



THIS MONTH

July/August 2010



The Calvary United Methodist Church Newsletter

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pastor's ponderings



On Father's Day, I preached a sermon called "Faith of Our Fathers." After the service a few people suggested that because so many people weren't here,

that I publish the sermon in the newsletter. So here it is, please realize that sermons are meant to be heard and experienced and that I don't even preach it just as I write it. I think it is an important sermon about some new thing for the church. Enjoy! And as always I would love to hear you thoughts.

I had my grandfather's hat and two Bibles that belonged him sitting on the altar when I started.

Beth

June 20 Sermon "Faith of Our Fathers":

This hat and this Bible belonged to my maternal grandfather. In many ways I feel more connected to him now than I did when he was alive. He was an older grandpa, 77 when I was born, although I remember him gardening and twirling my jump rope. But my connection now is ministry. He was a Baptist preacher, although he preached in the Methodist church too, because in the little town where he was serving the Methodists couldn't afford a pastor and the Baptists couldn't afford to get their heat fixed. So in the summer they worshipped in the Baptist church and in the winter they went to the Methodist building and my grandfather preached in both places. He was the community's minister. I find myself talking to him every once in a while. Don't worry I don't often hear him talk back. I do know that he

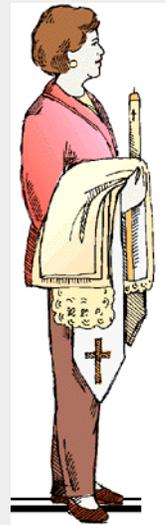
is happy that I followed a call into ministry. He often shared his faith with us. He would always give God credit for all the good things and always tell us that he was trusting God when it wasn't so good.

In the book of Isaiah there is an account of King Hezekiah. He becomes really sick and gets word from God through the prophet Isaiah's son, Amoz that he was going to die. He didn't want to die, he cried and he prayed to God. And the story tells us that God heard his cries and gives him 15 more years to live. And when Isaiah tells him what the Lord said and after he recovered from his terrible illness, he wrote a hymn of thanksgiving. It told his story and ended with these two verses,

Isaiah 38: 19-20, "The living, the living they thank you as I do this day; fathers make known to children your faithfulness. The Lord will save me and we will sing to string instruments all the days of our lives at the house of the Lord."

King Hezekiah is saying as people who are thankful for all that God has blessed us with, thankful for the opportunity to live, we will tell our children about God's faithfulness, that we can trust God with our lives and we will worship, with joy. We will go to the house of the Lord and we will sing and play music. We will worship!

We just sang that wonderful old hymn, Faith of Fathers by Fredrick Faber. He wrote this hymn in honor of Catholic martyrs to give them honor



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June 20 Sermon continued:

and to inspire others. The first verse,

*“Faith of our Fathers,
living still, in spite of dungeon, fire, and sword;
Oh, how our hearts beat high with joy
whenever we hear that glorious Word!”*

Tells us that even though there has been people imprisoned, and killed for their faith, even though there has been persecution, the faith of the generations before us is still alive and we are still filled joy to hear about the love of God in Christ.

The second verse:

*“Faith of our fathers,
we will strive to win all nations unto thee;
and through the truth that comes from God,
we all shall be truly free.”*

Because we believe in this faith, because this faith has sustained us in our life, we are going to work to share it with the world. We are going to win all nations for God. We are going to share the love of God with others so that others can join in worshipping and join the family of God.

It’s the faith of our fathers. It’s the faith the reformers, Calvin and Luther, it’s the faith of John Wesley, it’s the faith of the missionaries who built churches and established churches in this country, it’s the faith of my Baptist preaching grandfather, it’s the faith of the people who built this church. We want to share that faith with others and keep it going. The writer of Hebrews, lists in chapter 11, a long list of Biblical faith heroes, Abel and Noah; Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Sarah; and Jacob and Esau and Joseph; and Moses, Samuel, David, and the prophets and the disciples, it’s a great list, and then it says, “Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses,” since these people have shared their faith when they were here and left for us their lessons of faith that we can learn from, “we will run with perseverance the race that is set before us.” We will persevere in the passing on of faith so that we can become part of that cloud of witnesses.

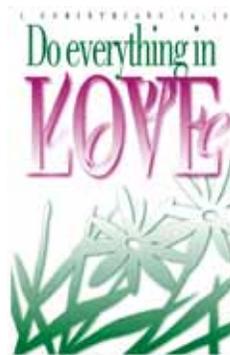
But now I need to ask a hard question, “How are we doing at sharing our faith with the generations that are coming after us?” Look around. For a lot of reasons there are whole generations missing from most of our churches, not just this one but it is a problem being addressed by church leaders from all size churches and from all different denominations. The people who shared their faith with us, did so through relationships, in a time when most of us were expected to go to church. We want because that’s what you did on Sundays. We learned from

being there, we experienced the presence of a living Christ. We heard faith stories, we read scripture and studied the stories. When I read that list of names, all those Biblical heroes, most of us know at least some of those stories, at least know the names of the people. The generations that we are missing, haven’t ever heard the stories.

I sat in Bible study recently with a person in their mid 20’s, we were talking about the different kinds of Psalms there were. We came to Psalm 51, and I said this is a Psalm written by King David, begging God for forgiveness after his run in with Bathsheba. He had never heard about the story of Bathsheba and David. It’s a great story for today it’s filled with lust and murder, the stuff current movies are made of. It’s a great story that needs to be told in a way that this generation can hear it.

But our world is not sitting and reading. I love to read I would encourage people to read, I love to read scripture, I would encourage people to read their Bibles, but they aren’t reading. They live in a world that is digital and full of images. In the 1950’s and 60’s a car ad in a magazine would have lots of information on it, gas mileage, kind of interior, what size motor is in it, how it should make you feel, and people would read it all, and compare it to another ad about another car. Today the best ads have very few words, the message is in the picture. We need to communicate the gospel to people in a new way, in a way that they will relate to, grab hold of and make it part of their lives.

We want to pass on the faith of our fathers, it doesn’t necessarily mean we need to have new Christians worship and develop their faith the same way we did. And this generation is not coming to church because their parents did, and to be completely honest many of their parents, people my age and a little older, aren’t coming to church either. So churches have to make some tough decisions, they can try to keep doing things as they have always done them, sing the same songs and even somewhat newer songs from hymnals, read scripture and listen to sermons, and if we are honest even those of us who come every week only hear some of it, or we can decide we are going to find a way to reach a new generation.



The United Methodist Church has a decided to put energy and money into “creating new place for new faces.” The dean of the Cabinet, Rev Grant Lobb, asked, “what do we want our churches to look like in 5 years? Do we want them to look like they do

today or to be growing and thriving? Do we want to be the only ones in our churches or are we willing to reach out and do what it takes to meet the faith needs of another generation of people?" He went on to explain that he thought one of the biggest problems in church growth is selfishness. We like our worship services, we like our programs, our friends, our church family, we like the songs we sing, and our worship service makes us feel good. And if we don't feel good then we think something was wrong with the service. I am not talking about this church of course, those other churches are like that. But I have to confess my guilt with this problem.

I like worship, I don't really need to change it, and well because you all like it, I like it and change would require more work. Adding a screen and new songs would require more effort on my part and also for those who are involved in planning worship. Starting something new would require that I, that we, step out of the box that we are comfortable in, that we take a risk that might fail, but might work, might share the love of God with new people. It wouldn't be easy and I would need others to do it with me. And quite frankly, I am happy with the status quo. BUT God is not calling us to the status quo, a long term member of this church said to me recently, "we can't afford to keep doing the status quo, we have to do something new, we have to make some changes." He's right.

The problem is only babies like to be changed. And yet, we can't become what we need to be by remaining what we are. If we keep doing the same thing we will get the same results. If businesses ran the way churches tend to, they would go out of business. Not one of us expects our doctors to treat our diseases the way they did in the 60's or even the 70's. None of us would buy a television that resembled those in the 70's. We wouldn't buy a new car and expect it to have an eight track player. Many of our children can't even tell time on an analogue clock, with hands and a face. The world continues to move forward and the church needs to do the same.

So I need to share a few things with you. I have been having conversations with this church's leadership and talking about some ideas I have. Some members have pledged their support in prayer, presence and gifts. I want to reach new people with the Good News of Jesus Christ. The gospel doesn't change, -- the way we teach it and communicate it can.

One thing that we have been talking about is some up-dating of this

service. Without changing the spirit and the flow of the service we can up-date with a projector, for those that learn with images and for young people who have been trained on computers and video games. We can learn some new songs, without getting rid of our favorites but adding some more contemporary music, a blend of style and lyrics. We also need to develop our nursery and children's ministry during this service.

The other thing that I am working on, is a second service, on Sunday evenings, I think. A casual, relaxed service possibly in the chapel, with a whole new feeling. Next weekend, I will be in Minneapolis visiting a church called Solomon's Porch. The pastor, Doug Pagitt, is a well-known author and speaker at training events, has agreed to meet with me, so that I can ask questions and get information about starting a similar service here. I believe this style of worship will be attractive to many people in their late 20's, 30's and 40's. If you look around these are the generations that we aren't reaching.

If you want to be part of this, there are many things to be done and tasks to accomplish to create a new worship service. I welcome your involvement, I hope that you will be involved in supporting this and helping to get it started. I also ask that if you have questions or concerns, come and ask them. I would love to hear other opinions and ideas. I would really like to know what people are thinking first hand, rather than through the grape vine. And please pray, for wisdom and discernment, and for the people who might come, and pray that people will come.

Honestly, I find the idea of doing something new frightening. What if it doesn't work at all? What if nobody ever shows up for this service? It might not work. But I guess I have decided the idea of doing nothing new is scarier. The idea that nothing will change in this church and churches everywhere in next five years means that churches will be closing. So I am ready to take the risk so that my grandchildren have a chance of singing Faith of Our Fathers. More importantly than that song, I want the generations that follow us to see us as part of that cloud of witnesses that shared their faith, so that even if it's not their father's church, they can have the faith of their father's in their own churches, have their own experience with the presence of God in their midst and they will worship just as we worship.



opportunity to share

Are you looking for an opportunity to offer some *special music* for our summer worship services? Can you help provide a song or play your instrument this summer for our congregation? Please contact Sandra Jameson or Pastor Beth – and thanks!!



thank you!

Thanks very much to those who have donated metal tabs plus eye glasses to help those in need especially in other countries. Please continue to do so. Simply leave the items in the church narthex in baskets that are marked.

prayer

“Prayer the Real Battle” is a new book written by Brother Andrew and Al Janssen. They wrote that listening to the United States and other free countries, it sounds like our prayers are mostly self-centered; “God hears what I want.” It is fine to pray about our jobs, families, health, loved ones, etc. However, if that’s all that we do at times, we are missing out on a great adventure. So they wrote, God invites us to literally direct history while praying and change it for the good.

smile awhile:

A took his small nephew to buy a gift for his mother, an important event which had to be kept a secret. However, the boy was so excited that on arriving home he shouted, “Mother, where can I hide this so you won’t find it?”

A little book in a library was about golf balls and why they have dimples. Apparently the dimples make the balls travel much further than smooth ones. So, try to great both the stress and serenity of life with a smile and a dimple - they will carry you further.

news from ruth husung

Ruth Barnard PhD, RN has retired as president of the Haiti Nursing Foundation. She founded the

organization in Ann Arbor with the Ann Arbor First Presbyterian Church. She attributes the development and success of the four year School of Nursing Bachelor of Science program in Haiti to prayers. This has been especially true after the recent disaster. The Dean of the school, students and graduates, worked diligently to provide immediate care for the victims. Due to poor construction other schools of Nursing buildings were destroyed in the disaster.

In August 2010, Rosemarie Rowney, MPH, RN, current president plans to go to Haiti, She will meet with leaders there to advance education of students through the Ann Arbor Haiti Nursing Foundation. Please pray for the people in this combined effort. You may also give a donation to the local foundation.

Ruth Husung will be collecting again this year for the *Annual Memory Walk*. So please plan to give to help this affected by Alzheimer’s Disease.

habitat action

The first Calvary Good News House building day was Tuesday, June 29, but there is another opportunity to participate on Saturday, August 7. Sign up in the narthex to paint/pound nails/or who knows what fun project, provide lunch for workers, or please provide your prayers for the work on the families of the two houses we’re renovating and all the churches involved.



youth in action

Thanks for your support of the Rummage Sale which raised funds for the well in Liberia and the upcoming Motown Mission trip which youth and parents will take July 18-24. You still can be the one to make the final donation to fund the well or support a youth on this mission project in Detroit. Designate your gift in the weekly offering or see Judy Weir.

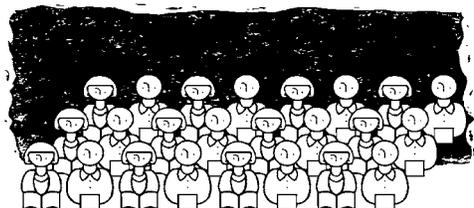


the refrigerator page

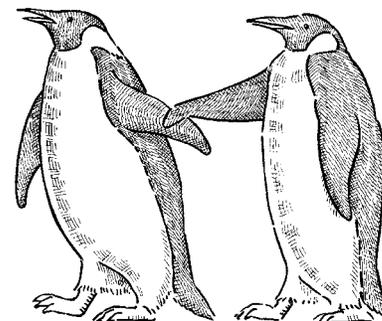
(you know, to hang on the frig door, so you don't miss anything)
Check your bulletin for details and dates and times that may change.

mark your calendars now

ANNUAL CHURCH CONFERENCE — Sunday October, 10 at 4:00pm.
Staff Parish Relations Committee will meet at 3:15.



Annual Conference



Bring a Friend This Sunday

birthdays

july

- 9 Jackie Goerke
- 13 Lynn Storey
- 13 Kelly Wier
- 16 Peg Leonard
- 18 Dottie Jameson
- 19 Sandra Jameson
- 23 Erin Lin
- 26 Betty Brewer
- 31 Lena Lowe



august

- 2 Betty Talbot
- 5 Ben Wier
- 7 Xavier Kimbrough
- 9 Pander Kimbrough
- 11 Neil Gates
- 12 Milt Andrews
- 16 DuWaine Hoy
- 17 Allie Jameson
- 18 Luke Hayden
- 20 Frank Lin
- Andrea Roche
- 23 Abigail Smith

anniversaries

july

- 12 Pat and Dick Fischer
- Pam and Dick Totten
- 29 Bonnie and Milt Andrews



august

- 2 Karen and David Gates
- 11 Carol and Steve Miller
- 16 Sandra and Tom Jameson
- Pander and Melvin Kimbrough
- 27 Margaret and Al Storey

July/August 2010

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Calvary United Methodist Church
1415 Miller
Ann Arbor, MI 48103



DON'T TAKE A
VACATION
FROM CHURCH

Please check and return to church office to cancel newsletter

The Calvary United Methodist Church Newsletter

Rev. Beth D. Titus, Pastor
1415 Miller, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48103

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Sunday Worship 10:00
Sunday School 11:15