

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - AUGUST 16, 2010

(From the Pastor's Pen)

In Leviticus 16:29-30 we read, "This shall be a statute to you forever: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall deny yourselves, and shall do no work, neither the citizen nor the alien who resides among you. For on this day atonement shall be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before the Lord." Israel as a people (nation/society) was to observe a day of atonement. On that day sacrifices were made for the purpose of cleansing Israel of its sins, but the sins for which Israel were cleansed were not just the sins of individual people. The sins of which Israel was cleansed were also the sins of Israel as a collective people, as a society/nation.

Atonement, however, involves more than just making a sacrifice. Having a day of atonement meant that Israel acknowledged that as a people it indeed was guilty of sin. Thus a part of atonement is acknowledging that we as individuals or we as a society have sinned and that we need to be forgiven of that sin. A day of atonement acknowledges before God and ourselves that we are not all that we need to be either as individuals or as a society as a whole.

I once heard a man say that he thought the United States needed to have a day of atonement for Vietnam. I had never thought about such a thing, but I think he had something worthy of our thinking. Sometimes as a society/nation we are not all that we should be. We miss the mark. We fall short. Sometimes we as a society/nation do things that simply are not right. We may not intend to do those things, but just as we as individuals don't intend to do wrong things but still find that some things we do are wrong, so it is with a nation/society. The question is how we deal with those kinds of wrongs if we don't have some kind of collective acknowledgment of our wrongdoing.

The question, I suppose, is how would we do that. Well, for Israel the day of atonement started with their leaders, the priests. The priests first made atonement for themselves and all the things that had to do with the tent of meeting and the altar. Then the priests made atonement for the people. So for Israel acknowledgment that they were in need of atonement, repentance, and then confession started with their leaders. The leaders of Israel led them as a society into a day of atonement.

Any kind of collective atonement in our society will have to start with our leaders, but our leaders often have a hard time dealing with such things as honesty about failures and/or wrongdoing, acknowledgment of such failures and/or wrongdoing, and repentance of those things. Apparently they think such acknowledgment and repentance is a sign of weakness, for one leader after another tries to hide embarrassing things until they can hide them no longer. Evidently they think it is a sign of weakness to acknowledge one's shortcomings. And our leaders seem to want to spend more times blaming previous leaders than owning up to what needs to be done. Both things show a reluctance to own our collective mistakes.

Ancient Israel didn't think that way however. Ancient Israel evidently felt that acknowledging a society's shortcomings was a sign of strength, for it was in such acknowledgment that as a society they could do something about those shortcomings. We as an American society could use some of that honesty about our shortcomings because without it I don't know how we as a society stay on the right path. Instead of blaming others we need to look honestly at ourselves sometimes.

Ancient Israel was instructed by God through Moses to have Day of Atonement for a reason. A society, a nation, that could acknowledge truth about itself when that truth was in fact convicting was a much stronger nation than one that could not. To refuse to repent is to continue in error and unrighteousness. To be able to acknowledge that one is not perfect, that sinful things have occurred and to sincerely repent helps a nation to more nearly stay on the right path.

Atonement is something we as individuals need and we as a society need. We need atonement because it makes us be honest about ourselves. It makes us confess, and it brings us to the place where we can say, "We need to do better." Israel practiced a day of atonement for a reason, and it was a quite good reason. Honesty about who you are and what you've done whether as an individual or as a collective unit makes

you stronger, not weaker. Just something to think about.

Until next time, **Bro. Jim**

BIBLE BASKETBALL @ THE CLC - SUNDAY, AUGUST 22ND @ 6:00 P.M.
(BRING FINGER FOODS)

More Bible Basketball Info: After team scores are tallied and on the final basketball shooting round, participants may opt for a long desperation shot for their team. Successful desperation shots are worth **10 Points!** Thus the outcome of the game can easily be swayed toward the underdogs if they can sink the desperation shot. More sample question: **1 Point Question:** Name a book of the New Testament that is called the "Good News". (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John) **2 Point Question:** Dumb Joke: "Big, Daddy, Junior and Spooky" refers to the "Trinity". What are their real names: (Father, Son and Holy Ghost) **3 Point Question:** King Ahab married a foreign queen who led Israel into the worship of false gods. What was her name? A: Delilah, B: Elvira, C: Ester, (D: Jezebel).

Remember that individual team members get to choose their level of difficulty, and an opportunity to shoot the nerf ball at the 1, 2, or 3 point range where 3 is the most difficult in each category. This is your mission. If you decide to accept this mission, please be advised you will laugh till it hurts. (This will self-destruct in five seconds.)

PLASKI DISTRICT UMW WOMEN MISSION EDUCATION STUDY

**Please bring in your box tops and soup labels, and glasses now. We will take these items with us to Coleman on the 21st, when we go to the mission study.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

The **Witness Committee** will meet on **Tuesday, August 24, at 5:30 p.m.** Members of the committee are: Chairperson-Jim Gardner, Barbara Edwards, Helen Dorsey, Beth Benson, Carla Clayton, Beth Lerner, Star Garner, Kim McKnight, Anita Marston, Keri McMahan, Mark Brewer and Judy Brewer.

The **Mission/Outreach Committee** will meet on **Tuesday, August 24, at 6:30 p.m.** Members of the committee are: Jerry Gibbs-Chairperson, Sonny Duke, Beverly Duke, Martha Jo Gibbs, Harlon Griffin, Frances Griffin, Sid James, Carol James, John Benson, Polly Marsh, Pam Shaffer, Jeff Shaffer and Lucy Benson.

The **Education Committee** will meet on Tuesday, **August 24, at 7:30 p.m.** Members of the committee are: Alecia Fishcer-Chairperson, Wayne Richardson, Tony Clayton, Carol Cheatwood, Beth Lerner, Judy Benson, Gayle Wright and Marc Lerner.

TENNESSEE CONFERENCE BISHOP'S FLOOD RELIEF APPEAL
SPECIAL OFFERING ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 22

The wind and water from the spring storms have passed for now, but tens of thousands of survivors have just begun a long path to recovery in more than **29 counties** across the Tennessee Conference. Perhaps you know someone who has been affected by the flooding in May. Continued support in the form of spiritual, emotional, building materials and volunteers, is needed. On Sunday, August 22, we will take a special offering for those who have been affected by the flood of 2010. This is a free will offering so you may give only if you wish. Checks can be made to First UMC and designated "2010 Spring Storms".

PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE SCHEDULED-MANAGUA, NICARAGUA

Our church has received word that there will be Partnership Encounter for Nicaraguan partners and their United States partners October 26-27, 2010. Representatives from our church will fly to Managua for the Encounter sponsored by CEPAD and then visit the Fountain of Life Church in Amatitan for three or four days. This will be a time for information and building relationships. Anyone who may be interested in being a part of this delegation should call Jerry Gibbs at *****. God bless you all.

A NOTE OF THANKS

Thank you to my church family for all the prayers, cards and gifts I have received during my surgery and recovery. Each day I grow stronger through your witness of the love of

Christ Jesus.

God Bless, **Alecia Fischer**

FIFTH SUNDAY SINGING - AUGUST 29TH AT 6:00 P.M.

On August 29, we will have a Fifth Sunday Singing at the Coleman Memorial UMC, beginning at 6:00 p.m. Everyone is invited to come out and enjoy music from choirs and individuals from Methodist churches throughout the county. A time of fellowship will follow the program.

PULASKI DISTRICT ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

On Saturday, October 30th, we will be hosting the Celebration of the 30th year of the Pulaski District. All clergy and all laity in the District are invited. There will be a worship service beginning at 10:30 a.m., with lunch to follow in the CLC. The Worship Service will feature Rev. Roger Hopson, Assistant to the Bishop, preaching and choirs singing, among them Antioch's Choir. While we are not responsible for anything in particular, we will need as many of our members to be present as possible. We will need to assist people in finding the sanctuary, getting them from Sanctuary to CLC, assisting with children and youth activities, and just generally assisting wherever needed. We want to be good hosts for this important event. Our Superintendent has asked us to do this, and we want to do it well.

Bro. Jim

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Ellen Crews - August 21st

Ray Price - August 31st

FALL BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study this Fall will return to Sunday night. As we ended our study last Spring, a number of people expressed the desire to go back to Sunday night. That's what we'll do. We will begin on Sunday evening, September 12th, at 6:30 p.m. We will study the book of Genesis. The Fall schedule will look something like this:

September 12 - Bible Study-Session 1 "Creation". Read Genesis, chapters 1 and 2

September 19 - Family Fun Night (Movie)

September 26 - Bible Study-Session 2 "The Fall". Read Genesis, chapters 3 and 4

October 03 - Bible Study-Session 3 "The Wickedness of Humankind; Noah; Tower of Babel". Read Genesis chapters 5 through 11

October 10 - Bro. Jim on vacation

October 17 - Bible study-Session 4 "Abraham and Isaac". Read Genesis, chapters 12 through 24.

October 24 - Fifth Sunday singing on Fourth Sunday.

October 31 - Trunk or Treat

November 07 - The Kelley's in concert

November 14 - Bible Study-Session 5 "Esau and Jacob". Read Genesis 25 through 36

November 21 - Community Thanksgiving Service

November 28 - Charge Conference

December 05 - Bible Study-Session 6 "Sons of Jacob". Read Genesis 37 through 50

December 10-12 Night in Bethlehem

WITH ONE ANOTHER

David Robertson

Freddie Mae Jackson

Bill Evans

