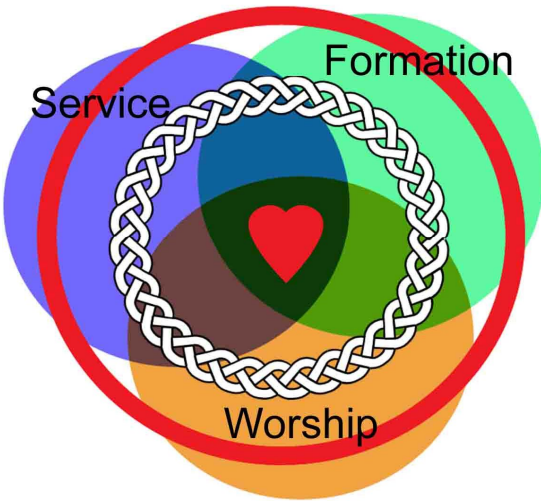


First United Methodist Church Messenger

drawing near to the heart of Christ

Newsletter - February 2011

Have you seen this before?



Just a reminder about the image here. The image itself...and its components are reminders to us of our discipleship. Discipleship is the Way of Life to which Jesus calls us. Our mission at First UMC Gulfport is to be disciples who make disciples for Jesus Christ.

Remember the components of the image? The **solid circle** reminds us of our life together as a congregation “under the dome of God’s watchfulness and care.” The **three large circles** are the “**pillars**” that hold up our life together as the pillars in our sanctuary hold up the dome. Those three pillars are:

Worship – Formation – Service.

The **braided circle** is a reminder that the pillars need support. We are responsible for that support through Caring, Connection, and Administration. Caring for one another in Christ. Connecting to one another in deep relationship. And Administering the life of our congregation so that all goes well.

The **Heart** of Christ is our destination. Our Discipleship leads us there.

Over the next months you will hear about opportunities to be part of the life of Discipleship at Gulfport First UMC...through Worship – Formation – Service. Jesus is calling us to a new Way of living. Do your ears hear him?

As a way of tuning our ears to voice of Jesus, I invite you to prepare for worship each week in February by reading these scriptures. Pray for God’s revelation and guidance.

Feb 6 *Matt 5.13-16 - Philippians 2* *Salt & Light*

Feb 13 *Matt 6.1-18* *Giving, Praying, Fasting*

Feb 20 *Matt 6.19-21; 25-34* *Don’t Worry*

Feb 27 *Matt 7.1-12* *Judging and the Father’s gifts*

Blessed to be a blessing....

Our Christian Sympathy....
...to the family of Sadye Carraway who died November 29, 2010.
...to the Laurence Tanner and family in the death of Juanita Tanner.

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Worship - Formation - Service

under the Dome of God's watchfulness & care

Youth News *by Chris Ray*

God is love. Crazy, relentless, all-powerful love. Have you ever wondered if we are missing it? It's crazy, if you think about it. The God of the universe - the Creator of nitrogen and pine needles, galaxies and E-minor - loves us with a radical, unconditional, self-sacrificing love. And what is our typical response? We go to church, sing songs, and try to be good.

Whether you have verbalized it yet or not. We all know something's wrong.

Does something deep inside your heart long to break free from the status quo? Are you hungry for an authentic faith that addresses the problems of our world with tangible, even radical solutions? God is calling you to a passionate love relationship with Him.

The answer to religious complacency isn't working harder at a list of do's and don'ts. It is falling in love with God. Once you encounter His love, you will never be the same. Because when you are wildly in love with someone, it changes everything. - "Crazy Love" by Francis Chan.

Dates:

Jan. 28-30: Spiritual Life Retreat at Camp Wesley Pines

Jan. 30: No youth

Feb. 1: Discover 6:30-8 @ Ray's house

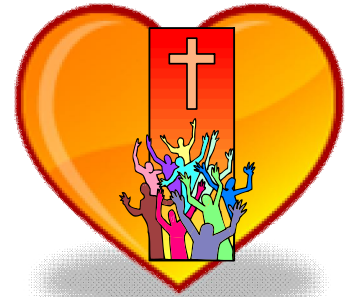
Feb. 6: Super Bowl Party @ Ray's house!!

Feb. 15: Discover 6:30-8 @ Ray's house

Feb. 20: 30 Hour Famine discussion

Feb. 22: Discover 6:30-8 @ Ray's house

Feb. 25-26: 30 Hour Famine Lock-in



Grief, Depression, Procrastination, Stress, Perfectionism, Anger and Resentment, Jealousy, Lust and Loneliness. David



Powell will begin a six-session series on N.W. Mohney's book "Slay Your Giants, Life Lesson from the Story of David and Goliath." The session will "offer inspiration and encouragement for facing and defeating the spiritual giants in our lives." If you are interested in finding the stones to put into your sling to slay these "spiritual giants," come, join David on January 30, during the Sunday school time in Room 2 of the education building.

The college committee is preparing to be in ministry with the college students for the rest of the year. If you would like to donate to the college committee please mark any donations college and place them in the collection plates. These donations help pay for postage for care packages as well as gift cards and gifts to be included in the care packages. The college ministry is striving to keep all of our college students, near and far, connected with the church and support them through the challenges of college. Your support is very appreciated!



Many THANKS to those who adopted a 2010 Angel from our Angel Tree. The generous presents were a wonderful blessing at Christmas for the children and youth in the care of the Women's Center for Non-violence.

"Flour-y" Congratulations to all the bakers and those who purchased the sweet delights of the December annual bake sale. It was an outstanding success! All revenue is going to the following local missions work - Moore Community House, Gulf Coast Girls Home, Women's Center for Non-violence, food and bus coupons for walk-in needs and W.I. Smith fund at First UMC. God has multiplied our work. Awesome!



"On the Road"

Sassy Seniors go on the Road to Bulls Restaurant at 300 Jeff Davis Avenue in Long Beach. John Bull, the owner, had Barnaby's on the beach before Katrina and has built back. Join us Wednesday, February 16th at 1 p.m. We will have a private room. For reservations call Ada Reid - 864-4721 or slntonsr@cablone.net before Monday, February 14th. We have to give a head-count to the restaurant by noon on the 14th.

Seniors 2011

Seniors 2011 will meet Thursday, January 27th at 2:00 p.m. at Handsboro Community Center on Switzer Rd. Melora Jackson, Coordinator of the Coast Chapter of the MS Alzheimers Assn. will share with the group about Alzheimers - diagnosis and treatment.

The Sea Chords, a Barbershop Quartet, will sing. The program is sponsored by Garden Park Medical Center and hosted by Ada Reid.

drawing near to the heart of Christ



In the Messenger from October 26, 2009; Andy shared this thought. "Christian Formation is a process. It is tempting (and not Biblical) to believe that we 'get Jesus' and we're done. First we don't 'get' Jesus as if he is a commodity or a product to purchase or acquire by trade. God has 'had' us from before our birth and will have us long after our death. No, Jesus invites us to walk with him on a journey that draws us closer to the heart of God, closer to the One in whose image we are created. That invitation is to be formed in the way of Christ. That is Christian formation, a way of living, a process of becoming."

The process of Christian formation is not easy. It takes effort. It takes effort; it takes intention in worship, study of the Scripture, study of Christian writers, prayer, communion, serving one another. Moving closer to the heart of Christ is not easy because it means changing our attitudes, changing the way we look at the world around us, the way we look at our fellow man.

John Wesley believed that this effort, our Journey, is best done collectively, with others in our congregation.

There are opportunities within our congregation to begin, to continue our journey. There are our regular Sunday Morning groups. There are several small group meetings during the week. There is interest within the congregation to expand these opportunities.



Please Pray For....

...David Bittle, nephew of David and Barbara Powell, who is in Afghanistan.

...Lee Farley, grandson of Sharon Olson, who is in the Marines.

...Susan Barrett, daughter of Peter and Fay Barrett, who is in the U.S. Navy.

...Tyler Schultz, grandson of Gene and Betty Schultz, who is in the U.S. Air Force.

...Brister Bishop, son of Wade and Ruth Bishop, who is in the U.S. Navy.

DIVORCE RECOVERY, GRIEF RECOVERY, and BROKEN

RAINBOW (our program for children) all started new ten-week sessions on Thursday, January 20. If you or anyone else you know needs these programs, it's okay start on the second or third night of the session. The groups meet on Thursdays in the Education Building at 7:00 p.m. For more information, call Catherine Barnes at 229-6851.



The Flower Calendar for 2011 is now posted on the bulletin board across from the church office. Please sign up to put flowers on the altar in honor or in memory of loved ones on your special date. The cost is \$40.00.

Gulfport First – Our Legacy of Love

Giving to your church through your will is a good way to continue your support of your church beyond your lifetime. When your estate plan is prepared, consider including plans for a gift to your church.

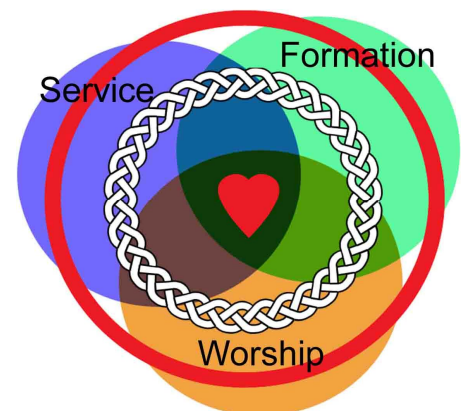
Dear Church,

It is a pleasure to be serving with you in our Music Ministry! I am enjoying getting to know you and sing with you weekly.

Our Chancel Choir is off to a great start for 2011. Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be a part of the Choir? Come be our guest in rehearsal - Wednesday nights 7:00-8:30 in the 3rd floor choir room. You will not regret it!

-Jonathan

"More than music, we are family"



The Messenger
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Andy Johnson – Pastor

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Gifts Given

In loving memory of Mrs. Gladys M. Hansen
Given by: The Path Finders Sunday School Class

In loving memory of Edna Snowden Foley
Given by: Cathy and Barry Cottrell

In loving memory of Sadye Carraway
Given by: Al and Martha Mayeu,
Mrs. J.C. Wallis, Oney and Linda Raines,
G.B. and Nona Flagg

In loving memory of Katherine Stokes
Given by: G.B. and Nona Flagg

In loving memory of Juanita Tanner
Given by: G.B. and Nona Flagg,
Mr. and Mrs. P.G. Bernheim, Jr.,
Al and Martha Mayeu, George and Mary East,
Peter and Kaye Bernheim,
Jare' and Mary Anne Barkley, Joe and Jean Cuevas,
Nancy Ramsay Holderer, Gary and Cynthia Cuevas,
Marvin P. Liberto, Ricky and Patti Venturini,
and Margaret Westbrook

In honor of Joyce and George Leonard
Given by: Jack and Lois Rogers
and Vicki and Randy Williams

In honor of: Wade and Ruth Bishop,
Harry and E.A. Allen, Jane Anderson,
Barby White, Barry and Cathy Cottrell,
Frank and Christy Moseley, Nancilee Peaks,
Tom and Susan McCormick, Trey and Heather Skaggs,
and Dr. and Mrs. J. Pat Smith
Given by: Carter and Penny Bise

In honor of Lydia Lander McCormick
Given by: Barby and Laurel White and Betty Brown

In honor of Melody and Doug Luke
and Susan and Tom McCormick
Given by: Betty Brown and Barby White



Sunday Lunch

sponsored by the UMM

Sunday, January 30
11:30 (following Sunday school)
in the Fellowship Hall

Menu: Pork Loin, Potatoes,
Green Beans, Roll and Dessert
Cost: By Donation

Friends of Mary

All ladies of the church are invited to attend the "Friends of Mary" on Tuesday, February 8 at 9:30 in the church parlor. The group will begin a new study on the Beatitudes.



ARTS UNDER THE DOME RASTRELLI CELLO QUARTET –

Saturday, January 29, 7:00 p.m. These four virtuosos from Russia play an incredible variety of music that includes all genres from classical to East European folk, jazz to tango, ragtime to American

standards. Their goal is to make you forget you are listening to a cello quartet! The group's latest recording was nominated for the equivalent of a Russian Grammy.

THREE ON A STRING – Saturday, February 19, 7:00 p.m. The popular trio from Birmingham is back under the dome! Besides being superb instrumentalists and singing a great three-part harmony, these guys will have you falling out of the pew with their sense of fun and crazy antics. Their music includes old standards, bluegrass, country, boogie-woogie and Texas swing.

Ticket information: \$15 adults, \$7 students for Rastrelli Cello Quartet and \$10 adults, \$7 students for Three On A String. For information go to www.arts.fumc-gulfport.org or call 863-0392. Tickets are available online, from the church office, or at the door.