

SHARING

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF HOHENWALD

MARCH - APRIL 2014 NEWSLETTER



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

“But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6: 17-18)

In this passage, Jesus is actually speaking of the contrast between hypocrisy and authenticity. But often when he spoke of religious discipline, Jesus mentioned the much misunderstood practice of fasting. Fasting, as we commonly understand it, refers to doing without a normal amount of food and drink. But it can include much more than one's diet.

Think of it this way. Any time we refrain from doing what would be normal under those circumstances because we do not want to be distracted from our personal relationship with God, we could call it fasting. Fasting basically means to abstain from normal practices in order to be more sensitive to spiritual things.

Many years ago, a Scottish minister named Andrew Bonar kept a diary in which he recorded his experiments in fasting. For example, he told that on occasion when he was going to partake of the Lord's Supper, he would not eat any food for a certain amount of time before. He varied his procedure: one time he did not eat for a day

before taking the sacrament; then prior to the next time, he ate. Each time he carefully noted the effect. He found that on the occasions in which he fasted, he was much more spiritually sensitive.

Too often, though, we limit the idea of fasting to food. I believe that more people fast for spiritual reasons than we ordinarily recognize. For example, I know one family who has decided that for one evening each week, the television in their home will not be turned on at all so they can spend their time reading or in some activity together. I think that would be fasting. Some people commit to going to bed early each Saturday night in order that they might attend worship on Sunday. I think that could be considered fasting too. Anything that we abstain from for spiritual reasons can be considered fasting.

Most people who have found the key to spiritual power in their lives have been people who have learned to deny their human desires in order to concentrate more fully on spiritual things. What a contrast this view is to the culture in which we live! We are taught to gratify our impulses immediately – fast food, easy credit, quick fixes! But Jesus taught that delayed gratification can be one of the keys to the Kingdom. Usually, in our lives, in order to put something on, we must be willing to take

something else off. In order to put on the things of the spirit, we must often be willing to take off the things of the flesh.

-Drew

Connecting Worship and Daily Living in Lent

Lent is a 40-day time of preparation for the initiation of people into the Christian life in baptism. It is also a time for the church to journey together toward Easter and the reaffirmation of our baptismal covenant. Lent is a time to prepare for Easter. It is a necessary prelude. The death and resurrection of Christ are true whether or not I prepare for Easter. However, without my heart and life being ready, I may not experience the depth and power of Christ's death and resurrection.

The Sundays of Lent are not part of the 40 days of Lent and so remain "little Easters," as are all Sundays. Fasting and giving up something can be part of Lenten disciplines, but so can taking on some things.

You may want to prayerfully consider some of the following:

Spending some time in solitude each day

Sharing in the Corinthians Bible Study on Sunday evenings

Keeping a journal of prayer concerns, questions and readings

Forgiving someone who has hurt you or giving up a grudge

Taking on some loving task or responding to Christ's call to a ministry of service

Senior Center Monthly Luncheon to Celebrate St. Patrick's Day



In March, lunch at the Lewis County Senior Center will celebrate St. Patrick's Day on March 20 at 11:15 a.m., with a dressed mixed green salad, corned beef, cabbage/onions/carrots, boiled white potatoes, rye bread and dessert.

If you would like to volunteer to serve or to supply a food item for any of the monthly luncheons, please contact UMW President Carolyn Shelton at 931-628-0106, or Kathryn Kozlinski, Nutrition Program Coordinator, at 931-796-2729 (or kawkppm@yahoo.com). Please save your receipts for reimbursement of your costs.

Nurture Committee Report

Nurture Committee chairperson Kathryn Kozlinski and Ann Strickland, chair of the Christian Witness Committee, are working on a brochure that lists the many ministries and outreach activities that Hohenwald First United Methodist Church conducts to serve our community.

Once completed, the brochure will be available for distribution. If you know of good locations for these brochures, locations that will help us reach families or individuals in search of a church home, please let Kathryn, Ann or another member of the Nurture Committee know.

Also, the Nurture Committee is interested in starting a Ride-Share Program to help young people and others who may not drive, to come to church services. If you are interested in finding out more, contact Kathryn Kozlinski.

Youth News

More than 15 of our young people attended “Acquire the Fire” in Nashville Feb. 21-22, and it was a wonderful time of worship and fellowship for them! Thanks to the church-wide support our Youth Group received, we had two full vanloads of teens attending this incredible event. Since teens are **always** hungry, we are especially grateful to UMW for helping us with the costs of meals! Take a look at some of the fun we all had:



Even though this year’s “Acquire the Fire” is barely over, we are already planning some new fund-raising events so we can continue to have our youth attend such inspiring activities. We will hold a **“Mystery Dessert Auction” on Sunday, March 30** when the church holds its Fifth Sunday Potluck Lunch. Special desserts prepared by our youth and boxed in decorated containers will be auctioned off, with all the proceeds going to the Youth Group for its activities.

New Ministry Opportunity

The Committee on Native American Ministries (CONAM) has a goal to create understanding through education in local churches and communities. The committee is dedicated to dispelling myths, creating a bridge for understanding and continuing to strive for healing from past and current hurts. If you have an interest in learning more about the Native American Ministries within the UMC, please contact Joyce McCutcheon, chair of the Outreach Committee, at [931-796-5909](tel:931-796-5909) or Pastor Drew.



From Lynn Pollard:

Dear Precious Women of First United Methodist Church,

Thank you so much for the beautiful Prayer Shawl. I have been so blessed by an outpouring of love since being diagnosed with cancer late last year. It is that love and support and the blessings of our wonderful God that has made this illness bearable. Your expression of kindness is much appreciated. I hope that I can pass that love and compassion on to others as it has been shown to me.

Blessings to you!



From the Family of Mary Jane Clifton:

Thanks so very much to all of you for your support after our mother died. The words of comfort from preachers Drew Brewer and Bill Webb were deeply appreciated and meant so much. Thanks also to the ladies who went to such great lengths to prepare the delicious meal to sustain us. You did a marvelous job, and there was such an abundance of it! Special thanks to Bill and Martha Edwards and to John Ford for seeing that Mama made it to church on time and also for the "finishing touches."

Your kindness meant so much and was deeply appreciated.

Sincerely, James and Betty

And a Valentine's Day Greeting was sent to the Nurture Committee by Suzy Brown-Miller:



Good Morning,

As I sit drinking my hot tea and reading my morning devotional, I am thinking about February and Valentine's Day and how it came about...and I thought "Love was here long before St. Valentine...so the Word of Love begins with God and as Christians we should also love..."

Monthly Music CDs Continues with new March Release

Te Deum Laudamus would like to announce the release of its latest album, March. "We appreciate George Drish and Kenny and Lynette Durham for sponsoring it," said Chris Boardman. "Without support from people like them, this ministry would not be possible."

The albums are available for sale in the church office for \$5.00 each, and the proceeds go to support church Youth programs. The CDs are also available at the Strand, the Lewis County Public Library, the nursing home, and First Baptist Church, but when purchased at those locations, the proceeds go to support ministries and activities at those locations.



If you are interested in sponsoring an album, please contact Kathryn Kozlinski or Christopher Boardman.

"Sharing" is the newsletter of First United Methodist Church of Hohenwald, TN, published six times a year as a service of the Christian Witness Committee. To submit news for "Sharing," please contact Deborah Baker at 931-285-0058; email deb.baker@wildblue.net, or contact other members of the Christian Witness Committee. The newsletter is also available on the church website.