

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - June 15, 2009

The Pastor's Pen

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). I suppose it could be said that in our world we take light for granted. I know that I do. We have light at our fingertips seemingly. With electricity in our homes, businesses, churches, and other buildings we simply flip a switch, and we have light anytime we need it or want it. And with all the lights that are now available to us at night, we seemingly never have complete darkness. It is easy to take light for granted, and I think we probably do just that.

With that in mind, let me suggest some things about light that we may just take for granted and not think about. Light reveals. Light often shows things that we might not see otherwise. Light exposes. Sometimes light shows things that weren't intended to be seen or didn't want to be seen. So light exposes.

Light also illumines. It shatters the darkness so that we see where we could not have seen before. Light, therefore, illumines. And light protects. Light allows us to see things we might not otherwise see. It enables us to avoid that which could harm us if we did not see it. So light does a lot of things for us. Light is important.

Now Jesus as the light of the world comes I think primarily through Jesus as the Christ of the cross. The cross indeed does those same things that light does.

The cross reveals. It reveals God's love for us. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, so that those who believe in him might not perish but have everlasting life." The cross also reveals sin. It was sin that put Jesus on the cross. "For he made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God."

The cross exposes. The cross exposed some things that were sin which had not really been thought of in that way before. For instance, the role of the Jewish religious leadership in wanting to protect their status was exposed for what it was, sometimes rather ruthless in maintaining its power. The same can be said of the Roman government. It too could be ruthless in maintaining its power, to the point of killing innocence. The cross exposes. It exposes sin.

The cross also illumines. It shows us the path to follow that leads to life. After the cross came the resurrection and the revealing of God's power in Jesus. The cross illumines for us the path of losing life for Christ's sake in order to find life. The cross shows us the way of living that brings blessing and joy and peace and salvation.

And the cross illumines in another way. The cross opens up a way of seeing that allows us to avoid those things that will destroy life. We don't have to go through things that will rob us of life. The cross illumines those things would take life from us. The cross enables discernment.

So the cross reveals, exposes, illumines, and leads to discernment. Jesus as the Christ of the cross is the light of the world, and that leads us to something else very important.

In the course of life we all have to make judgments about things, and how do we make judgments without light to reveal, illumine, expose, or protect? Light enables to make judgments that we need to make. Now, I

realize that in today's culture of political correctness judgment is often seen as a bad word. We are not to judge our culture implores. Being judgmental, says our culture, is a "no no." But we can't go through life without making some judgments. For you see, judgments become necessary if we are going to value. There can be no valuing without judgment. If we are going to deem something as having worth versus something else, then we must make a judgment about what has worth and what does not. If we are going to make an evaluation of something being good versus bad, we have to make a judgment. Value determinations cannot exist without making judgments, and without the proper light judgments may lead us down the wrong path.

When Jesus says that he "is the light of the world," he is offering to us a way of determining value, worth, goodness, in life, and we need that. The light reveals things in our own lives that are not as they should be and allows us to make a value judgment. Light exposes and allows us to see that in the world there is something called sin, and thus we can make a value judgment. Light illumines and affords us the opportunity to choose the path we will follow, another value judgment. And light brings to our attention those things that can bring destructiveness to us, again allowing us to make a value judgment. And these are all important to life and living.

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." As the light of the world Jesus enables us, anyone, to find, follow, and value that which has the mark of goodness and the mark of eternal worth to it. Value determinations are impossible without some judgment, and without light judgment can choose to value that which has no value and thus lead to the destructive and the harmful. And in our world this very thing happens much too often. Just something to think about. Until next time, **Bro. Jim**

**TENNESSEE CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN**  
**CHRISTIAN MISSION EDUCATION EVENT**  
**"TOGETHER AT THE TABLE"**

**Martin Methodist College - Pulaski, Tennessee - July 8 - 11**

Applications are available in the church office for the upcoming Christian Mission Education Event at Martin Methodist College, in Pulaski Tennessee. The event is scheduled for **July 8-11**. The registration deadline for the event to guarantee a room and pay 50% deposit is **June 20**. After this date rooms will be booked on an "if available" basis and a late fee will apply. Otherwise, all registrations are to be received by **June 30**. Fees for this event are as follows: **Full Time** (Includes room Thurs/Friday, all meals Thursday lunch thru Saturday Breakfast is **\$120**.)

**Commuters** (Includes lunch and dinner) **\$75**

For more information and/or applications for the event and scholarship, please call or come by the **church office**.

**NURSERY NEWS**

The Nursery Committee is preparing its June-December schedule. There are several Sundays where volunteers are needed. If you are currently not on the volunteer list, but would like to participate in this ministry, please contact **Cissy Holt at \*\*\*\*\*** or leave a note in the church office or in the Friends in Fellowship classroom.

Nurturing the little ones in our church is a valuable and vital service to families considering attending First Church. This ministry requires just two Sundays a year and includes helping through the Sunday school and 10:30 service hours. Julie Wright continues to provide excellent coverage and leadership in the nursery each Sunday, and all volunteers can expect to be blessed during their time there.

**WITH ONE ANOTHER**

David Robertson  
Freddie Mae Jackson  
Oscar and Agnes McCarter



