



SteepleTalk

January 2010

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Member Care Volunteer

Judy Leonard

Deacon of Month/ Visiting Deacons

Judy Denney
Judy Leonard

Steepletalk Deadline

January 22nd

Circle Meeting

January 5 at 9:45 a.m.

Mission Co-workers

Roger & Gloria Marriott

From the Pastor...

“Do not let loyalty and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.” (Prov. 3:3)

Beginning Well: Making a Good Start states that every person has some gifts that God has put into your life. Although gifts and talents are not absolutely equally distributed, nonetheless, we all have them. As we contemplate any new beginning, we may want to look and explore the gift of the heart.

The greatest danger in talking about our faith is that often when people speak about the heart and the mind we lose sight of a danger that lurks in this combination. Most of us aspire to be “hardheaded and softheaded.” Yet, we all know far too many Christians who are “softheaded and hard-hearted.” When we say hardheaded we mean that we know how to think dispassionately and with a cool reason. We need to make some decisions with a calculated rationality. For example, your doctor will tell you not to let your desires for certain kinds of “bad foods” dictate what you eat. If you do, then your diet may well “do you in.” On the other hand, being hard-hearted is never the aim of a person who is concerned with God or God’s creatures. Being softheaded means that we feel for and with another person and his or her circumstance in life. Having a soft heart simply means that we have feeling and passion for life and others. Without passion or zeal we become merely human robots.

Scripture reminds us that being hard-hearted is no good thing. In Exodus, Pharaoh, an example of one who opposes God’s will, is regularly described as hard-hearted. We read in Exodus that “the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he would not let the people go” (Exodus 9:7). Who hardened Pharaoh’s heart? We are not told, but later we find out that at least on some occasions, “The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh” (Exodus 14:8). Thus, we are locked in a mystery. God sometimes hardens the heart, while other times the Bible discloses no such source. Either way, however, Pharaoh comes across as God’s enemy. J. Stowell writes convincingly of the Bible’s use of the term heart:

Heart is used in Scripture as the most comprehensive term for the authentic person. It is the part of our being where we desire, deliberate, and decide. It has been described as “the place of conscious and decisive spiritual activity,” “the comprehensive term for a person as a whole: his feelings, desires, passions, thought, understanding and will,” and “the center of a person. The place to which God turns.” (Joseph M. Stowell, *Fan the Flame: Living Out Your First Love for Christ.*)

We see this understanding at work in David’s call to become Israel’s new king in 1 Samuel 16. Samuel visits Jesse near Bethlehem and asks to see all of Jesse’s sons from which Samuel will choose Saul’s replacement as Israel’s king. Eliab and Abinadab and Shammah each pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen any of these” (1 Samuel 16:10b). Finally, David comes in from keeping sheep, and without delay “The LORD said, ‘Rise and anoint him; for this is the one’ ” (1 Samuel 16:12). Why, we wonder, is this the one? The story tells us something key not only for choosing kings but also for our own lives: “The LORD does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

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God “knows the secrets of the heart” (Psalm 44:21). Therefore, if one wants to get right with God then one had best begin with getting his or her heart right first. But if you are like me, this is a proposition that strikes fear into the hearts of rational people. We all know and know all too well the dangers of combining religion and passion. We want to stick closely with what we can think and therefore control. Wild passion out of control—passion not checked by cool reason—furnishes circumstances like Jim Jones’s jungle cocktails in Jonestown, Guyana, or David Koresh’s fiery end, along with his flock, in Waco. Hitler’s emotional appeal and scapegoated Jews provided his ascension to power. Hitler built his power without any sort of solid logic. We all have good and recent historic reasons to distrust emotional manipulation—no matter how convincing this emotional appeal may be.

All this being said, however, our own passion for the gospel and zeal for our faith is at the heart of our relationship with God. Our enthusiasm and fervor define the depth of our commitments to the things we love. Can you imagine not being passionate about your family or your life’s work or even your faith? We are passionate about the things we love. Passion and a heart disposed toward God define the intensity and vitality of our faith. Without it each of us is nothing more than a walking and breathing human wasteland.

On the first Easter Sunday evening, two disciples “were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened” (Luke 24:13-14). As they trudged along, no doubt bewildered by recent events, Jesus drew alongside them and began to talk with them as they walked. “Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures” (Luke 24:27). Later (and this is the most telling part of the story), they said, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:32). Because their hearts burned they understood the significance of the encounter. My question for all of us is this: Does your faith in Jesus cause your heart and passion to burn within you? I am not suggesting that you shout or handle snakes or speak in tongues. Rather, I only ask you in the quietness of your heart, are you convinced that Jesus is the Lord of your life?

Søren Kierkegaard once wrote, “Purity of heart is to will one thing.” Do you will to have a relationship with Jesus on a personal and heartfelt level? In your heart of hearts do you desire to be a faithful disciple? Do you wish to remove all the impediments in your heart that keep you from a personally satisfying relationship with God? Are you willing to forgive others and yourself for the failure to bind your heart to God? If so, I ask you to decide today to give your whole heart to God through the mercy of Jesus Christ. Remember, “Happiness is in the heart, not in the circumstances.” Amen.

Blessings,
Dr. Cheetham

From the Associate Pastor...

It is with a sad and happy heart that I am writing today. I have accepted a call as the Interim Associate Pastor at FPC Columbia. I will be leaving at the end of 2009. While I am excited about where I feel God is leading me, I am very sad to leave behind the relationships that I have made and cherished over these past few years. Through all my joys and struggles that I have experienced in my ministry here, there have been so many people here who have genuinely cared for me and showed me much compassion and for this I give thanks to God!

I have enjoyed the time I have spent with the children and youth. There are so many great children and parents of this church whom I have loved growing closer to and I will miss them deeply. In my time here, we have started many different ministries and programs and my hope is that they will continue. I know they can but they need the support of everyone. I know you will not disagree with me when I say that the future of our church is our children and we need to care for them and love them. It’s not one person’s job, but the job of all the members. I am a believer that the greatest gift you can give these kids is your time and energy and I know all of you have this gift to give!

The session and I agreed that I will work through the end of 2009. My hope is that I will be able to see each of you so I can tell you how much you mean to me and my ministry. Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to minister to you and not only be a part of your own faith journey but helping me grow in mine!

Grace and Peace,
Nick

Session Highlights

from the December 14, 2009 meeting

- Pam Denny met with the session for the purpose of joining the church by profession of faith on Sunday December 20 at the 11:00 service.
- Treasurer Tracey Hay's report indicated that November offerings were \$17,687.75.
- The bank balance on November 30 was \$1,958.32
- Elder Pat Bone resigned from the session, Worship Committee and Personnel Committee effective November 17, 2009.
- Reverend Nick Reed has accepted a call from First Presbyterian Church in Columbia, Tennessee to serve as an interim associate pastor. He plans to start at First Columbia on January 11, 2010.
- Elders Kathy Adams and Dot Jenkins are planning a reception for Reverend Reed on December 27 after the 11:00 service.
- David Hazelwood provided a proposal for unity building and strategic planning, The session voted to delay a decision on the proposal until February after the new elders are installed.
- The Outreach Committee plans to divide the remaining funds in their budget among 3 or 4 local charities before the end of December.
- Communion for both services on January 3, 2010 will be by intinction.
- The congregational meeting to elect officers, to sever the call of Reverend Nick Reed, and to consider a 3% increase in compensation for Reverend John Cheetham was rescheduled for Wednesday, January 6, 2010 at 6:30 p.m.

A Prayer for the New Year

Eternal God, thank you for bringing us once again to the threshold of a new year. Help us dedicate each day of 2010 to following your will for our lives. Guide us, Lord, in all our decisions and actions, day by day and hour by hour. Help us accomplish all that you desire for us to do, until our mission on earth is finished. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Lectionary Readings

January 3	Jeremiah 31: 7-14 Ephesians 1: 3-14 John 1: (1-9) 10-18
January 10	Isaiah 43: 1-7 Acts 8: 14-17 Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22
January 17	Isaiah 62: 1-5 1 Corinthians 12: 1-11 John 2: 1-11
January 24	Nehemiah 8: 1-3, 5-6, 8-10 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31a Luke 4: 14-21
January 31	Jeremiah 1: 4-10 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13 Luke 4: 21-30

Wednesday Night Fellowship Dinners for January

Adults \$6.50 Children under 10 years \$3.00
Under 5 years "Free"

To make a reservation, mark the Sunday attendance card in the bulletin, visit the website, or call the church office. Reservations must be made **no later than noon on Tuesday.**

Menus for January are:

January 6: Salad, Chicken Alfredo on Pasta, Steamed Vegetables, Garlic Bread, Dessert

January 13: Salad, Salmon Croquettes, Whipped Potatoes, Pinto Beans, Bread, Dessert

January 20: Salad, Taco Soup, Corn Muffins, Dessert

January 27: Chicken Tetrazzini (Casserole with Chicken Pasta, Peas, Mushrooms and Creamy Sauce), Buttered Corn, Salad, Bread, Dessert

Congregational Meeting

There will be a congregational meeting on Wednesday, January 6 at 6:30 p.m. to elect new officers, receive the 2010 budget, dissolve the pastoral relationship with the Associate Pastor, and vote on changes for the Pastor's terms of call.

January 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Sunday 8:45 & 11:00 Worship 9:45 a.m. Church School					1 Office Closed	2
3 Communion	4 9:00 a.m. Morning Sewing Group 6:00 p.m. Disciples Class	5 9:00 a.m. Preschool 9:45 a.m. Morning Circle	6 5:15 Bell Choir 6:00 Dinner 6:30 Congrega- tional Meeting 7:15 p.m. Choir	7 6:30 p.m . Contemporary Practice	8	9
		Nick on	Vacation			
10	11 9:00 a.m. Morning Sewing Group 6:30 p.m. Southern Starrs 7:15 p.m. Session	12 9:00 a.m. Preschool 3:30 p.m. Knitting	13 5:15 Bell Choir 6:00 Dinner 7:15 p.m. Choir	14 6:30 p.m . Contemporary Practice	15	16
17	18 9:00 a.m. Morning Sewing Group	19 9:00 a.m. Preschool 3:30 p.m. Knitting	20 5:15 Bell Choir 6:00 Dinner 7:15 p.m. Choir	21 6:30 p.m . Contemporary Practice	22 Steepletalk Deadline	23
24 5:00 p.m. Deacons 4 Cents a Meal	25 9:00 a.m. Morning Sewing Group	26 9:00 a.m. Preschool 3:30 p.m. Knitting	27 5:15 Bell Choir 6:00 Dinner 7:15 p.m. Choir	28 6:30 p.m . Contemporary Practice	29	30
31						



Officers for 2010: The Nominating Committee will present the following slate of officers:

Session Class of 2012

Jeff Campbell - Jeff serves as the facilitator for the Monday night Disciple I class. He and Lauren are the parents of Virginia.

David Howell - David, a retired engineer with Bell South, is involved with the Synod's Living Waters for the World water purification mission project. He and Barbara live in Mt. Juliet.

Joy Shaw - Joy is a former member of the Farragut Presbyterian Church in Knoxville. She works at the Wilson Co. Adult Educator Center.

Roy Wauford - A long time member of FPC, Roy is a consulting engineer and a retired banker. He and Lois Ann have been married for over 50 years.

Deacon Class of 2012

Lisa Burruss - Lisa and Dave are the parents of Allison, William, and Thomas. She is a Sunday School teacher with the Rotation Classes.

Rachel Farley - As a child, Rachel attended FPC where she sang in the children's choir. She now sings in the adult choir and teaches in the Rotation Sunday School program. Her son Caleb is in the 4th grade.

Stuart Miller - Stuart is a native of Scotland. He plays the guitar and sings with the Praise Team. He and his daughter Bethany sang a duet at the Candlelight Service.

Robin Orewiler - Robin and her husband Bob recently transferred their membership from Powell Presbyterian Church outside of Knoxville. Robin served on the Member Care Committee this past year.

New Member

We welcome Pam Denny as the newest member of our congregation. Pam joined by profession of faith on Sunday, December 20.

Mary Margaret and I would like to thank you for all the cards, gifts, goodies, and expressions of kindness and generosity extended to us during this Christmas season. We also deeply appreciate the gift card from the church. We appreciate all of you and wish for you the most blessed Christmas season.

Dr. Cheetham

I would like to thank everyone for the sweet gifts and delicious goodies that have been given to me during the Christmas season. I appreciate the gift card to Wal-Mart. I hope that each of you have had a Merry Christmas and will have a Happy New Year.

Kristy

Thank you so much for the gift card. I hope everyone had a very Merry Christmas and a blessed New Year.

Branson

Thank you for the gifts and the gift card from the church. I hope you all had a Merry Christmas and that you have a safe and Happy New Year!

Nick

Dear Church Family,
Thank you for your words of encouragement and appreciation in recent weeks. Thank you also for remembering me at Christmas with your generous and thoughtful gifts. I truly appreciate your friendship and support. May our hearts be warmed throughout the year with God's love.

Gary

A Special Thank You to everyone who helped prepare for and participated in the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.

STANDING COMMITTEES

If you are interested in serving on one of the following committees, please fill out the form below and return it to the church office at your earliest convenience.

I would like to serve my church by serving on the following committee or committees:

Christian Education _____ Member Care _____ Budget/Finance/Stewardship _____
Outreach _____ Worship _____ Building and Grounds _____

Name: _____