



STAFFORDSBURG UMC
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John Wesley for the New Year

When I first entered into the pastoral ministry 14 years ago, I thought that all I needed to do as a pastor in order to have what many would call a “successful” ministry was to preach with enthusiasm and have a genuine love for people.

While these attributes are still necessary for any pastor they will only carry you through for the first year of a new appointment, for the long haul you have to have purpose and direction. Fourteen (14) years later purpose and direction for me (and many other pastors) is located in what is best described in a book by Leonard Sweet entitled; *“First Century Passion for the 21st Century World.”*

In essence this is what is called an “ancient/future” dimension that will distinguish churches from church growth approaches that pit the “old” ways against the “new” ways of doing church and from seeker churches that remove Christian symbols and terms from their services as barriers from evangelism. This same type of respect for tradition and attention to context marked the ministry of John Wesley. We see this

was true for the ministry and work of Jesus Christ as he observed and participated in the Jewish

festivals and said on one occasion; *“Do not think I have come to abolish the Law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them.”* (Matthew 5:17)

Drawing upon these truths I want to share briefly a vision for SUMC to continue to be carried forth in 2010. First: Changing our understanding of what it means to be the Body of Christ. Most church folks have understood the gospel something like this: “give a little, do a little, pay membership dues, get ‘a going to heaven pass’ because you accepted the gospel.” Wesley said this type of Christianity is “minimalist,” doing just enough to get to heaven yet with a concern for living a new life, following Christ or as Charles Wesley put it; concern for the heaven below. Wesley believed God had raised the “people called Methodists” to reform the nation, particularly the church, and to spread spiritual holiness over the land.

Second: The 20-21st century Church invented a secular system of study, organization and ultimate control which compartmentalized church life from life in the world. While this made people “spiritual” it left their “secular life untouched.” We must again come to realize that there is no facet of our lives or our world that is untouched by God. This is why indigenous worship and lifestyle evangelism are so central to any church.

Third: The Church must become an alternative community that is to believe the risen Christ is present in our midst through the power of the Holy Spirit, leading and empowering the community into mission. The Church is also people; we do not go to church we are the church. The lifestyles of members and the practices of the community must be radically transformed in light of the coming of the kingdom of God.

Fourth: But not final (I am just running out of space for the article). Wesley sought to be a sacramental church. Basically this means retrieving the ancient practices of the Church and giving them fresh expression. I hope 2010 becomes the year that we at SUMC go backwards

in order to move forward, to become the church that we always wanted, “no” rather to become the church Jesus intended. Will you join in on this new endeavor? I hope so!

Blessings, Pastor John



Food donations for Fairhaven Rescue Mission

REMINDER

**AMBER DONSKY'S NEW ADDRESS:
SPECTRUM CARE ACADEMY, 4500
CAMPBELLVILLE RD., COLUMBIA, KY
42728-9314 – PLEASE SEND HER A CARD AND
LET HER KNOW WE ARE PRAYING FOR HER!**

**Elmer & Ann Kessel's address is:
6408 Taylor Mill Rd., Indep. 41051 –**

**PLEASE REMEMBER THE
HOMEBOUND, (Francis Duncan,
Jesse Robinson – they would
appreciate cards too! Check your
weekly bulletin or email prayer list
to see if others could use an
encouraging note or phone call.**

On the third Saturday of every month a group of men from SUMC prepare a meal at the church and serve it at the Mission followed by a chapel service. We usually serve enough for 100 men each month.

Standard fare includes green beans, usually a salad and a meat dish, as well as sheet cakes (chocolate is the favorite.)

Each month we need:
Family size cans of cut green beans; we use 6 cans for each meal.
6 lb. bags of macaroni or spaghetti noodles.
5 lb. bags of shredded cheese
Large cans of creamed soups; mushroom or cream of chicken
Large containers of fruit punch powered drink mix.
10lb. boneless hams
Large cans of white chicken meat
5lb. rolls of ground beef.

Important Upcoming Dates

January 1 HAPPY NEW YEAR!
January 7 Regency Manor 9:00am
January 9 Choir Practice 10:00am
January 10 Admin Council 7:00pm
January 16 Fairhaven Dinner
January 29-30 Planning Retreat @ St. Anne's



**SERVING MEALS
TO THE HOMELESS**

MARK'S MESSAGE

*It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.
From 'Invictus'*

By William Ernest Henley 1875

I realize it is unusual to begin a church newsletter column from a secular reference, but it is done to make a point. Tim and I just viewed, and would recommend, a current movie by this title, directed by Clint Eastwood. The poem was written by William Henley from a hospital bed. He just had his right foot amputated. He may have written this poem to encourage himself and others to press on through adversity. Unlike many people of this age, he was not railing against fate for the unfairness of his situation. He was ready to move onward, and he did, continuing to be a successful writer for another 30 years. He might have read Malachi 4:2 for further inspiration: *'But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall'.*

Nelson Mandela, as a member of the African National Congress, was an activist against South African apartheid. Although he initially followed the Gandhi example of non-violence, he eventually resorted to sabotaging government symbols of authority. In 1962, the CIA tipped off South African security forces to Mandela's whereabouts and disguise. He was arrested, tried, and then imprisoned for 27 years. He received one letter (heavily censored), and one visitor every 6 months. He attributes the poem above to strengthening his spirit during his imprisonment. After South African blacks gained the right to vote, in 1994 he was elected President. Mandela might also have turned to the scriptures for strength in his adversity:

Psalms 146: 8 - 'The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.'

Once apartheid ended, the South African rugby team, the Springboks, continued to be despised as symbols of apartheid. At their home field they were booed by their fellow South Africans. The team was mediocre at best, and was not predicted to move very far into the World Championship tournament being held in South Africa in 1995. President Mandela realized a successful Springbok team would focus sports and business interest on his emerging country. He passed along the Invictus poem to inspire them on to victory. The South Africans did go on to win the Rugby World Championship. Another football player, Heisman Trophy winner, Tim Tebow, has a scripture message marked in white over the black anti-glare under his eyes: *Hebrew 12: 12 - 'Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make the straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed'.*

In this New Year, making resolutions is a fine thing. Resolutions to put away childish things, to be a better person, to move through adversity, are laudable. Just don't forget who is in charge. Despite the lines from the poem above, don't set yourself up as the 'captain of your soul'. The best outcome from that decision would be going down with your ship. Instead, continue to move forward as God would have you move forward. If a resolution is what you need, how about *Micah 6:8 - 'he has told you, O mortal, what is good: and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?'*

De Colores!

Mark

A N Y M O R E....

One day a woman's husband died, and on that clear, cold morning, in the warmth of their bedroom, the wife was struck with the pain of learning that sometimes there isn't "anymore."

No more hugs, no more special moments to celebrate together, no more phone calls just to chat, no more “just one minute.” Sometimes, what we care about the most gets all used up and goes away, never to return before we can say goodbye, say “I love you.” So while we have it, it’s best we love it, care for it, fix it when it’s broken and heal it when it’s sick. This is true for marriage... and old cars, and children with bad report cards, and dogs with bad hips, family and aging parents and grandparents. We keep them because they are worth it... because we are worth it. Some things we keep...like a best friend who moved away or a sister-in-law after divorce. There are just some things that make us happy, no matter what. Life is important. We only have one. We only one mom, one dad, one unique brother or sister or friend. I’m writing this to people I think of in the same way. Now it’s your turn to send this to all those people who are “keepers” in your life, including me. Suppose one morning you never wake up. Do all your friends know you love them? I was thinking...I could die today, tomorrow or next week, and I wondered if I had any wounds needing to be healed, friendships that needed rekindling or three words needing to be said. Let every one of your friends and family know you love them. Even if you think they don’t love you back, you would be amazed at what those three little words and a smile can do. And just in case GOD calls me home... I Love You! Live today to the fullest because tomorrow is not promised. All is possible with God and truth!

(Excerpted from an email sent to me)

FINANCE TEAM MESSAGE...

Stewardship Moment - ““Use your God-given gifts well and wisely, to earn all you can, that you might practice frugality and save all you can, that you might have more than enough so that you are able to give all you can.” – John Wesley

Do you ever wonder how our tithes and offerings are being used? Briefly, they pay for the

“operation” of the church (i.e. pastor salary, insurance and pension, church and parsonage utilities, office expenses, building insurance and our district and conference covenants). Other expenses such as building repairs and maintenance, outreach ministries, youth ministry and special teaching materials are supported by fundraisers and donations made for specific purposes. For example, money donated through Change for a Change supports youth projects and activities.

Every month, the finance committee will be highlighting a portion of the church’s financial situation with the goal of highlighting the importance of stewardship and educating the congregation about some of the challenges facing our church. When we enter the Methodist church, we commit to uphold the Church with our prayers, presence, gifts and services. Hopefully, these “Stewardship Moments” will shed some light on how our members’ gifts and services are being used. If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please don’t hesitate to talk to a member of the finance committee or attend an Administrative Council meeting on the second Sunday of every month.

This month, the Finance Committee wanted to highlight one of our bigger expenses, **electricity**. By the end of this year, we will have paid \$3,104.66 for the church and \$1,604.85 for the parsonage, or an average monthly expense of \$392.46. These expenses, as well as all others, are paid through tithes and offerings. When you miss church, or don’t tithe regularly, budgeting and paying expenses becomes a very difficult and unpredictable task.

God owns it all and (you) are stewards of His resources...Because you are stewards of the resources God has entrusted to you, every financial decision you make is actually a spiritual decision. For many, that’s a revolutionary concept. How you manage your finances is a pretty good barometer for the condition of your spiritual life.



FAIRHAVEN GIFTS...

Thanks to everyone who donated to this project. SUMC collected 80 pairs of socks to give the men of Fairhaven on Saturday, December 19th. J.B. said there were eighty (80) men being served a meal that evening. God is so good! Blessed be His Name!



Plumbing problems?

Do you have or know someone who has some big or little plumbing needs? We have a licensed plumber in our church that is in need of work. No job is too big or small for him. If you can use his services please contact the church office at 356-0029.

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Through Thick and Thin in 2010

Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.

Psalm 90:1

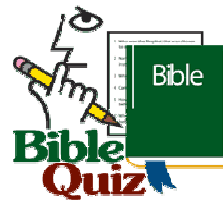
God has gone before us and is waiting here at the portal of 2010 to welcome us to a hope-filled year. Throughout His Word we are assured of His presence in our lives. The Almighty promised in Exodus 23:23, "My Angel will go before you." We're told in 2 Samuel 5:24, "The LORD will go out before you." In Isaiah 45:2, we read that He will go before us and make the crooked places straight. "The LORD will go before you," affirms Isaiah 52:12, "and the God of Israel shall be your rear guard." What a wonderful assurance to know that He not only goes before us, but He is also our "rear guard."

Jesus is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. From everlasting to everlasting, He is our

dwelling place, both now and throughout all generations. Every promise in His Book is available every moment of the day and every day of the year, and He will be with us through thick and thin in 2010. This is the basis of ur hope and the source of our strength. He Himself is going before us this year to guide the way.

He goes before you, O my heart! Fear not to follow where He leads; He knows the strength each task demands, He knows the grace each trial needs.

Annie Johnson Flint



1. Who was the father of Methuselah?
2. How old was Noah when he got out of the ark and built an altar to the Lord!
3. Who was John the Baptist talking to when he said: "you brood of snakes!"
4. King Solomon built a palace for himself, after building the temple; how long did it take him to complete the construction on his personal palace?
5. Do you know how much God loves you????



