

## **FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - June 08, 2009**

### **The Pastor's Pen**

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35). These "I am" sayings peculiar to the Gospel of John find their reference in the conversation Moses had with God at the burning bush. After God had told Moses that he wanted him, Moses, to go back to Egypt and lead the Hebrew people out of slavery, Moses asked God what name he could give to the people for the one who had sent him. God's reply to Moses was, "I am who I am." Jesus' "I am" sayings come directly from this and are intended to say that Jesus is one with God, a major theme in the Gospel of John. So Jesus is the great "I am."

Jesus as the "bread of life" has to do with sustenance for our spiritual lives. The context of this particular "I am" saying is immediately after Jesus had fed the 5000. The people talk to him about Moses providing manna, or bread, from heaven for the Hebrew people in the wilderness. Jesus quickly corrects them and says that it was not Moses who gave the manna, but God. And then Jesus identifies himself as the bread that has come down from heaven to feed their spiritual needs.

Bread just naturally implies sustenance. Bread has to do with satiating hunger, physical hunger. And just as food, or bread, satiates the hunger of our physical bodies, so Jesus as the bread of life satiates the hunger of our souls. What is so amazing, however, is that so many folk neglect Jesus, "the bread of life," the bread that can feed their spiritual emptiness. These same people would never neglect eating. As sure as those empty feelings in our stomachs come and we move to try to fill that emptiness, so spiritual hunger comes and we need to fill that emptiness as well. And while many people may seek what they think is the spiritual bread, they find their hunger never satiated because they haven't partaken of "the bread of life."

I remember when I first became a member of the Masonic Lodge. Older members of the lodge would say to me, "You've got to study masonry." I took that to mean that I needed to think about the things that I had learned and then ask questions of those longer standing masons about things I didn't understand or know. For us as Christians to feed on Jesus as "the bread of life" we must study. There is simply no substitute for reading the Bible, especially the New Testament, and the Gospels in particular. There is no substitute for thinking about Jesus, who he is and what it means to belong to him as one of his disciples. There is no substitute for being in the presence of the worshiping community in times of worship, times of study, times of decision making, and times of fellowship. We learn from other Christians. There is no substitute for prayer. We need to talk to Jesus every day. If we are going to have our spiritual hunger satiated, we need to turn not only our eyes on Jesus but our minds as well.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life." He said it to the people he had just fed by blessing and breaking the five loaves and two fish. He said it to them for their benefit. He wanted them to know that as well as giving them the food that would satiate their physical hunger, he also is the bread that satiates our spiritual hunger. For us to have our spiritual hunger satiated

and for us to grow spiritually it is important that we set our minds on Jesus by immersing ourselves in what John Wesley called “the means of grace,” the means of grace being things like Bible reading and study, prayer, Christian conferencing and fellowship, and Holy Communion. Depth of spiritual life is a gift of God through Jesus, and receiving that depth of spiritual life comes from setting our minds much more on Jesus than on “the things of earth.” Just something to think about.

Until next time, **Bro. Jim**

### **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.

### **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**. **First time attendees are eligible for ½ scholarships and the deadline for the applications is June 15**. 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**.

### **Loaves and Fishes - Month of May**

During the month of May we served 163 families and 412 (Total 575) individuals through the Loaves and Fishes food pantry. Donations were given in the amount of \$2,189.00.

### **VBS - JULY 20-24, 2009**

Our theme this year is Studio Go! Check out our website for more information, to register or to volunteer: [www.vacationbibleschool.com/firstumclawrenceburg](http://www.vacationbibleschool.com/firstumclawrenceburg). You may also pick up VBS registration forms in the church office.

### **WITH ONE ANOTHER**

David Robertson  
Freddie Mae Jackson  
Oscar and Agnes McCarter  
Bill Evans  
Scottie McMackin  
Rev. Clifton Johnston  
T. J. Moore



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