



FIRST

VISIONS

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Barry's Corner

Pastor's Report



Next month, as many of you I'm sure are aware, our chancel choir will again be performing the Christmas portion of Handel's "Messiah." It's always a treat to have both a large choir and orchestra perform this outstanding composition in worship. The complexity of Handel's music keeps both choir members and orchestra very busy, but none I suspect are more focused than Sarah Kelly who's direction must somehow keep all the many parts performing together as one. It's a rare talent which can conduct so many, keeping them all in sync both with one another and with the composer's music.

The prolific author, Robert Fulghum, always had a secret dream. His dream was to conduct an orchestra. Unlike most of us, however, his wish actually came true when he was invited to conduct the Minneapolis Chamber Symphony in a series of performances.

Robert had never conducted an orchestra in his life so he practiced in his living room by waving his arms while listening to a CD. (Any of you ever secretly conducted an orchestra in your living room?) What Robert discovered, however, was that it's much more difficult working with an actual orchestra than any of us might suspect.

For six months Robert practiced and then the day finally came for the first performance. The hall was filled with people. As Robert got up to the podium, he explained to the audience that he represented them and anybody among them who had always wanted to conduct. He also apologized for not carrying a conductor's

baton, but explained that every time he used a baton in rehearsal he accidentally threw it into the chorus.

Then he began conducting the orchestra. It wasn't as easy as he thought. Every time the tempo of the music changed he experienced an adrenaline rush and came in waving his arms at a speed about ten beats faster than normal. The result was that the music was played much too fast. The next day a critic called the performance "crisp."

On the final night of the performance Robert felt drained and exhausted. Before the performance he told the audience that it was "an insult to the greatness of the music for someone to conduct who didn't know how." Then he asked the real conductor to come forward and do justice to the music. And he did. It was the orchestra's finest night. The audience was so moved that they stood through the entire performance.

When I read about Fulghum's experience, it occurred to me that there are many people who do all right in life - who out of sheer determination to succeed make their way to the top of the heap. But the problem is, it doesn't last - not for any of us.

There comes a time when, for whatever reason, every one of us becomes drained and exhausted. And when that time comes, the wise person asks the Master Conductor to come forward and do justice to the music.

Why? For one thing, we don't have the endurance to keep on going on our own resources. For a while, maybe, but not for the long haul. And

secondly, we need to be reminded how the music is supposed to sound. If we don't stop periodically and asks the Master Conductor to come forward and do justice to the music, we may never realize how our music can sometimes degenerate into mindless noise.

This is one of the reasons why our church accepted Bishop Whitfield's invitation to become a Connected In Christ (CIC) congregation. CIC helps us to step aside for a moment and listen anew to the music of the Master Conductor. And over the past year as we've been listening intently, and asked ourselves some hard questions:

1. We began by asking the congregation to complete a simple "Readiness Assessment" which measured our receptivity to transformational ministry planning. The results were "Yes," we are a people eager to reexamine our reason for existence as a church, and who also possess an openness to retool where necessary so as to become a more effectual instrument for God's transforming grace within our community and throughout the world.

2. Our second step as a congregation was to discern what our Core Values are. During worship on Pentecost Sunday, we asked everyone three vital questions:

"What were the core values of Jesus as seen in his earthly ministry?"

"As we look in the Bible at the activities of the early church, what might we surmise their core values to be?"

"What are our core values here at First UMC?"

We received approximately 900 individual responses to these three inquiries. It's taken some time, but we're excited to tell you that in a little over a week, on Sunday, November 13th, we will again be reporting back to you our analysis of your input, and then lead you into the next step where we will be to ask ourselves: "Based on the core values of our church family, what "shared vision" do we hold for the future of our congregation?"

This is the next essential step for us. Our vision must be a clear and challenging picture of our preferred future for First UMC. Visions are important because they illuminate and motivate us towards what God is calling us "to be." It's a process of allowing the Master Conductor to come forward and do justice to the music so that all of us together might again know the beauty of His composition, and play in sync with one another. I hope you will come and look forward to seeing you Sunday.

In harmony with Him,

Barry





Susan Nava talks during Children's Time about the Heifer Project.



Heifer Project Update



The children have been raising money for their on-going goal, the Heifer Project. To date these young people have raised enough money to donate an alpaca to this worthwhile cause. Three alpacas came with Susan Sasser to second service on Sunday, October 30 to help the youngsters celebrate and visualize just what they are accomplishing. They have now set a new goal for themselves, to collect enough money to donate a heifer, the namesake of the project.

Fare Thee Well, Michael

Reformation Day was celebrated this past Sunday, October 30. Michael Ross's sermon, "Free", addressed our need and desire for forgiveness and freedom won for us through the work of Christ Jesus. This Sunday was Pastor Ross's last Sunday at FUMC.

During the service members of Michael's Resurrection class which has been meeting every week since Lent, came to the front of the church and sang with Michael the class's

theme song, "Borning Cry." He told the children who were in the front of the church for Children's Time that these members of the Resurrection Class and the other adults in the church are here for them to help them and give them aid when needed.

Church was followed by a Farewell Reception for Michael.

Go with God, Michael!



"Borning Cry"

Resurrection Class give Michael Ross a farewell dinner last week and discuss what the Resurrection means for them.



Rev. Michael Ross, farewell sermon



Mada Jones presents a gift to Michael on behalf of the SPRC during the Farewell Reception

We Witness

Our Church Vows

We will be loyal to the United Methodist Church and uphold it with our prayers, presence, gifts and service.

Our Prayers

There are many, many prayer needs in our church family and community. The caring board by the church office is filled to overflowing, and there are too many prayer needs to put in this space without leaving out some other

equally important needs. Having the complete prayer list is as simple as sending your email address to the church office and asking to be placed on the email list for prayer needs.

Our Presence

Throughout the month of October our average attendance at church was 153.

Special November Days



Birthdays:

Louise Mendius 11/04
Jeanie Standley 11/11
Balog, Miriam 11/12
Irene Bubernak 11/14
Harriet Zickert 11/17
Margaret Gibson 11/22
Mada Jones 11/25
Bob Kelly 11/26

Anniversaries:

November 4
Walt & Martha Lou Ellis
November 23
Ron & Mada Jones
November 25
Court & Mary Courtright
November 26
Ray & Debbie Trimmer
November 27
Larry & Bobi Bryant

New Ray Vander Laan Series Starts

This Sunday, November 6, at the Sunday School hour, the Bible History Class will start the newest of the Ray Vander Laan Faith Lessons. This is Volume 6 of the "That the World May Know" series that has been very popular in our church. Volume 6 is titled "In the Dust of the Rabbi - Becoming a Disciple". Each lesson starts with a video in which Vander Laan, a minister, historian, and archaeologist, takes us to various places in the Holy Land

and describes the Biblical events that happened there. His "Faith Lesson" follows with applications to our daily living. The Bible History Class meets in the Friendship Center.



The next edition of Visions will be dated November 25.

The deadline for articles is Wednesday, November 16.

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Sunday Services & Activities

8:00 a.m. Contemporary Worship
9:15 a.m. Sunday School
10:30 a.m. Traditional Worship

Wednesday Activities

Methodist Youth Fellowship
6:30 pm
Chancel Choir 7 p.m.

United Skates, Friday evenings

First Session 5:00-6:45 p.m. for children third grade and younger, \$2.00 includes skate rental
Second Session for third grade and up, \$2.50 includes skate rental



Our Applause

Thank you to everyone who worked hard on the Halloween Carnival this year.

Many thanks also to all the people who contributed to the

Farewell Reception for Michael Ross and to our continuing Potluck/Birthday celebrations.

Michael, thank you, for the time, love, and effort you put

into FUMC over the last two and a half years.

Congratulations! Joey Grindstaff Winner of the Duke City Marathon

Upcoming Events to Celebrate Christmas

Handel's "Messiah"

(Christmas Portion)

Performance will be December 4 at the 10:30 am service
If you would like to be a part of the production, please attend the rehearsals which will be on Wednesdays from 7:45-8:30 pm



Messiah
Performance

Christmas Pageant

"The Next Noel"

Performance will be December 18 at the 10:30 am service
If you would like to be a part of the production, please fill out the form available in the kiosk. Rehearsals will be arranged based on cast schedules.



The Next Noel

A Humbling Christmas Musical

