



TO THE POINT

*A letter from Rev. Stephen Hoffman,
Pastor of First United Methodist Church
of Palmetto*

www.fumcpalmetto.org

September, 2009

Dear Friends,

A Great Summer

I want to begin by thanking all of you who have been willing to adjust your schedules to make presence in worship a priority these summer months of June, July, and August. The combined worship service has asked something of all of us, and I am grateful for each of you who responded in such a positive manner. It is also true that with summer vacations and other reasons for being away, many of you have also been willing to serve in very consistent ways through all the various aspects of our ministry.

As part of worship our liturgists, ushers, choir members, children's workers, sound technician have all been lovingly consistent. In our Outreach ministry we hosted a very successful Family Promise Week and our weekly Food Pantry continues to serve hungry families in our community. The Thrift Shop has also had volunteers serving multiple shifts through the week. Here in the office volunteers have been faithful to the Counting Committee and registering attendance. Thank you to each and every one of you.

Sunday Worship Schedule

I am now going to increase the font size!

September: 8:30 am and 10:45 am

Yes, that is my not too subtle way of reminding you that in September we will go back to our worship schedule if 8:30 and 10:45 am. I am very grateful for the welcoming fellowship and expectant faith with which we gather in worship each week.

Youth attend Summer Camp

A number of our Youth attended several summer camps this year. This was a significant time in their lives to experience the joy of Christian fellowship and to grow in their faith. We are grateful for all the adults who provided transportation and scholarship assistance. Our Youth attended the United Methodist Summer Camp north of Leesburg and also Riverside Retreat Center near Fort Myers. We are blessed that our Florida Conference provides such quality opportunities for growth for our Youth.

July 29, 2009

Thank you First United Methodist Church of Palmetto for sending me to camp this year. I had a great time at camp. We were able to do many different activities such as kayaking, swimming, sports, rope courses and much more. Also by sponsoring me to go to camp you let me reach God in a deeper way than before. You let the Lord teach me

methods of prayer and he changed me into a better person than I already was. I also was able to sing and worship at camp and that was another fun thing that we did. Thank you again for sending me to camp at Riverside Retreat in Fort Myers, FL it was a great and fun time.

Sincerely,
Eddie Mercurio



Youth on their way to the Warren Willis United Methodist Youth Camp in Leesburg

Food Pantry responds to increased requests

We are very grateful for the consistent way in which our Food Pantry is able to respond to local needs for food. This ministry is supported by very generous donations from you in our congregation, but as the requests have increased we are also very grateful for the support, both food donations and volunteer help from others in our community. The following chart shows the dramatic increase in requests we are experiencing this year:

MONTH	2008	2009
January	55	109
February	39	100
March	48	126
April	54	104
May	55	92
June	45	99
July	40	124
August	48	120



Church Secretary Noni Hammerstrand accepts Terra Ceia UMC food donations from their Pastor, Rev. Don Ringland.

What makes this distribution of food a ministry is not just the amount of food that is distributed or the number of families served, but it is the love which it expresses. Every person who comes is served in the name of Jesus, and we also provide free Bibles for all who make a request. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Is God Green?

The theme of our Florida Annual Conference in June was “Cherishing the Creation.” To follow up on that emphasis we are having a four week study on “Christianity and the Environment.”

Every day we learn more about how the earth is in an escalating environmental crisis. Using a guide from Sojourner's Magazine, this series will spark discussion and thought about how to live out God's call for justice in our world.

The Bible offers many images for the relationship between God and the environment - from the Sabbath in Genesis to Christ's work in reconciling all creation to God. The theology of domination has played a destructive role in degrading the environment, but theologies of stewardship and sacred relationship between God, humans, and creation are a vital part of the environmental movement.

Our church will offer this study beginning September 9 from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. The weekly topics are "A Theology of Creation," "A Love Relationship with the World," "Green Grassroots," and "The Earth is the Lord's." All are welcome. RSVP is requested so study materials can be provided. Call 941-722-1812 or stephen_palmetto@earthlink.net.

It is my hope that some specific actions will come out of this study for our Church Council to consider.

What is NOOMA?

Good question! Actually, NOOMA is a phonetic spelling for the Greek word for Spirit. It is also the title given to a series of short, evocative DVDs by a young pastor Rob Bell. Each one centers around an important question relating to our faith in Jesus Christ. Each one is based on sound Biblical teaching.

These concise lessons will provide the starting point for our new **NOOMA Group that will begin meeting on September 13, Sundays at 6:00 p.m.** Each lesson encourages us to look at the ways we live our faith from a fresh and relevant perspective. Does this sound interesting? Would you like to be a part of a small group that supports each other and wants to grow? Why don't you come and be a part of our NOOMA Group?

As a taster this is a description of the first lesson:

RAIN: Things don't always work out the way we want them, or the way we think they should. Often something just happens, and we don't even see it coming. We get hit with some pain that leaves us feeling desperate and helpless. That is the way life is. But it still makes us wonder how God can allow these things to happen to us? How can God just stand there and watch us suffer? Where is God when it really hurts? Perhaps God is closer to us than we really think. Maybe it is when we are in these situations, where everything seems to be falling apart, that God uses these as opportunities to make us deeply aware of how much we are loved.

United Methodist Men

Our United Methodist Men continue to meet each Thursday morning for breakfast at 7 a.m. at Popi's IV in Ellenton. This is a meaningful time of fellowship and devotion. We have been especially praying for Bob Marble who is serving with the American Red Cross in Baghdad, Iraq. As a tangible expression of encouragement the UMM have sent 50 devotional books called Strength for Service. (www.strengthforservice.org) These were dedicated with prayer in worship on 16 August. We are very grateful for Bob's sacrificial service.



Six of our men will also be attending a Men's Retreat at the Life Enrichment Center in Leesburg from October 9-11. The theme is "Walking with Jesus." This is the first time in many years we have attended as a group, and I have great hopes that God will use this as a time of spiritual encouragement for the men in attendance.

Report on Mission Trip to Hogar de Ninos in D.R.

We were very excited that four of our members were able to join two Mission Teams traveling to Hogar de Ninos in the Dominican Republic. Lisa Edington and Daniel Soules traveled with Riverside Park UMC in Jacksonville where your former Pastor Rafe Vigil is currently serving. Rafe and his wife Amy led several trips while they ministered here in Palmetto. Sandy Davis and Dickey Stuckert traveled to the same place the next week with Rev Neil Long and several members from Manatee UMC here in Bradenton who joined up with members of FUMC in Lake Placid.

You will have the opportunity to hear their report during worship in both worship services on September 27. Daniel Soules has also written a very helpful description of the trip in journal form, complete with photographs.

At Church Council meeting on August 16 it was decided that our church would apply to sponsor its own Mission Team to Hogar de Ninos next summer. This is a great opportunity for our church to grow in ministry and love!

It continues to be a great joy to serve Christ with you in this community.

Grace and peace,

Stephen



We wish a Happy Birthday in September to

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 9/2 - Owen Jago | 9/15 - Linda Gibel, Lee Ann Russo |
| 9/3 - Terri Dees | 9/16 - Bill Pascoe |
| 9/4 - Ella Crossman, Dickey Stuckert | 9/17 - Bethany Foil |
| 9/5 - Jeannette Rinehart, Betty Smith | 9/18 - Kirk Atkins |
| 9/8 - Bill Walwork, II, Dianna Ward | 9/19 - Ann Thomas |
| 9/9 - Connie Houser | 9/20 - Ted Minick, Marge Trees |
| 9/12 - Sharon Grobaker | 9/21 - Florence Barrett, Casey Jago, Virginia Reed |
| 9/13 - Jerry Quesenberry | 9/23 - Laura Troxell |

We wish a Happy Anniversary in September to

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| 9/7 - M/M Harold Emminger | 9/21 - M/M Clem Stiving |
| 9/8 - M/M Rick Thomas | 9/25 - M/M Jerry Quesenberry |



*“For where two or three
come together in my name,
there am I with them.”*

Matthew 18:20, NIV



First United Methodist Church
PALMETTO

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Palmetto, FL 34221

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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 Summer Worship: 9:30 a.m. ~ Sunday School at 10:30 a.m.

Senior Pastor
Rev. Stephen Hoffman
Music Director/Organist
Mary Shields

Pianist
Michele Jurgensen

Administrative Assistant
Noni Hammerstrand

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

Fax: (941) 723-0082

Email:

fumcpalmetto@yahoo.com

A PRAYER FOR PERSPECTIVE

Eternal God! Grant us gratitude enough to look
backward and be thankful;
courage enough to look forward and be hopeful;
faith enough to look upward and be humble;
kindness enough to look outward and be helpful.

Amen.

