

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
OCTOBER 25, 2010

E. Stanley Jones, the great Methodist missionary of the 20th century, wrote a book entitled The Divine Yes. This title is taken from a verse in II Corinthians 1 in the James Moffatt translation of the Bible. The verse reads like this. "For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was proclaimed among you by us (by myself, Silvanus, and Timotheus) was not 'yes and no' - the divine yes has at last sounded in him, for in him is the "yes" that affirms all the promises of God" (II Corinthians 1:19-20). E. Stanley Jones in that book makes the point the Jesus is God's "yes" to us.

As Christians we have sometimes been taught to think about the Jewish faith as a religion of law while the Christian faith is a religion of grace. This distinction has been used from time to time to show the difference between us and Jewish people, but this distinction is not entirely correct. In fact, it is actually a misrepresentation of both the Jewish faith and to some extent the Christian faith.

In the Book of Deuteronomy, the book I like to call Moses' farewell address to the Israelites, Moses talks to the people about their status before God. In the first part of chapter 7 (verses 1-5) Moses instructs the Israelites to destroy all the various groups of people in the land - the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Now that sounds harsh to us, but the Israelites are given this instruction for a reason. It is to avoid any kind of contact that would result in the Israelites intermarrying with any of these people or making any kind of covenant with them. Such intermarriage or any kind of covenant between the Israelites and these peoples might result in Israel being turned from worshiping God to worshiping the idols that these various peoples worship. So Moses instructs the Israelites to destroy the worship centers of these various peoples and burn their idols, and then Moses tells the Israelites why a zealous clinging to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is so important.

Moses says, "For you are a people holy to your God; the Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on earth to be his people, his treasured possession." Then Moses tells the Israelites that they were not chosen because they were the most numerous of all the peoples on earth. In fact, they were the fewest. The Israelites were not the strongest or the most developed among all the peoples on the earth. If anything, they were the weakest and the least developed. The reason God chose them was because God loved them and because God had made a covenant with their forbears. So for the Israelites their chosenness was a matter of grace. They became God's people because God in God's grace reached out to them. They weren't chosen for something they had done. They were chosen simply because God loved them. This is grace.

Now as a Christian, I've never been taught to think of Christians as a chosen people. Rather, as Christians, it seems to me that ours is more of an inclusion. Through Christ we have been brought into the people of God. The Apostle Paul uses the term grafting in his letter to the Romans. As Gentiles we are grafted in. Ours is not so much a being chosen as it is being included by the grace of God through Jesus. And our inclusion is by God's initiative, not ours. Any decision we make to follow the Lord Jesus is made possible by God's prior "yes" to us, what E. Stanley Jones calls "the divine yes."

So when we think about the distinction between Jews and Christians, we ought not to think in terms of Jews equal law versus Christians equal grace. That simply is not correct. Rather it is quite incorrect.

Now while it is true that "the law" came to play a very important role in the Jewish faith, that law was the Israelites/Jews way of understanding their appropriate response to God's grace. Keeping God's law meticulously sanctified the name of God before Gentile people. So to some extent the Israelite/Jewish people are a people of law, but they are also a people of grace as cited above.

And sometimes we as Christians make the Christian faith more about law than about faith or grace. That is, if we live a certain way, we will be saved, but we err when we do that (See Paul's letter to the Galatian churches). We need to remember that we are in some sense chosen just as were the Israelites. Jesus said to the disciples in the

Gospel of John, "You did not choose me. I chose you." Our "yes" to God through Christ is always preceded by God's "yes" to us through Jesus, and as we see in this chapter in Deuteronomy, the Israelites' "yes" to God was preceded by God's "yes" to them.

The initiative is always God's. Any decision we make for God is always a response to God's initiative. Any move we make toward God is always a response to God's prior action or call. And so by grace we saved, and not by our decision (decisions). Like the Israelites we are a people of grace. While the Israelites were chosen, we are included in God's people through Jesus. This Paul says is the fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham. This Paul says has been God's plan from the foundation of the world. Both Jews and Christians are a people of grace because for each God's action is always prior to any decision we make for God. Just something to think about, and let us be careful about the way we make distinctions.

Until next time, **Bro. Jim**

STEWARDSHIP MONTH

November is usually stewardship month for us here at First UMC. We begin to think about what we can give to our church in the coming year while we the church begin developing our spending plan for ministry for the coming year. As we think about stewardship month I would like to have one person in each of our worship services speak on the following topics:

November 7 - What my church means to me.

November 14 - Why I give to my church.

November 21 - How I would like other people to see my church.

November 28 - What I think the church means to the world.

If you would be willing to speak for about 5-7 minutes on one of these topics, please talk with Bro. Jim about it.

Bro. Jim

COLLEGE MINISTRIES

The fall semester is winding down and it is almost time for Finals. Please help our college students know that we are thinking about them by donating some "goodies" for them to snack on during finals. Goodies can be gum, hard candy, crackers, little Debbie snacks, micro. Popcorn, nuts, tea or coffee, cookies, beef jerky. We have 22 college students and 2 military. Please bring the items to Alecia's office by Monday, **November 1st**.

WHAT: UMW NOVEMBER HARVEST

WHERE: FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

WHEN: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 8:00 - 12:00

Our November Harvest is fast approaching. Once again we will be offering breakfast of sausage & biscuit, juice and coffee to be enjoyed while shopping our Country Store and Bake Sale Extravaganza. We certainly welcome all baked goods and candy as well as home canned vegetables, fruits, jams and jellies to sell. The latest edition of our church cookbook will also be on sale. Homemade lunch items such as pimento cheese, chicken salad, stew, chili, chicken & dumplings and desserts will be available for carry out. **We need your help!** Plan now to bring something for the bake sale and join us on November 13th.

TRUNK OR TREAT

Trunk or Treat will be this Sunday, October 31st, at 5:00 p.m. We will have hotdogs and chips. There will be a costume contest as well as Trick or Treating. We will show an outdoor movie "Charlie Brown & The Great Pumpkin" at 6:30 p.m. Everyone welcome!

PULASKI DISTRICT 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30TH @10:00 A.M.

LAWRENCEBURG FIRST UMC

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: ROGER HOPSON

(Assistant to Bishop Wills)
FREE LUNCHEON WITH BBQ PREPARED BY
COLEMAN UMC 'HOLY SMOKERS'
(INCLUDING MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT DURING LUNCH)
ALL LAY & CLERGY ARE INVITED

HAPPY ELDERS - NOVEMBER 18TH TRIP

The Happy Elders have 14 tickets to see the play "The Honky Tonk Angels Holiday", November 18, 2010 in Dickson, TN, at the Renaissance Center. The musical play, "Honky Tonk Angels", was authored by Ted Swindley, creator of the successful "Always Patsy Cline." Three women from very different backgrounds meet by chance on a bus to Nashville and they form a honky tonk singing group. These honky tonk girls have been playing the circuit for sometime and will reunite for a Christmas Special. We will leave the church west parking lot at 10:00 a.m. Lunch is at 12:00 noon and the play starts at 1:00 p.m. Cost is \$30.00 which covers lunch, play, ticket for the driver and gas for the van. Tip is not included. Age limit is 55 and up. Sign up and pay at the church office or call Jean Robertson at ***** by October 29, 2010. Checks should be made to The Happy Elders. The theater has assured me that this is a fun play and contains nothing that would offend us Methodist.

LIGHT THE NIGHT WITH JESUS

Does it feel dark inside your heart? Do you feel all alone?
There is someone who waits and wants to make your heart his home.

The darkness that you feel inside is that sin that lives in you.
You cannot make it go away; There's nothing you can do.

But Jesus is the Light of God that makes the darkness flee.
He died to take your sin away. He rose to set you free.

Now do you want the Light of God to live inside of you?
And would you like to shine like him in everything you do?

Through faith believe what he has done. Receive his gift for you.
He'll come into your heart today and make your life brand new.

*"You were once darkness, but now you are the light of the Lord.
Walk as children of light."* (Ephesians 5:8 NKJV)

PUMPKIN PRAYER

Dear Jesus, as I carve my pumpkin help me pray this prayer:

Open my mind so I can learn about you. (cut the top off the pumpkin)

Take all my sin and forgive the wrong I that I do. (clean out the inside)

Open my eyes so your love I will see. (cut eyes shaped like hearts)

I'm sorry for times I've turned up my nose at what you've given me. (cut a nose in the shape of the cross)

Open my ears so your word I will hear. (cut ears shaped like the Bible)

Open my mouth to tell others you're near. (Cut the mouth in the shape of a fish)

Let your light shine in all I say and do! Amen.

WITH ONE ANOTHER

David Robertson
Freddie Mae Jackson
Bill Evans
Scottie McMackin

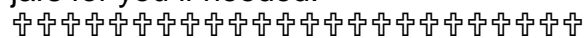
Jean Cone
 Scott Dean
 George Clark
 Charlie Krieger
 Kelsey Gobble
 Justin Mitchell
 Selene Crews
 Jane Marston
 Buddy Gibbs
 Kenneth Williams
 Bea Thigpen
 Byron Shelton
 Peggy Cooke
 Laura Kitchens
 Lonzo Bailey
 Bill Clark
 Rob Raymond
 Caleb Brown
 Drew Brown

...We extend our love and sympathy to Brenda & Beth Benson and Betsy Phelps and their family. Kenny Benson passed away on Tuesday of this week.

FIRST UMC YOUTH GROUP TRIP - SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30TH

Attention All Youth: We are planning a Youth group trip to Miller's Thrillers on Saturday, October 30th. We will leave the church parking lot at 4:30 p.m. We will eat supper somewhere in Spring Hill; at 5:30 p.m. (remember to bring money to eat on). We will then head to Miller's Thrillers (the cost is \$10 to get in). We will return to church no later than 11 p.m. **YOU MUST HAVE A SIGNED PERMISSION SLIP TO ATTEND.**
 Questions? Alecia's cell number is *********, or you may contact her at the church office hours.

NEEDED: Persons to make Chicken & Dumplings for the November Harvest. If you have not been contacted, please call the church office at 762-3696. We can provide jars for you if needed.



I Will Be Loyal

To The United Methodist Church And Support It With: My Presence:

Sunday, Oct. 24, 2010

8:15 a.m. Worship Attendance.....43

Sunday school Attendance.....79

10:30 a.m. Worship Attendance.....88

My Service: Sunday, Oct. 31, 2010

Acolytes: Hunter Hardy & Maggie McKnight

Nursery Volunteer: Laura Hardy

Children's Church: Gracie Henson

Loaves and Fishes

Tues. Nov. 2: Loulie Brown, Jean Grimsley, Anita Marston & Jerry Gibbs

Thur. Nov. 4: Joan Cochran, Martha Jo & Jerry Gibbs

WINTER COATS FOR LOAVES & FISHES

The Food pantry is accepting gently used or new coat/jacket donations in children, youth and adult sizes.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT MENU
November 3rd

Meatloaf
Mashed potatoes, Mixed vegetables,
Salad & Rolls
Apple crisp

Workers: Friends & Fellowship

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