result the ground Cain loved was cursed. Cain was alienated from the land he loved as the result of his own uncontrolled anger.

And God had warned Cain. "Cain, sin is lurking at your door, and it wants to have you. You must master that sin." And that sin that God was telling Cain to master was his anger. God was telling him to get control of it, lest his anger become his downfall and alienate him from the things he loved. But Cain failed to master his anger, and thus what God warned Cain would happen, happened.

Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders shall be liable to the judgment.' But I say to you that if you are *angry* (emphasis added) with a brother or sister, you will be liable to the judgment..." (Matthew 5:21-22). Jesus is saying that while the act, namely murder, will surely bring judgment and punishment, the inner motivation that leads to the act is also just as worthy of judgment and that anger is indeed the cause of the murder and hence the judgment and punishment that comes. Thus one cannot guard against a propensity toward murder without controlling the underlying cause - anger. And so we see another warning in Scripture about anger. Anger uncontrolled leads to dire consequences for both the person who is angry and the one toward whom the anger is directed.

Think about what anger does in people's lives. Anger alienates. Anger within a household can alienate a son or daughter from a parent and vice versa. Unfortunately this happens in some families. Anger in a marriage can alienate a wife from a husband or a husband from a wife, and possibly lead to separation, divorce, or worse, physical or emotional abuse. Anger in the work place can lead to tense working conditions, or worse unemployment. Anger has a way of alienating. Uncontrolled anger has consequences.

And yet we seem to continue to entertain anger in this world in which we live. As far as I can tell the motivation for terrorism which has become prevalent in today's world is nothing more than anger. The terrorists seem to be angry people, and they act on that anger. And the result is alienation from the rest of the world.

Too often anger gets exercised and alienation results in other segments of society. There can be alienation of one group against another because of anger. There can be alienation between people of different races because one side or the other, or both, exercises their anger. I think that the motivation behind many of the school/university shootings we have seen recently in our society is nothing more than anger uncontrolled. And anger often rears its ugly head in some seemingly innocent places like kid's sporting events. How many times have we heard about ugly scenes at kid's ball games in which a parent went out of control in anger? We seem to be a society unwilling to control anger, and there are consequences for it. One of those consequences is alienation, alienation from things we care about. That's just the nature of anger uncontrolled.

The question I would raise is this. "Knowing what we know about anger, why do we then insist as a culture on so freely exercising our anger and failing to put a bridle on it?" The consequences are obvious, but we seem to pay no attention. We go blindly on, more and more letting our anger get out of bounds. Can we not see? Do we not care? One has to wonder about this when the consequences are so very obvious.

That brings me to something that is described over and over in the Bible. That thing is sin. Sin has often been described on the evangelical side of the church as being lost, but the condition of sin in our day would be more adequately described, not as lostness, but as blindness. We simply don't see. We are blind seemingly to the consequences of such things as anger. Like Cain many in our society today just go ahead and indulge their anger, and it leads to some very unwanted results, as was the case with Cain. Insisting on indulging our anger can only lead to one place, and that is the place Cain found himself and said he could not bear - alienation from something or someone we love. I can't help but wonder when our world is going

to see that.

But then to see we need a light that will illumine our human condition, and that light is the light of God. It is the light of Jesus Christ. But even that light is darkness to those who refuse to see. There are none so blind as those who will not see. Just something to think about.
Until next time, **Bro. Jim**

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

Children in Fredericksburg, Texas, have an Easter rabbit that is different from anyone else's. One Easter Eve in the nineteenth century when this town was first settled by German people, a family of children saw Indian campfires flaming on the hillsides all around. Their mother told them not to be afraid. It was just the Easter rabbit heating kettles of flower dye to color eggs. During the night, he would leave the eggs at the house for the children.

Every Easter Eve since, "rabbit fires" on the hilltops around Fredericksburg have lighted the whole town. And on Easter morning the children wake up to find colored eggs in nests made of bluebonnets and other Texas flowers.

Almost anywhere that Easter is celebrated there is an Easter bunny, though not always the same kind. Among the children in Panama, it is a painted rabbit called the conejo that brings the eggs. In countries where people speak German, Belgium, and Switzerland, children wait for Oster haas, the Easter hare. The hare is larger and quicker than a rabbit, with longer legs and ears, and it does not dig a burrow in the ground like our cottontail. The children often make pretty nests of leaves, moss, or grasses for the Easter hare, and sometimes special little gardens. Country children of Yugoslavia put their nests in the stable, while in England they hide them in the garden.

Many Indian tribes in Central American countries like Guatemala believe in the Christian religion now, but they have woven into Easter celebrations bits of the ancient springtime festivals of their ancestors. They build Easter arches covered with flowers, fruits, vegetables, and stuffed small animals of the fields and forests, squirrels, raccoons, and rabbits.

Everyone knows what large families rabbits have, and most people believe that the hare or rabbit of Easter is a symbol of new life, as it probably was in religions far older than Christianity.

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 931-762-2350. A deposit of \$100.00 will hold a seat and balance 30 days before departure.

Noon Lenten Service Schedule:

April 8 - Calvary Hill Church of God

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

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.

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.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT MENU - APRIL 1ST

Chicken Picasso, Green salad, Garlic bread and cookies
\$5 (adults) and \$3 (children)

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

GOOD YEAR AHEAD!

We look forward to another year in Happy Elders. We appreciate the leadership of Frances and Harlon Griffin in 2008. They were so organized and faithful.

As we look forward to another year, we remember our beginnings. Okeleen Brewer and Anita Johnston were the first leaders, along with a good committee. To give the group a name, we had many suggestions given and voted by the group. Jean Cone's Happy Elders had the majority of votes.

Our next leaders were Mary Benson, Carol and Sid James, and Frances and Harlon Griffin.

Our most gratifying project of the past years is taking food to our shut-ins. We have found joy in our sharing a meal with our most important members and friends who can no longer be with us in the Church. They give us support in their prayers and encouragement as we visit with them.

The leaders for this year are Anita Johnston and Ann Cornelius. Harlon Griffin will organize the delivery of plates. Loulie Brown will call each shut-in about the delivery. We appreciate all the ones who deliver the plates and all the cooks who prepare the food.

If you are a shut-in and we have not had you on our list, please call Anita at ***** or Ann at *****.

Jean Robertson will continue to organize our travels. If you have a suggestion about a day trip call Jean at *****.

We would encourage our retirees to come join us. We eat after the delivery of meals to shut-ins in the CLC. We have no business meeting. We just eat and enjoy each others company.

The date for the next shut-in meal will be April 23rd. We will meet at the CLC at 10:30 and be able to deliver meals about 11:00. Help us to have a good year.

THANK YOU

Dear Members of First United Methodist Church,

It is in times of deepest need that friends provide comfort with their thoughts, prayers, cards, and acts of kindness. Thank you so much for staying in contact with Dad during his illness. You will never know how much it meant to him and us. Many, many thanks for the food that you prepared for our family and friends. Your concern and thoughtfulness will continue to remind us of a beautiful life that will be greatly missed. Please know you have blessed our memories.

In Christian Love, **The Family of Dr. Elmer Hackney**

WITH ONE ANOTHER

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

Rev. Clifton Johnston
T. J. Moore
Norman Marston
Jean Cone
Gracie Henson
Scott Dean
Georgia Childress
Brian Beller
Al Harlan
Elويد Brock

...Congratulations to Sid and Carol James on the birth of their new granddaughter Geneva Parkes Gaston, born on March 24, to daughter Lara and husband Bryan (Oklahoma). Geneva weighed 8 lbs. & 2 ozs. and was 20 & ½ inches long. All are doing well and Sid and Carol have plenty of pictures to show of baby Geneva.

If you would like to see pictures of baby Geneva, go to
<http://www.our365.com/NewbornPortraits/BabyDetail.aspx?birthid=25008513-2efb-4f62-b98f-c566ab446e5f&babyid=8331b200-8929-45e6-9af4-340383c37c66>

...Correction - Larry & Peggy Morris's phone number is incorrect in the church directory. Their correct phone number is:

*****.

NOTES OF THANKS

Thanks to everyone that helped make the yard sale a huge success. Thanks to everyone that donated items, priced the goods, helped with the sale and clean-up. What an amazing group of folks. Over 1,200 was raised.

The Outreach Committee

Dear First UMC,

Thanks to all the friends and family who hosted the tea for Ryan and Heather. It was just beautiful and Heather's grandmother and I enjoyed meeting everyone. We felt so welcomed. Thanks for all the food, fellowship and love.

Sincerely,

Emily Rutherford (Heather's Mom)

Donna Frazier (Heather's grandmother)

I Will Be Loyal

To The United Methodist Church And

Support It With: My Presence:

Sunday, March 29 2009

8:15 a.m. Worship Attendance.....53

Sunday school Attendance.....87

10:30 a.m. Worship Attendance.....112

My Service: Sunday, April 5, 2009

Acolytes: Brianna Snider & Katie Rochelle

Loaves and Fishes: Tues. & Thurs.

Tues. April 7 Loulie Brown & Anita Marston

Thurs. April 9 Joan Cochran & Joyce Holmes

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.

MISSION TEAM UPDATE

We have received an email from Associate Pastor Alecia Fischer and the mission team, who arrived safely at the Henderson Settlement (in Kentucky) on Sunday. They are working (painting) at the home of a lady (Ms. June) who has custody of her two young grandsons.

According to Alecia, the family has been without power since Sunday (lines were cut by someone stealing copper); and there is no running water at the residence. Please continue to pray for the mission team as they help those in need this week.

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