

First United Methodist Church
PALMETTO

THE FLAME

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER, 2011

FROM
THE
PASTOR



October 1, 2011

Dear Mom and Dad,

I have been here 3 months now and I'm starting to know more people and get familiar with the area. I love what I do and I love the people but we have a lot of work ahead of us. Many remember a grand and glorious past when membership was triple what it is now. They had a day care school at one time. They had program staff for Senior ministry and a growing Youth ministry. The pews were filled at all services.

Well, needless to say, in recent days things have changed. Oh, sure, a lot of people have left (or passed away). The world we live in today is extremely mobile. Home is wherever we find ourselves at any given time. It affects attendance too. For example, I know folks that have more than 1 church home—so it's not strange that they haven't figured out a way to be at both every week! I also know loyal committed churchgoers whose lives are so busy with family, work, and other interests that they only make it to church occasionally. People sometimes wonder why no one notices if they miss a Sunday or two. That's because sporadic attendance (not sporadic commitment) is the new pattern; when you miss a Sunday it doesn't always follow that something is wrong.

I heard a colleague compare church members to the floats in a parade that continually move past. Today, Pastors can count on having a whole

new congregation every three years!! You know, it used to be that Methodist Pastors were the itinerate ones, moving from one community to another. Today, it is the Pastors and the ministries that provide continuity and stability in a community and world that is constantly changing.

It's not just change that affects us; the *rate* of change has also speeded up. Churches today have to be good at being flexible, ready to change on a dime. Our society has become more diverse; the churches must follow. The church of the future will look more like the world (notice I didn't say it would ACT like the world). Many of these folks don't even know church or God exists. We have to go to them and show them.

Well, Mom and Dad, as usual I have been too wordy! I have such hope and ambition for this little group. I get confidence from the Apostle Paul who was unflagging in zeal and love. From prison, he wrote to the Philippians: "forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:13

Peace and prayers,

Your daughter,

Esther

SPOTLIGHT ON: Consecration Sunday

Congregations that approach financial stewardship from a biblical perspective do not view the money Christians give to their church merely as a way to pay its bills. Rather, such congregations see financial contributions as a way to help people grow spiritually in their relationship with God by supporting their church's mission and ministry with a percentage of their incomes.

Our congregation's Finance Committee has selected the *New Consecration Sunday Stewardship Program* as a way to teach the Biblical and spiritual principles of generous giving in our stewardship education emphasis this year. We are blessed to have Bonnie Ogie-Kristianson, of the Florida United Methodist Foundation, join us as our guest to help lead us through the program.

New Consecration Sunday is based on the biblical philosophy of the need of the giver to give for his or her own spiritual development, rather than on the need of the church to receive. Instead of treating people like members of a social club who should pay dues, we will treat people like followers of Jesus Christ who want to give unselfishly as an act of discipleship. *New Consecration Sunday* asks "What percentage of my income is God calling me to give?" and encour-

ages us toward proportionate and systematic giving in response to the question. Consecration Sunday for us will be November 13 and we will be asked during worship to make our financial commitments to our church's ministries.

We will do no home solicitation to ask people to complete pledge cards. On Consecration Sunday, our guest leader will conduct a brief period of instruction and inspiration. Everyone

who attends the service on Consecration Sunday will have the opportunity to voluntarily complete an *Estimate of Giving Card* in a procedure done as a confidential act of worship in which no one should feel personal embarrassment if he or she chooses not to fill out a card.

Since there will be no follow-up visits after Consecration Sunday to ask people to complete their cards,

we will make every effort to inform, inspire, and commit everyone to attend Consecration Sunday worship and the special Consecration Sunday luncheon after the 10:45 a.m. worship service. More information will follow as we get closer to November.

Thanks in advance for your enthusiastic participation in Consecration Sunday events.

Carolyn Brown,
Church Council Chairperson

*"...remembering
the words of the
Lord Jesus, for
he himself said,
'It is more
blessed to give
than to receive.'"*

Acts 20:35

PANCAKE
BREAKFAST



United Methodist Men

Pancake Breakfast ~ Saturday, October 22 8:00-11:00 a.m.

All you can eat pancakes! \$3.50 ~ add an egg \$4.00

Fellowship Hall Refurbished

The Trustees are pleased to announce that the repainting of the Fellowship Hall, the adjacent hallway and some related painting in the kitchen is now complete. In addition, the ceiling tiles in the kitchen have been replaced and the floor tiles through the area have been repaired, stripped and refinished. We want to thank everyone who participated in this project for their efforts, and especially Jim Conklin and George

Strawn for their leadership.

A special thanks goes out to Wendy Marble, who first brought up the idea to Church Council of refurbishing the Fellowship Hall. We know that she has further plans and look forward to seeing additional improvements to this great facility.

Richard Barber, Chair

From the Finance Committee

Summer was a somewhat challenging time for the Finance Committee due to the reduced attendance and ongoing economy. We continue to thank our faithful givers for their support throughout the summer. We especially want to thank the board of directors and the many volunteers of the Thrift Shop for the many special projects that you have funded over the summer as well as your contributions to the general fund.

Finally, and importantly, the Finance Committee has recommended, and the church Council has approved, a stewardship campaign for this fall season. We are confident that this campaign will remind us why it is so important to support our faith and our church.

Richard Barber, Chair

Greetings from the Glory Group

We had a fun-filled first meeting. Our planning has begun for all of our fall activities. Our next meeting will be on October 24 at 6:30 p.m. This meeting will be a potluck, so bring a dish to share. We are also collecting donations of loose leaf wide-ruled paper at our next meeting, these will be given to children in need at Palmetto Elementary

We will continue with our Coffee Shop between services. We accept donations which we use toward our children's ministries. I love the Coffee Shop, it is a great time to get to meet some people who don't sit in your pew.

We have planned our Trash & Treasure Sale for

Saturday, November 12 from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Please consider cleaning out your closets and garages to donate some treasures to us. We would love to have any items, but no clothing please. The money raised at this sale will help us purchase food and gifts for families in need at Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Our group is open to all of the women of the church. If you have any questions please ask me, or any of our members. If you have children you are welcome to bring them with you to our meetings, I usually bring Savannah.

With love,
Bethany Foil



Learn
&
Grow

What's New? Check out these Study & Fellowship Opportunities . . .

Serendipity Bible Study to resume in October. It's time to get back together with old friends and welcome new ones in the Serendipity Bible Study that meets Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. between services in the Fellowship Hall. A summer hiatus has not shown me anything in the newspaper, on the television or internet that makes me feel we don't need the hope, enlightenment and comfort the Scriptures can offer us; in fact, more than ever we as Christians need to know what we're about. But how can we read the Bible so that it really comes alive for us? The Serendipity Class follows a two-fold system: reading the Scriptures in historical context to discover what they meant to the people back then, and reading also as if the Bible were a personal letter from God to us,

paying attention to how it can help us truly live.

Would you like to practice reading your Bible as a participant rather than a spectator? Not to master the Scriptures but allow them to master you? Our upcoming study series by James W. Moore is entitled "6 Amazing Bible Stories to Strangely Warm Our Hearts". Those of you schooled in Methodism may recognize the reference to John Wesley's first encounter with the Holy Spirit in which he "felt his heart strangely warmed." Each lesson reviews a passage from Scripture and connects it as well to Methodist founder John Wesley's reflections on certain core beliefs about what it means to be a Methodist. At a time when the national and global definition of "church" is changing, it's a good time to review what we stand for and what we want to carry into the future, which is the never-changing truth of Jesus Christ.

Membership & Methodism for a New World: Rev. Esther Robinson will offer a class during Sunday school on October 23, 30 and November 6 for anyone interested in learning more about the meaning of Christian membership for today's world. This class will be offered four times a year and is appropriate for visitors and newcomers, as well as seekers and traditionalists. Ya'll come!

Beginning Wednesday, November 2 Rev. Esther Robinson will lead a study using *The Externally Focused Church* by Rick Rusaw and Eric Swanson for all interested persons. Studying one chapter per week, the class will meet from 4:00 until 5:15 p.m. in the Church office for the five Wednesdays in November. We will not meet during Advent and Christmas; we will resume in January to finish the remaining chapters. The book can be purchased from Amazon new or used, as well as from Group Publishing. If you would like to share a book or need assistance finding one, please let Pastor Esther know.

"Sacred Journeys", New Women's Bible Study/Discussion Group Formed. We are all on a journey and there is room for you in this group of travelers! A new Women's Bible Study/Discussion Group will meet Wednesday evenings from 7:00-8:15 p.m. in the Bride's Room downstairs. All women of our church and community are invited to be a part of this group, to connect and cultivate our relationships with one another and with the loving God we share. To begin we will meet once weekly, pausing during the season of Advent. The group will reconvene in January to determine their direction in the new year. Feel free to join in at any time. Want to know more? Have ideas? Call Sue Revell at 650-7656.

Food Pantry Ministry

The Food Pantry Ministry is looking for volunteers who would be available on Tuesday and Thursday mornings to be prayer partners. Anyone coming to the Church for food will be offered the opportunity to go into the sanctuary and pray



along with one of our prayer partners. Jeannette Quesenberry has offered to get us started on this mission, but we need your help! Please call Cindy Minick 962-5806 or the church office for more details.

We wish a Happy Birthday to . . .

10/6 - Doug Shaw, Sharon Taylor

10/9 - Ted McClary

10/12 - Jane Touchton

10/13 - Bill Thomas

10/15 - Martin Lawson

10/19 - Ruth Leonard

10/23 - Roberta Greiner, Annabel Russo

10/24 - Jean Swihart

10/27 - Bob Thompson

10/28 - Newt Greiner

10/29 - David Marble, Ken Maynard

10/31 - Kathy Lacher

11/3 - Harry Doyle, Louie Jurgensen

11/6 - Ruth Bandeen

11/7 - Happy Dilley

11/8 - Chris Marble

11/10 - David Bischoff, Sydney Thomas

11/14 - Betty Moore

Celebrating Wedding Anniversaries

10/12 - M/M Clay Thomas

10/20 - M/M Lee Bandeen

11/7 - M/M Doug Drayton

11/8 - M/M Ed Gibel



(L-R) Bob Thompson,
George Strawn

**LOOK
AT
THIS!**

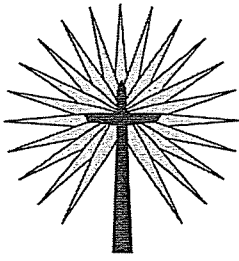


(L-R) Lyn Smith, David Brown, & Clem Stiving

Have you seen Fellowship Hall and the Kitchen lately?

If not, check it out!

Many thanks to ALL THE VOLUNTEERS (some are pictured here) who worked so diligently on the recent renovation!



First United Methodist Church
PALMETTO
330 11th Avenue West
Palmetto, FL 34221

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID

Return Service Requested

We are instruments of God called to be neighbors in this community and world through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ based on quality worship, spiritual growth, and effective service.

Sunday Morning Worship Services at 8:30 & 10:45 a.m. ~ Sunday School at 9:30 a.m. ~ Nursery Care Available

Pastor
Rev. Esther L. Robinson
Music Director/Organist
Mary Shields
Pianist
Michele Jurgensen
Administrative Assistant
Noni Hammerstrand
Receptionist
Betty Sharp
Custodian
Lyn Smith
Nursery Care
Rebecca Staples
Church Office Hours:
8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Monday - Thursday
Phone: (941) 722-1812
email:
fumcpalmetto@yahoo.com
website:
www.fumcpalmetto.org

Mark Your

CALENDAR

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Church Conference
Sunday, October 16, 2011
4:00 p.m.
Dinner following in Fellowship Hall
All members welcome!