

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
NOVEMBER 08, 2010

The second chapter of the Book of Joshua tells the story of spies going to Jericho to spy out the land in advance of the Israelites crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land. Some people don't like the Book of Joshua because of all the battles and all the killing that is described in it, but I happen to like this book because of the stories of adventure in it. I guess it's the kid in me that likes these stories - stories in which Israel overcomes great odds to win. The story of the spies going to spy out the city of Jericho is just one such story.

Joshua sends two spies to Jericho. The two spies go to the house of Rahab who makes her living by the oldest profession in the world. One would suppose they go there because it would not be unusual for strange men to be seen in such an establishment. But the people of Jericho have evidently heard about the Israelites, that they're just across the river, and that they have defeated everyone and everything that has stood in their way on the way up from the Sinai Peninsula. And so the people of Jericho are afraid, but they are also making preparation for what may be coming.

Someone in Jericho reports to the king that he has seen two men not from Jericho in the city, and so the king immediately sends out a search party to find these men and capture them. But Rahab hides the men up on her roof under some flax she is drying up there. When the search party shows up at Rahab's door, she tells them that the spies are not there, that the spies probably slipped out through gate just before it was closed at dark. So the search party goes off looking for the spies outside the city along the way to the Jordan River. In the meantime Rahab makes a rope and lets the spies down through a window. Her house is on the city wall. But before the spies go she tells them to go into the hill country, wait a couple of days, and then go back to their camp across the river. She also makes them promise that when Israel comes to take Jericho, she and her family will be spared in return for her helping the two spies. And in the course of the conversation Rahab tells the spies, "I know that the God of Israel is the one true God." Rahab makes a profession of faith in God. She has come to believe that the God of Israel is the God of all that is, the one true God.

Now there are a couple of faith lessons that can be drawn from this story. One has to do with preparation. Even though God is on the side of the Israelites and God is going to be with them to lead them to victory, that does not relieve Israel of the responsibility of being properly prepared. We will see this same need of proper preparation in later battles, particularly when Israel goes against the town called Ai. Joshua sends out the spies in order to be prepared for the taking of Jericho. They need to know something about Jericho, its lay out, and the mood of the people as they head across the river. Yes, Joshua believes that God is leading them and will lead them, but he still needs to be properly prepared for battle. Joshua is a wise leader.

Living by faith in God does not mean our just sitting back and doing nothing. We walk by faith, but we still need to prepare for that which lies ahead. While the Lord does lead us, we still give our best to the Lord, and our best requires proper preparation. John Wesley was a proponent of

Christians “availing themselves of the means of grace,” namely Bible study, prayer, meeting together with other Christians, fasting, and partaking of the Lord’s Supper. John Wesley believed that we are saved by God’s grace through faith, but he also believed that by availing oneself of the means of grace we put ourselves in better position to experience the presence of God, to experience God’s grace. There is some responsibility on our part for our relationship to the Lord. We need to make sure we make our preparation.

Now a second faith lesson from this story would be that the Lord goes before us even as the Lord leads us into those next steps of our faith journey. It is as if God prepared a place for those spies sent to Jericho in Rahab’s home. What I find interesting in this story is that the people of Jericho have already heard about Israel’s coming, and they’re getting ready for it. They’re anxious about it. Rahab tells the spies that such is the case, and Rahab has not only heard about the coming of Israel and the power of Israel’s God, but Rahab has made up her mind that the God of Israel is the one true God. She makes that profession in front of the spies. It is as if God is already there in Jericho ahead of the Israelites preparing a way in the person of Rahab. So the second faith lesson from this story is that God goes before us to prepare a way. We just have to find that way and follow it.

Thus the story of the spies being sent ahead to Jericho. It is an intriguing story, especially for those of us who like adventure stories. This is certainly one, but it is also a story that teaches us some faith lessons. One is that we need to engage in proper preparation even though God is leading us, and the second is that God goes before us and arrives at the places along our faith journey before we do. Just something to think about.

Until next time, **Bro. Jim**

### CHARGE CONFERENCE REPORTS

The following report forms are available in the church office and will need to be completed for Charge Conference: Trustees; Committee on Finance; Staff Parish Relations Committee; Martin Methodist Representative; and Lay Speaker Report. Chairpersons are responsible for the various reports. Charge Conference will be Sunday night, November 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

### 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 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*

### NOVEMBER HARVEST - IT’S HERE!

The UMW November Harvest is this weekend, **Saturday, November 13**. **Get your bake sale items ready**. It is our hope that you will bring a friend and join us for

breakfast and shopping any time from 8:00 a.m. until 12 noon. Our success depends on your support!

The CLC will be open on Friday afternoon, November 12<sup>th</sup>, until 5:30 p.m. to receive bake sale items, chili, or chicken and dumplings. You may also bring them early Saturday morning.

It is important that you label you items so that we will know what kind of cake, bread, pie, candy, etc. we are selling. You may also price them if you like.

### **CHRISTIANS CONNECT - SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup>**

Christians Connect will meet on Sunday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, following the 8:15 a.m. service. We will meet in the Friends and Fellowship class-everyone is invited to join us for food and fellowship. This month's gathering will be hosted by the **Wesley Class**.

### **SUNDAY SCHOOL LITERATURE**

I will be ordering Sunday school literature in the next few days. If your class needs something new ordered, or an increase in the number of books you are currently receiving, please contact me at the church office. Thank you, Terri

### **CHRISTMAS PLAY - "WHAT IS HIS NAME?"** **(December 5, 2010)**

*"They all worshipped Him; slaves, peasants, Kings, shepherds, angels, and soldiers, and even Mary and Joseph."*

**What roll would you like to play?** People are needed to narrate, sing, act, play instruments, set up props and organize costumes.

**Come and celebrate our Savior.** The play will be presented in the sanctuary at 6:00 p.m. on the first Sunday in December (**Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>**), with food and fellowship to follow in the Christian Life Center.

**Attention all interested children: Practice began on Wednesday night, Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5:45 p.m. in the CLC. We will continue to meet every \*Wednesday night.**

\*(There will be no practice on Wed. November 24<sup>th</sup>, but we will practice on Wednesday, Dec. 1).

**Attention all adults and youth:** Just let Beth Lerner or Judy Benson know what you'd like to do. God Bless You!

### **ATTENTION: HAPPY ELDERS - NOVEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup> TRIP**

Those signed up to go on the Dickson trip on November 18, need to be at the Christian Life Center west parking lot by 9:45 a.m.

### **HISPANIC MINISTRY CALENDAR**

Volunteers - 5:15 until 7:30 p.m. in the Christian Life Center

**11/18/10:** Anita & Jason Story

**12/02/10:** Mary Ann & Abby Clayton

**12/09/10:** Alanna Harris & Beverly Philpot

### **NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

Jim Carey - Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>

Kaye Allen - Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>

Bruce Edwards - Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>

Beverly Duke - Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup>

Martha Jo Gibbs - Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>

Janice Shaffer - Nov. 17<sup>th</sup>

Beth Lerner - Nov. 20<sup>th</sup>

Nancy Nelson - Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup>

Sid James - Nov. 27<sup>th</sup>

### **WITH ONE ANOTHER**

David Robertson

Freddie Mae Jackson

Bill Evans



**Tues. Nov. 16:** Loulie Brown, Jean Grimsley, Anita Marston & Jerry Gibbs

**Thur. Nov. 18:** Joan Cochran, Bruce & Barbara Edwards

**WEDNESDAY NIGHT MENU**  
**(November 17<sup>th</sup>)**

Pork Loin  
Sweet Potatoes  
Salad & Rolls  
Pecan Cobbler

**Workers: Wesley Class**