

First United Methodist Church Messenger

drawing near to the heart of Christ

Newsletter - August 2011

Three Questions from Father Wesley...

John Wesley was the father of the Methodist movement. He was a priest in the Anglican (English) Church in the 1700's. He endeavored to be faithful in his ministry, but over time he felt that there was something missing in his life and in the Church that he loved. John broke with tradition and preached...(*gulp!*)...outdoors! Not behind a pulpit. Without stained glass and walls and the proprieties of "regular" worship.

And with that the seeds of a movement were planted. John rode his horse or walked from place to place across England, preaching the Good News of Jesus, calling people into right and good relationship with God, and gathering them into small groups called "classes." It was in these small groups that the people called Methodist really began to grow...not just in spirit but also in numbers. The class meetings combined worship, study, and a commitment to serve. Lives were transformed. Hearts were warmed. The 18th Century English world was changed.

As the movement grew, Wesley knew that he could not do the work alone so he began to send out lay preachers. They used his notes and his sermons. They modeled their ministry after his. He had three questions to be asked about those whom he sent: ***Have they faith? Have they gifts? Have they fruit?***

Those three questions are not just for Wesley's lay preachers. They are for all of us as we examine our life together in the community of faith called First United Methodist Church of Gulfport.

Have they faith? Faith is about our connection with God. More than what we believe, it is about the One whom we trust. It is primarily in worship that our faith is born and nurtured. It is in the worshiping community where we seek God and where we find ourselves in the Presence of the Living Christ. *Have you faith?*

Have they gifts? Gifts are about God's grace – a key Wesleyan theological reality – and our discerning of those gifts in us. Gifts are received and shared within the body of Christ. Wesley found...and I have too...that discerning gifts is best done together. Sometimes others can see things in us that we cannot see about ourselves. It is also best done in conversation with the scriptures in intentional, ongoing study. What are *your* gifts? How are *you* listening to others and to scripture so that you might discern them?

Have they fruit? Fruit is about how we live in the world. Does our faith make a difference in us and through us? Are the gifts given by God being used to bind up the wounds of the world, to reconcile to those who are alienated, to heal the "sin sick soul" as the Gospel hymn says? Fruit is about serving God by serving in the world. What fruit is growing in *your* life?

These three questions will guide us in the coming weeks. Pray the questions. Prepare for worship. Receive the gifts. And produce fruit in the world.

Serving with you under the dome of God's watchfulness and care.

Our Christian Sympathy to...

...Diane Miller and family in the death of Diane's aunt.

...Betty Peaks and family in the death of Betty's brother, Boyd Collins.

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Worship - Formation - Service

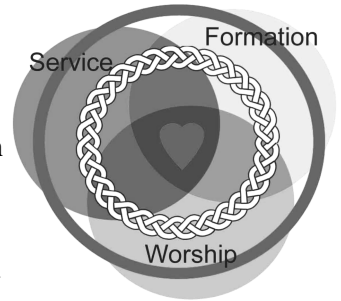
under the Dome of God's watchfulness & care

Formation and Service - *Chris Ray*

FORMATION:

There are many opportunities for formation starting in September.

- ⇒ Long-term Disciple Bible Study. 3 groups have formed, Disciple 1, Christian Believer and Jesus in the Gospels. These groups are now closed and start on September 11 for Disciple 1 and September 12 for Christian Believer and Jesus in the Gospels.
- ⇒ Short-term Disciple Bible study. The Invitation to the Old Testament. This journey group will be lead by Beth Matthews and will last 9 weeks. This study will start mid to late September. This study approaches the Hebrew Scriptures by inviting participants to hear the story of God and God's calling of the people of Israel through the many 'voices' of the biblical text.
- ⇒ "Love Wins" an 8-10 week study led by Harry Allen. This journey group is based on the book "Love Wins" written by Rob Bell. A book about heaven, hell, and the fate of every person who ever lived.
- ⇒ A study led by E.A. Allen. It will be between 6-9 weeks. More information to come soon on this opportunity.
- ⇒ NEEDED: Help with the college committee. As our number of college students is growing, our members of the college committee are not. To help ensure that our church loves the college students, we need your help! See Chris or Jenny Ray for more details.



SERVICE:

- ⇒ Thank you to all who prayed and supported the mission group to Rayne, LA. There were a total of 16 people who made the trip over and completed 3 work sites and one project on a fourth. It was a wonderful experience for us, thank you for your support. There were about 90 homes that were affected by the tornado and they currently have about 30 homes that are open cases. We were the last team that they have scheduled. We are starting to look into making a return trip to continue the support for this community.
- ⇒ Our church provides a sack lunch for Feed My Sheep every third Sunday. We currently have opening for Sunday Morning Journey groups or a group of individuals to help in this ministry. We need to cover November 20th and December 18th. Please contact Chris Ray or Susan Lenes.
- ⇒ The Service Working group is also starting to look into housing a cold weather shelter again this year through the Red Cross. We will keep you posted on all developments.
- ⇒ We continue to explore the possibility of housing a homeless shelter in our facility two days a week. If you have any questions please see Chris Ray, Susan Lenes or Roger and Rebecca Brunell.

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.
...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.

W.I. Smith Fund

The service pillar is in need of donations for the W.I. Smith Fund to help people with assistance.

Also: Servants wanted! When we have enough funds, we would like to have someone willing to come in and help with assistance on Tuesday's and Thursday's. If you have questions or would like to help, please contact Chris Ray, 863-0047.

Word Taylor has served for a number of years in a special **ministry**. After worship each Sunday, she collects the attendance registers and straightens up the pews. As she moves through the sanctuary she prays. She will not be able to continue in that ministry and trusts that as God is finding new places for her to serve, God will also raise up new servants to collect the attendance registers each Sunday and to pray. Is God calling you to serve in this way? Contact Andy for more information.

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Minister to Families with Children and Youth

- Ryan George

This is the closest to a state of the Union address I've ever given. My hope is that in sharing what's happening, it will answer questions and fill in blanks.

To start with, if you haven't noticed the dust, let me tell you we are in the process of re-gearing our age-level ministries. We are evaluating deficient areas, creating policies, as well as gathering and training team members. One thing that has been missing is a calendar for children and youth program; it is in the works, but not yet ready for release.



Why all of this restructuring? Simply put: it's necessary. To build on a shaky foundation and look for solid work is bad planning. We need to know what our plan is, we can't just "run and do." It's the habit of churches, here and elsewhere, to find volunteers who are willing, place them (often without training), and then re-evaluate the situation after they quit. This breeds expectations for success without giving the tools to realize it and ruins people on ministry. We won't do that.

Here's what we will do: develop a bench. This will be comprised of those who don't feel like they're "first string" players, but who are willing.

You might be in this category if you:

- ◆ Feel you don't have the time to commit to a full position, but can assist.
- ◆ Care about the nursery/preschool/children/teen ministries but feel like you bore/intimidate/don't fit well with them
- ◆ Want to help, but not be the lead every week
- ◆ Are looking for an introductory tour of ministry

There's much more that could be on this list of course. Please see me and we can talk more about the bench. This won't be our operating plan forever, however, it will be a useful tool to have in our arsenal.

We have policy meetings and discussions going on, we have on-going research for proper conduct and background checks, we are looking at where we are and where we want to be. Essentially we are doing the ground work for better age-level ministries. To answer the cry of "Where are the activities and programs?," the short answer is they're coming. But we won't add to unhealthy. Our kids deserve better. We're going to give it to them.

DIVORCE & GRIEF RECOVERY WORKSHOPS



FUMC's ongoing community outreach programs begin Thursday, September 15 and run for ten weeks. Over the past twenty years, these programs have helped hundreds of hurting people in our community get their lives back together.

The **Divorce Recovery Workshop** offers support for persons who are going through the upheaval of a divorce or separation. Participants hear local counseling professionals speak on divorce issues, and spend the remainder of the time in sharing and discussion.

The **Grief Recovery Workshop** offers a caring environment for persons dealing with the aftermath of the death of a loved one. Participants are given the opportunity to share with one another and to hear speakers on various aspects of grief.

Broken Rainbow is a program for children dealing with divorce or grief issues. It is suitable for children ages six and up.

All programs meet at 7:00 p.m. in the Education Building. The workshop fee is \$30, which includes a book. Children of Divorce and Grief Recovery may attend Broken Rainbow at no extra cost. Pre-registration is not required except for Broken Rainbow. Child care is available upon request. For more information, call Catherine Barnes at 229-6851.

**The Church Office
will be Closed
Monday, September 5,
Labor Day**

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Gifts Given

In loving memory of Tom Hogan
Given by: Mary McCay, Margaret Westbrook,
Guy and Amelia Lewis, Lou Black,
Tom and Nancy Holderer. G.B. and Nona Flagg,
United Methodist Men, Liz Clower,
The Wesley Searchers Class

In loving memory of Chet Goodyear
Given by: Mary McCay, Margaret Westbrook,
Tom and Nancy Holderer

In loving memory of Dot Thompson
In loving memory of Charlotte Parker
Given by: Jare' and Mary Anne Barkley

In loving memory of J.C. Mozingo
Given by: Mary Green

In loving memory of Thames Lloyd
Given by: Carter and Penny Bise,
Frank and Christy Moseley

In honor of my daughter, Carla
Given by: J.C. Meek

In honor of Carter, Penny, Kelty and Devon Bise
In honor of Peter, Kaye, Rebecca, Margaret
and Rachel Bernheim
Given by: Tom and Susan McCormick

In honor of Andy Johnson and the Congregation
Given by: Betty Brown



Sisters in Service

Sisters in Service women's group September meeting will be on Monday, September 12, at noon in the Church Parlor. We will be visiting the Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN) home in Biloxi. Our project is to donate cleaning supplies to IHN Rebekah's house and tour this family support facility. POC is Ginny Cooley or Margaret Jackson.

Attention: Senior Adults

Sassy Seniors go "On the Road" to Golden Corral on Wednesday, September 21 at 1 p.m. We will be in the private dining room to the east of the building. Please call Ada Reid at 864-4721 or email her at slntonsr@cablone.net to make your reservations before Monday, September 19th.

Seniors 2011 will be held on Thursday, September 22 at the Handsboro Community Center at 2 p.m. with our own Dr. Sam Robinson, ENT Specialist, who will share on "Allergies, Colds & Sinusitis: How to Treat Them". Entertainment provided. Sponsored by Garden Park Medical Center and hosted by Ada Reid, the free monthly program is for all seniors and others who would like to attend. Handouts, door prizes and refreshments are available.

Servants for September:

Nursery:

September 4: Kaye Bernheim, Kellee Caldwell
September 11: Cathy Cottrell, Lou Hare
September 18: Beth Matthews, Dot Moore
September 25: Pete Lenes, Jan Nelson

Ushers for September:

Ruth Bishop, Lanier Lang, David Powell, William Powell, Darren Raybourn, Kenny Rich, Nely Rich, and Walter Taylor.

Thank you for all that you do for FUMC, Gulfport.