

## FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - May 18, 2009

### The Pastor's Pen

Meet the Apostle Peter. He's the brash one. In the Gospels he's always the one speaking too quickly, and while getting some things right, he gets a lot of things wrong. Peter tends to make a fool of himself sometimes. He confesses Jesus as the Messiah, gets praised for having been able to receive such a revelation from God, and then immediately gets rebuked by Jesus as being a stumbling block to Jesus. "Get behind me, Satan," Jesus says to Peter when Peter objects to Jesus talking about having to die in Jerusalem.

Peter is the one who doesn't want Jesus to wash his feet at the last supper and makes the most commotion about it. Peter is the one who boasts that he will never leave his Lord's side. He's ready to stand by Jesus out in the Garden when the mob comes to arrest Jesus. Peter has a sword in his hand then. But in the courtyard of the high priest where Jesus is on trial Peter, with no weapon, is not so brave. He denies knowing Jesus, not once, but three times, to his great shame.

This is Peter – brash, hard-charging, thinks he's much of a man, unafraid when armed, and yet wilts when the pressure is on. And to him Jesus says after his confession at Caesarea, "Upon this rock I will build my church." And to him and the rest of the disciples Jesus says, "Greater works than these (meaning the works Jesus has done) will ye do." Hard to believe, isn't it.

Now meet Peter in the Book of Acts. He's at the home of Cornelius having been summoned there by Cornelius himself. Peter is speaking to Cornelius and his household, and he says, among other things, these words. "You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached – how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him."

Peter has come to Cornelius' home by a rather circuitous route. He and John healed a crippled man at the Temple in Jerusalem; a deed which along with his and John's preaching afterward landed them in front of the Sanhedrin and got them a warning not to preach in the name of Jesus anymore. With the persecution that arose around Stephen's martyrdom, Peter and some of the other apostles were forced to leave Jerusalem, but on the way from Jerusalem to Caesarea Peter stops in Samaria to lay hands on some believers there and anoint them with the Holy Spirit, he heals a paralytic named Aeneas in Lydda, raises a woman named Dorcas from the dead in Joppa, and consents to go with Cornelius' envoy to Cornelius' home in Caesarea.

This Peter looks different than the Peter in the Gospels, but this Peter looks a lot more like Jesus than the one in the Gospels. And what's the difference? Well, one might point to his courage. He seems to have no fear. One might point to his more calm and peaceful demeanor. He seems to be a much more confident person. But here's what I would point to. Peter is kind. Wherever he meets someone in need, he assists them. He heals a crippled beggar in Jerusalem at the gate of the Temple called Beautiful, saying to him, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I unto thee. In the name of Jesus rise up and walk." In Lydda he heals Aeneas a paralytic. That's the only time we hear of Aeneas in the Scripture. And he raises Dorcas from death to life. Likewise that's the only time we hear of Dorcas in the Scripture. And he goes to Caesarea to share the good news of Jesus with a Gentile and his household.

What sets the Apostle Peter of the Gospels apart from the Apostle Peter in Acts? One simple word – his kindness. He's like Jesus. He goes about doing good to anyone and everyone he meets. Peter's doing the works of Jesus for sure, and I would say that Peter is quite good ambassador of the church.

Are we marked by kindness? If we really want to be known as a Christian, then we surely need to be. Kindness, I believe, makes us more Christ-like and more Christian than anything else that can mark our character. And kindness is surely one of the things on which the church is built. Just something to think about. Until next time, **Bro. Jim**

### FIFTH SUNDAY SINGING AT MARS HILL UMC

Please join us for the Fifth Sunday singing which will be hosted by Mars Hill UMC, on Sunday, May 31<sup>st</sup>. The music program will begin at **6:00 p.m.** and there will be a time of fellowship following.

### WITH ONE ANOTHER

David Robertson  
Freddie Mae Jackson  
Oscar and Agnes McCarter

Bill Evans  
Scottie McMackin  
Rev. Clifton Johnston  
T. J. Moore  
Norman Marston  
Jean Cone  
Gracie Henson  
Scott Dean  
Georgia Childress  
Brian Beller  
Al Harlan  
Barbara Harlan  
Olivia Grace Moody  
Herman Dunkin  
Herb Magee  
Vita Mae Owens

...**CONGRATULATIONS** Maggie Philpot on graduating from Ole Miss with a degree in Hospitality Management this past Saturday.

**PRAYERS FOR OUR TROOPS**  
**Memorial Day - May 25, 2009**

Please join us in our prayers for the men and women of the Armed Forces of The United States of America and other countries who are now in harms way in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other parts of the world. We thank them and their families for their sacrifices.

We are grateful for the ultimate price of freedom paid by those fallen. We pray for strength and courage for the POWS and Missing in Action and those held hostage.

We pray for the protection and safety of selfless relief workers and missionaries who help those in need.

We pray for the protection of children and innocent civilians.

We pray for our nation and our leaders.

**I Will Be Loyal**  
**To The United Methodist Church And**  
**Support It With: My Presence:**  
**Sunday, May 17, 2009**

8:15 a.m. Worship Attendance.....42  
Sunday school Attendance.....73  
10:30 a.m. Worship Attendance.....109

**My Service: Sunday, May 24, 2009**  
**Acolytes:** Kamelia Wayne & Katie Rochelle

**Loaves and Fishes: Tues. & Thurs.**  
**Tues. May 26** Linda Newton, Ray Price & Jerry Gibbs  
**Thurs. May 28** Elmer Cooke, Jean Robertson & Jerry Gibbs

**THANK YOU** to Alecia, Keri McMahan and Janice Bailey for all their hard work putting together the graduate luncheon on Sunday. Everyone enjoyed this special day.

**A SPECIAL THANK YOU**

I would like to thank those who put together the special day for the graduates this past Sunday. You did a wonderful job honoring the kids and we enjoyed it very much.

**CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED ON MONDAY**

The Church office will be closed on Monday, May 25, in observance of Memorial Day.

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