

## FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

February 6, 2011

Judging - that's a topic we hear a lot about in these days. We live in an interesting time and in an interesting society. In today's American culture tolerance has achieved a kind of God-like status. That is to say that tolerance has become an absolute while being judgmental is just about the worst thing anyone can do. In this current American society being judgmental has come to be what I would call the "unpardonable sin." It's right up there in this society with being ignorant or naive.

And yet, it seems to me that there is a terribly thick irony here. How does one know that another is guilty of being judgmental without making a judgment about it? How do we name someone else as judgmental without being judgmental ourselves? Have you ever thought about that? It might just be worth thinking about.

Paul in his letter to the church at Rome gives expression to an understanding that says that God is calling both Jews and Gentiles to be a part of the family of God, and that Jesus as the Messiah is the completion of God's promise to Abraham that through him (Abraham) all the peoples of the earth will be blessed. It is through Jesus that the promises to Abraham are now extended to the Gentiles so that all may be a part of the family of God.

In the latter part of chapter one Paul talks about sin. Now some have said that the sins Paul lists in 1:28-32 are the sins of the Gentiles, and that may be correct. But basically what Paul has said is that all sins are the result of not acknowledging God as Creator and not worshiping God as such. Without God at the center of our worship we find ourselves given over to a way of thinking that can do no other than enter into degrading and destructive-type behaviors (the list in 1:28-32 are examples). But then Paul follows chapter 1 with an interesting sentence. "Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are (in this context either Jew or Gentile), when you judge others; for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are the doing the very same things" (2:1).

What I think Paul is saying is that if we can name the deeds of others as originating from a failure to acknowledge God as God, then we are naming our own sin as well. We may not engage in the same deeds as another, but if we have deeds that are in the degrading or destructive-type behaviors, which we all do, then we are not only naming the sin of another, we are naming our own sin as well. So in judging the sin of another we bring judgment upon ourselves. None of us are immune from those behaviors we are apt to name as sins, and thus we are guilty as well. So in judging sin, we not only judge something as sin for the other, we judge it as sin for us too. When we pass judgment upon another, we in fact pass judgment upon ourselves.

So what are we to do? Are we never to name something as sin? No, I don't think so. We need to be able to name sin. We need to be able to discern that which separates human beings from God. That's all but imperative. How do we correct something if we can't first name it as in need of correction? Such presents a kind of dilemma, doesn't it?

But maybe here is the answer. Paul later in that passage asks this question. "Do you despise the riches of his (God's) kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not realize that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance" (2:4)? The question about judging is not whether we can name sin in another's life, in our own life, or in the life of the culture around us. The question about judging is how we judge. Are we harsh? Do we want our pound of flesh? Do we have the attitude of wanting God to rain down fire on those evil doers? Or can we be patient? Can we be kind in the face of sin? Can we want the other to find forgiveness and redemption? The bad part about our judging is the harshness, unkindness, or impatience with which we judge another. Do we deem another's sin unforgivable while ours is forgivable? Therein lies the problem.

Paul with his rhetorical questions in this passage is saying that God is patient with those who sin, even though that sin is mostly directed against God. God is patient, kind, and forbearing because God wants to give every opportunity for repentance. God wants to give every opportunity for the sinner to turn from his or her misdeeds to

salvation through faith in Christ Jesus the Lord.

So the thing about judging is not that we can't be discerning about what is right and what is wrong. We can't not make judgments about what is good and what is evil. We must do that. The key in that discerning and the key in making those judgments is how we do it.

In his Sermon on the Mount Jesus said, "Judge not, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get" (Matthew 7:1-2). I don't believe Jesus ever meant that we are not to discern between right and wrong, good and evil. It's just how we do it. If we make our judgments in a harsh way not allowing for repentance, then as the old saying goes "we are on thin ice." If on the other hand we discern between right and wrong, good and evil, all the while having patience, forbearance, and kindness believing that such gives the opportunity for repentance, then I think we are on solid ground. Just something to think about.

Until next time, **Bro. Jim**

### **STELLAR SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS**

In 1936, Mrs. G. K. Vaughn agreed to be the teacher of a young ladies Sunday school class which became the Stellar Class. The class was organized at Mrs. Vaughn's home on February 15, 1937. It became a class of earnest Christian workers and is still a vital part of the church school. The class has sponsored many projects to help equip and beautify the church. Its members have taught Sunday school classes, Vacation Bible School and ministered to the sick and bereaved. A picture of the class in 1938 include many of the founding members-Ethel Nelson, Ruth Lumpkins, Viola Hagan, Lucille Hillhouse, Mary Roberts, Beulah Harwell, Verna Rutherford, Nellie Mae Stewart, Nell Belew, Annie Bell Hart, Blanche Norton, Sibyl nation, Annie Ruth Beckham, Jennie Ola Lumpkins and Olena Nation. The class is named for the "Stellar" or "star", its light and becon to the world.

Our class is adult ladies. The best way to describe our Stellar class is that it is uplifting spiritually and heart-warming socially. We are in the class you cannot be promoted or demoted. Because of age, we like to think we are full of wisdom and we like a little humor.

Beverly Duke is our teacher, using the International Sunday School lessons. Beverly is a wonderful Biblical teacher and promotes good class discussion. Our class enjoys helping with Christians Connect and the Wednesday Family night suppers. We also help with the Happy Elders meals to shut-ins. Some of our members are also active in helping with Loaves & Fishes. We have an interest in all our older adults in our church.

We have a Christmas luncheon with the Guild-Ruth study group of the United Methodist Women and the East Lawrenceburg FCE (formerly Home Demonstration) in our town.

We are happiest when we receive a new member. We invite any without a class to come join us. Come and help us to walk closer to our God and closer to one another.

### **LIBRARY NEWS**

The new UMW reading books are now on the library shelves. A new list of the reading books available is being prepared and will be on the shelf soon. We ask that you please check your shelves at home to see if you have any library books from the church. Several books from the church library have been "checked out" for a long time. We especially need those that are still on the UMW list to be returned.

### **BIBLE STUDY**

Bible Study will resume on Sunday, February 13<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. We will finish the study on Genesis. Please read Chapters 37 through 50.

### **UPCOMING MEETINGS**

The Lydia Circle will meet on Monday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, at 10:00 a.m.

## CHRISTIANS CONNECT - FEBRUARY 13<sup>TH</sup>

Christians Connect will meet on Sunday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, following the 8:15 a.m. service. Everyone is invited to join us for snacks and fellowship. This month's gathering will be hosted by the Friends and Fellowship class.

### A NOTE FROM THE HAPPY ELDERS

Bruce and Barbara Edwards will be leading the "Happy Elders" ministry this year. Barbara has notified us that they plan to have the first luncheon for the church shut-ins on **Thursday, February 17<sup>th</sup>**. The group will start putting the meals together for the shut-ins around 10:30 a.m. If anyone knows of any shut-ins that have not been served before, please **call Barbara at \*\*\*\*\***. Also, Barbara would like for those who can volunteer to prepare food to please call her and let her know what they plan to bring.

### NEWS FROM THE FRIENDS AND FELLOWSHIP CLASS

Beginning February 13<sup>th</sup>, the Friends and Fellowship class will be starting a new lesson entitled Confronting the Controversies. This is a lesson on issues confronting us in our day to day life. We invite anyone interested in fun, fellowship and some good discussion to join us in the classroom right off the Rose Chapel.

### NEWS FROM OUR EDUCATION TEAM

The Education Team met in January led by the Chair, Beth Lerner. Sunday school curriculum was reviewed for each of the classes. There was also discussion about fall classes for children and youth and class sizes with our current number and ages of students. We are delighted with the new Sunday school class for young adults, being led by Judy Benson; it seems to have filled a much needed space in our Sunday school ministry. The Education team decided to provide Lenten Devotion booklets for each Church family. These will be available by March 6, 2011. We also discussed the need for current classroom signs at each entrance to the Education Building. Our next meeting will be in March.

### HAPPY ELDERS TRIP - MARCH 12

The Happy Elders have 14 reservations to see the play "Annie", which includes a boxed lunch, at the Bethlehem United Methodist church in Franklin, TN on March 12. The price for lunch, play, driver and gas for the van is \$27 each. Lunch begins at 12:30 and the play starts at 2:00 p.m. We will leave the west end of the CLC at 10:00 a.m. Sign up and pay at the church office by **February 28, 2011** or call Jean Robertson at \*\*\*\*\*.

### MISSION TRIP TO HENDERSON SETTLEMENT-KENTUCKY

Anyone interested in going to Henderson Settlement, for a work/mission project in the Spring? We are looking at the weeks of April 3<sup>rd</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup>. Cost is \$245 per person, meals and housing included. Please let Alecia know if you are interested.

### SAVE THE DATE

On Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011, there will be a Spring yard sale sponsored by the Outreach Committee. Start rounding up all the extra things you have stored in your houses and bring it to the church. We can store some things upstairs in the Education building, if you want to start bringing things in.

### WITH ONE ANOTHER

David Robertson  
Freddie Mae Jackson  
Scottie McMackin  
Jean Cone  
George Clark  
Kelsey Egly

Selene Crews  
Buddy Gibbs  
Kenneth Williams  
Bea Thigpen  
Byron Shelton  
Peggy Cooke  
Agnes McCarter  
Ray McCarter  
Kaye Price  
Don Grimsley  
Peggy Morris  
Helen Dorsey  
Carolyn Pack  
Joey Howell  
Jeff Shaffer  
Carlos Pierce  
Ruth Johnstone  
Justin Mitchel

**NOTES OF THANKS**

I appreciated all the cards and phone calls during my illness. Thank you all and God Bless.

**Joyce Holmes**

Dear Church Family,

I am very appreciative of my care package I received during finals. It kept my fire fueled! God Bless all of you.

Love, **Ben Egly**

Dear FUMC,

Thank you so much for the care package! I've really enjoyed all of the snacks. It's great to know that I have so many people thinking of me!

Thanks again,

**Ryan Egly**

**P.S. Prayers for finals would be much appreciated.**

**CROCHETERS & KNITTERS**

All baby caps need to be turned into the office by Sunday, **Feb. 20<sup>th</sup>**, so we can get them in the mail.

**Alecia**

**I Will Be Loyal**

**To The United Methodist Church And**

**Support It With: My Presence:**

**Sunday, Feb. 06, 2011**

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

Sunday school Attendance.....94

10:30 a.m. Worship Attendance.....107

**My Service: Sunday, Feb. 13, 2011**

**Acolytes:** Hunter Hardy & Maggie McKnight

**Nursery Volunteer:** TBA

**Children's Church:** Gracie Henson

**Loaves and Fishes**

**Tues. Feb. 15:** Ray Price, Martha Jo & Jerry Gibbs

**Thur. Feb. 17** Anita Johnston, Ellen Crews, Jean Robertson and Jerry Gibbs

