

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - June 29, 2009

The Pastor's Pen

The Old Testament book of I Samuel tells a story about King Saul of Israel going up against the enemies of Israel, the Amalekites. God commanded Saul to go against them and utterly defeat them, and God had also commanded that Saul and his men destroy all the livestock that belonged to the Amalekites. So King Saul led Israel against the Amalekites and defeated them soundly. However, Saul did not kill all the sheep and the cattle. Saul's claim was that these livestock were kept alive to use as sacrifices to God.

Samuel the prophet went out to meet Saul after the battle. When Samuel met Saul, Saul told him that he had done as the Lord had commanded. Samuel then said, "What are those sounds I hear, the lowing of cattle and the bleating of sheep?" And Saul replied that he and his army kept some of the livestock alive to be used as a sacrifice to God. And Samuel said these famous words, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams" (I Samuel 15:22b).

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). Jesus is talking about sacrifice when he talks about laying down his life for the sheep. Certainly the cross is about sacrifice. Jesus gave himself for us. He made a sacrifice.

The New Testament speaks in a number of places about Jesus' death as a sacrifice. In Romans Paul says, "God proves his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). In II Corinthians Paul says, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that we might become the righteousness of God" (II Corinthians 5:21). We all know John 3:16. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son so that whoever believes in him may not perish but have eternal life." That's about sacrifice. In the First Epistle of Peter we read, "He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed" (I Peter 2:24). And Isaiah 53 is often referred to in the New Testament to understand Jesus' death on the cross. Isaiah 53:5 says, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed." That's about sacrifice.

And in his sacrifice for us we see some things. We see Jesus' faithfulness to God, and we see his love for us. Jesus said that "the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." Shepherds no doubt made sacrifices in their work, and as the good shepherd the sacrifice Jesus made he made for us. God didn't need that sacrifice. We did.

And that brings us to something important about sacrifice. Sacrifice is the way we love our fellow human beings. We give of ourselves in order to show our love for others. That's what Jesus did. Through sacrifice he showed his love for us.

Now, we can make a sacrifice to show our love for God, but we have to be careful there. When it comes to sacrifice, we maintain control. Obedience, on the other hand, means giving up control.

That's what happened to Saul. He wanted to stay in control. He couldn't bring himself to totally surrender himself into the hands of God. Saul either wouldn't or couldn't totally trust God. That's the major contrast

between King Saul and King David, Saul's successor. David trusted God and therefore obeyed, most of the time.

King Saul, on the other hand, tried to use sacrifice as a pretense for loving God and trusting God, but it didn't work. He was found out. Saul actually kept those animals alive because he wanted to get some of the spoils of war for his men and himself. Sacrifice is not always a sign of love for God because in sacrifice we still maintain control. Sacrifice can be used to look pious even when one is rather disobedient.

That brings me to this point. Sacrifice is the way we love each other. Obedience is the way we love God. We have no other way of showing our deepest love for each other than by sacrificing for each other. So sacrifice is the way we love our neighbors, but the way we show our love to God is to be faithful and to be obedient.

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. I lay down my life for the sheep." Jesus showed his love for us by dying for us. He showed his love for God by being obedient, always, to the will of God. In sacrifice we hold control in our hands. In obedience we don't. That's the difference between the two. And that's why the one, sacrifice, is the way we love our neighbor while the other, obedience, is the way we love God. Just something to think about.

Until next time, *Bro. Jim*

OUR HATS OFF TO A VERY DESERVING LADY

Our own Tresia McWhirter received high honors, Monday night, June 22, at the Lion's Club Installation of Officers Banquet. Tresia received the Melvin Jones Fellow plaque for dedicated Humanitarian services from the Lion's Club International Fellowship.

Tresia has worked in the club to promote sight services which includes: screening pre-school children for glasses, purchasing eye glasses and helps with eye examinations and surgeries for needy people.

Because of her dedication to the goals of the Lion's Club, she was also selected as Lion of the year. In addition, she will serve on the Board of Directors for the next two years.

Tresia has been a faithful worker and was well rewarded. We at First United Methodist are proud of her. Congratulations, Tresia!

TUESDAY LUNCHES

June 30 is the starting date that lunch will be provided to people who participate in the Loaves and Fishes program. **Lunch will be served from 11 a.m. until 12:30 p.m., each Tuesday through the month of July. Anyone who is interested in helping cook, serve, clean up, or would like to make a dessert for a particular Tuesday, please call the church office (762-3696) or Carol Beasley (*****) and give the date you are available. We are also accepting donations to help with the cost of the lunch - please label you donation "Tuesday lunches."** Thanks so much for you help with this new ministry and please remember us with your prayers. "The king will say to those at his right hand, '...I was a stranger and you welcomed me...just as you did it to one of the least of those who are members of my family, you did it to me.'" (Matthew 25:34-35, 40)

VBS MATERIALS NEEDED **(July 20 - 24)**

6 large bowls
3 blindfolds

Tarps, shower curtain liners or other covering
3 large boxes of cooked macaroni
Vegetable Oil
2 ladders of equal size
6' long board
Tape x 5
Small prizes x 5
3 corrugated cardboard wardrobe boxes
6 clean empty paint cans
Paint or colored roll paper
10 empty boxes of varying sizes
10 different prizes, from wacky to wonderful
3 \$ bills
Clothesline
6 hinged clothespins
6 large brightly colored paper plates
Masking tape
4 boxes of plastic wrap (100 ft. box)
4 trash cans
6 clean boxes of the same size
3 (or more) costumes consisting of the same # of pieces (pants, shirts, hats, glasses, etc.)
Balloons, same # as costumes
6 large rubber balls
6 pots, pans or plastic bowls, (large enough for one ball to rest on or in)
3 toilet plungers (New)
3 plunger ends
Drill
3 tennis balls
3 lengths of string (2 ft. ea.)
Hot glue
Duct tape
7 cardboard circles - Approx. 10" diameter
Self adhesive Velcro circles
2 large sheets of poster board
2 floor easels
Large book

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
Scott Dean
Georgia Childress
Brian Beller
Robert White
Herman Dunkin
Flora Benson
Tom Stillwell

Aaron Kirby (serving in Iraq)
Sharon (Tim & Maggie Spencer's niece) has been moved to Hope Hospice and her mother also has health issues.

The family of Rosie Umphrey (Gary Umphrey-husband)
Jim Weatherford (many of you have asked for the address to the facility Mr. Weatherford is currently at). The address for the Select Specialty Hospital is:
2000 Church Street
Nashville, TN 37236

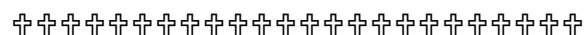
MARY-MARTHA CIRCLE

The Mary-Martha Circle will meet on Tuesday, July 14th, at Bonnie Thigpen's home (198 Goodhope Rd) for a pool party. Everyone is asked to bring a covered dish.

ITEMS NEEDED FOR VBS

The items listed on the other side of this sheet are needed for our upcoming VBS:

Please call Pam Shaffer at
*****, if you can donate any of these items for VBS. Your help is much appreciated!



I Will Be Loyal To The United Methodist Church And Support It With: My Presence:

Sunday, June 29, 2009

8:15 a.m. Worship Attendance.....	38
Sunday school Attendance.....	69
10:30 a.m. Worship Attendance.....	69

My Service: Sunday, July 5, 2009 Acolytes: tba

Loaves and Fishes: Tues. & Thurs.
Tues. July 07 Linda Newton, Ray Price & Jerry Gibbs
Thurs. July 09 Jean Robertson, Martha Jo Gibbs & Jerry Gibbs

AN INVITATION

Everyone is invited to attend the Liberty Festival Church Service which will take place at Coleman Memorial United Methodist Church on Thursday evening, July 2nd, at 7:00 p.m. Special music provided by Aaron McCroskey. Rev. Brad Holliman will provide the

