

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - AUGUST 02, 2010

(From the Pastor's Pen)

Worship is important. It is important not because we will suffer some kind of penalty if we don't attend worship, but because worship indicates a relationship between us and God. And just as any human relationship needs attention lest that relationship lose its importance or just dissolve, so it is with our relationship with God. One of the very important ways we attend to our relationship with God is through regular worship.

The Old Testament book of Leviticus opens with five chapters describing four different offerings that the Israelites are to bring to God from time to time. The first is a burnt offering as atonement for sin, the second is a grain offering as an offering of thanksgiving, the third is an offering of well-being which is also an offering of thanksgiving, and the fourth is the sin offering that has various categories to it. The first five chapters of Leviticus describe in detail what is to be brought for each offering and how the offering is to be made. No details are left out. Each has a particular purpose and a particular way it is to be done.

Now to us all these instructions about offerings may seem tedious. In fact, the entire book of Leviticus can seem tedious. Throughout Leviticus we have attention to detail almost ad infinitum. Leviticus is a book of law, and law by its very nature has to attend to details and to possible eventualities. Now while these detailed instructions may seem tedious to us as we read this book of the Old Testament all these details tell us something. They tell us that Israel's relationship to God and to each other was important. It was important enough to attend to the smallest of details, and these offerings had to do with Israel coming before God and worshiping. These offerings acknowledged Israel's and its peoples' relationship to God. These offerings were the way in which Israel attended to its relationship with God.

Now we don't worship like Israel did. We don't bring bulls, goats, sheep, grain, or birds to be offered before God as a sacrifice. The New Testament makes clear that we as Christians do not enter the presence of God by the blood of bulls and goats (Hebrews), but rather by the blood of Jesus who gave himself as an atonement for our sin. But nevertheless worship is one of the primary ways we attend to our relationship with God. Without worship I doubt that we attend to that relationship very well. So worship is important. That is one of the lessons of the Book of Leviticus to us.

I met a man once whom I think fancied himself a kind of agnostic. I honestly think this man was angry with his mother who had long since died, and because his mother was quite strict religiously, he transferred some of that anger for his mother onto God. This man was always trying to needle me because I was a minister, and he told me once about his extensive traveling in Europe and that in Europe people generally only attend church at Christmas and Easter. Then he asked me why the church here in the United States didn't do that instead of insisting on worship each and every Sunday. But how does one attend to one's relationship with God well when one worships only twice a year? Surely our relationship to God is more important than that.

You see, those offerings mentioned in the opening of the Book of Leviticus have very much to do with the relationship of human beings to God (the Israelites in particular), both as individuals and for Israel as a society. Any sin that they might commit either unintentionally or intentionally affected their relationship with God. That had to be dealt with. Worship was the way to attend to that.

The Israelites brought grain offerings to God which, were essentially as I interpret it, offerings of thanksgiving to God. The Israelites believed that their whole lives were lived in relationship to God. Their crops were a blessing from God as were their livestock, and so how could they attend to their relationship with God without worship, without giving thanks through those offerings? And how can we attend to our relationship with God without giving thanks for the precious gift of life God has given us?

And the offerings of well-being follow along in the fashion of the sin offerings and the grain offerings. Their offerings of well-being would be a way of giving thanks to God for watching over them and keeping them as a people. How can we attend to our relationship with God without giving thanks to God for all the really good things that come our way in life? How do we attend to our relationship with God without giving

thanks for God's provision for us?

Worship is important. It is important for us as individuals. It is important to us as a society. Worship is the way we attend as individuals and as a society to our relationship to God. And since worship is so important, then the church becomes important. It is the church in the midst of a society that leads people in worship. It is the church that leads us in attendance to our relationship with God.

The European style of worship that my friend brought to my attention I'm afraid just isn't adequate to attend to an important relationship like our relationship with God. Without worship we are basically ignoring God. Leviticus gives us better instruction along these lines than do the customs of Europe, that is, if my friend interpreted those customs correctly. Just something to think about.

Until next time, **Bro. Jim**

HAPPY ELDERS TRIP

The Happy Elders of First United Methodist Church-Lawrenceburg have the opportunity to take a four day tour to the National Quartet Convention, in Louisville, KY, September 16-19. The package includes:

- Round-trip deluxe motor coach transportation from Good Time Travel Tours
- 3 nights lodging
- Admission to 3 evening concerts
- Admission to 3 featured artist showcases
- Admission to 3 special guest speakers: Sarah Palin, Dr. David Jeremiah, and Dr. Charles Stanley.

The price per person: Single (\$729); Double (\$599); Triple (\$559); Quad (\$539). If interested, you may pick up details from the church office or call Jean Robertson . Sign up and pay by August 20th, in the church office.

TN CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN SPIRITUAL LIFE RETREAT

The church office has applications for the Women's Spiritual Life Retreat to be held at Beersheba Springs Assembly Ground, on September 10-12, 2010. The registration deadline is August 14, and registration is first come, first served. The registration fees include the cost of registration, 6 meals and lodging. Please contact the church office if you are interested in attending the retreat.

CINDERELLA 8.0: TRULY, TRULY OUTRAGEOUS!

Chaffin's Barn Theatre - Children's Summer Feature

Benefiting Miriam's Promise - Saturday, August 7, 2010

From the team that brought you *Snowderella* and *Sarah and the Secret of the Cellar* comes this rocking adaptation of one of the most enchanting stories ever told. Osborne and Eppler present an 80's jukebox musical retelling of Cinderella that takes you back to the days of neon jelly bracelets, break-dancing and rubik's cubes. Featuring your favorite 80's tunes, Cinderella 8.0 is truly, truly, truly outrageous! Will Cindy make it to the ball? Will the Prince find the gal of his dreams? Will Ugly Step Sisters get their shoes knocked off? Osborne's & Eppler's hilarious take on this traditional story is a fractured fairy tale for the whole family and a rocking good time! Doors open at 10 a.m. show starts at 11 a.m. Tickets are \$8 per person and include the show and a beverage. You are more than welcome to bring your own snacks or lunch.

JERRY THOMAS CLASS BREAKFAST - AUGUST 14th

The Jerry Thomas class will have a breakfast on, Saturday, August 14th, at the Square Forty Restaurant, beginning at 8:00 a.m. All members and spouses, and former members and spouses are invited to attend.

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Happy Birthday to the following who have birthdays in the month of August:

Hallie Boston - August 2nd

Steve Wright - August 3rd

Rusty Cummings - August 15th
Ellen Crews - August 21st

Noah Saliba - August - 15th
Ray Price - August 31st

If you would like your birthday listed in the newsletter, please fill out the information forms found in the bulletin, Sunday school classes, chapel and sanctuary entrances or church office. Thanks.

MARY-MARTHA CIRCLE MEETING

The Mary-Martha Circle will meet on Tuesday, August 17th, at 6:30 p.m. at the Brass Lantern.

NOTES OF THANKS

Dear First United Methodist Church Friends,

The family of Bea Thigpen thanks you for your gifts of prayers visits, flowers cards and phone calls, she has received during her illness.

Our mother is improving slowly and hopes to return home. She will remain at Scott-NHC for the extended recovery period.

Yours in Christ,

Ronnie, Larry, & Tim Thigpen and Families

To Everyone at First UMC,

We would like to thank everyone for the baby gifts. You all have made us feel so welcome. Special thanks to the Friends & Fellowship class for the baby bible book. It was perfect!

Sincerely, **Mike & Charity Simbeck**

...The family of Wanda Tidwell is very grateful to the members of First Methodist Church for your support in making the benefit very successful. We will always remember your kindness.

Kaitlyn & Steve Rochelle

PULASKI DISTRICT UMW WOMEN MISSION EDUCATION STUDY

The church office has information about the upcoming Pulaski District UMW women's mission education study, which will be on Saturday, August 21st. The study will be held at the Coleman Memorial UMC. The studies offered are: "For the Love of God--The Epistles of John" and "Joy to the World--Mission in the Age of Global Christianity". Please tell your circle leader if you plan to attend and which study you wish to do, or contact Mary Ann Clayton. You must register by August 14.

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 ten 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".

WILL MASSEY IS MTSU PHYSICS STUDENT OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to Will Massey who recently received the Wade Gilbert Scholarship Award from the Department of Physics at MTSU, for his achievement in algebra-based physics. The award is only given to one student per academic year. Will also received the Walter Chitwood Pre-Dental Scholarship Award for the 2010-2011 school years for his high academic achievements. Will is the son of Chris & Kris Fann and Skip & Melita Massey. Will is a Pre-Dental major at MTSU and serves as Vice President of the MTSU Dental Club.

WITH ONE ANOTHER

David Robertson
Freddie Mae Jackson
Bill Evans

