

The Witness

Volume 10, Issue 20

September 17, 2009

Coming Up . . .

- **SPR Committee meeting** is this Sunday, September 20th at 4:00 p.m. at the church office.
- **Prayer Ministry meeting** will be Monday, September 21st at 6:30 p.m. at the Mattie St. house.
- **Charge Conference** will be Tuesday, September 22nd at 6:00 p.m. in our sanctuary.
- **Trustees meeting** will be Monday, September 28th at 6:30 p.m. at the Mattie St. house.
- **Worship Committee** meeting will be Tuesday, September 29th at 6:00 p.m. at the Mattie St. house.
- **Education Committee** meeting will be Tuesday, September 29th at 7:30 p.m. at the Mattie St. house.

Ministry of Spiritual Formation

Spiritual formation is about everyday life with God—how we relate to God, experience God, and mature in faith and wisdom. Spiritual formation opportunities engage both head and heart, move participants toward deeper, more enriching relationships and strengthens discipleship through prayer, discernment and service.

Our own Louisiana Conference under the leadership of Rev. Carole Cotton Winn established the Academy of Spiritual Leadership about ten years ago. This Academy was open to both clergy and lay and offered an opportunity to learn how to offer opportunities in our respective churches in spiritual leadership. There is a necessary interaction between a person and the Divine. This interaction does not come only to prophets but to ordinary people like us. It is a part of our human nature to call out one of the thousand names of "God." Call and response is perhaps the oldest impulse that we have as human beings. We have always looked up and bowed down before the mysteries of the universe and asked God to be present.

The word *journey* has always been a key metaphor for the Christian life. I recently returned home from a pilgrimage experience of connecting with God in the forests, mountains, lakes and the Pacific Ocean in Olympic National Park in the state of Washington. One of the leaders on this pilgrimage, Christina Baldwin, has written a book entitled *The Seven Whispers: A Spiritual Practice For Times Like These*. In this book Christina teaches us to listen to the inner voice that starts in our souls—the voice of spirit. She offers us seven ways to stay connected to God: *Maintain peace of mind; Move at the pace of guidance; Practice certainty of purpose; Surrender to surprise; Ask for what you need and offer what you can; Love the folks in front of you; Return to the world.*

There will be an opportunity for you to learn more about Spiritual Formation beginning in October. If you are interested in being a part of a small group that learns more about faith formation please contact me either at the church office (665-8995) or at home (665-5243) for more information. May God bless you each and every day by His love!

Rita

Special Gifts

The following special gifts have been made to First United Methodist Church:

In Memory of:

- **Marguerite Benton** by Robyn R. Parker
- **Mattie Millet & Harry E. Jackson** by Minnie Allen
- **Anna Boyd** by Teresa & Clyde Ellis.

In Honor of:

- **Bryson Smith** by Josephine Schultz
- **Minnie Allen** on her birthday by Joyce Annison.



An inscription over a doorway at one of the monasteries on Mount Athos reads, "Die before you die so that when you die you will not die."

We can be sure the progenitor of that quote was familiar with the writings of St. Paul. To the issue of living with certainty, while facing the reality of death, he writes: "For to live is Christ, to die is gain." (Philippians 1:21) and "I face death every day!" (1 Corinthians 15:31).

I believe the author was doing more than ruminating over the brevity of life, or even the matter of eternity. He was talking about living – real living – while we are alive. Living life to the fullest. Living what Jesus called the "abundant life."

One of the greatest movies of all time (in my humble opinion) is *Lovesome Dove*, a grand saga, sweeping across the vast, open West. In one memorable dialogue, Woodrow and Gus get caught up discussing whether or not to bring along a young woman, Lorena. After a litany of all the trials that lay ahead, including Indians, sandstorms, and blizzards, Woodrow says, "She ain't got no business dying out there!" To which Gus replies, "It ain't dying I'm talkin' about, Woodrow...it's livin'!" To one, the cattle drive was fraught with danger, misery and perhaps death, while to the other, those same experiences and events were all about the adventure of life. How can two people see the same things so differently?

Perhaps it's something about our internal wiring – that we just see things differently. But maybe it is because some see life as an adventure and death as one point along the way, not to be avoided, but to reckoned with. Maybe it is about a matter the Bible calls faith.

A friend of several years has gradually changed from an optimistic, energetic soul, with a bright outlook on life, to an irritable, easily aggravated, pessimistic, and often intolerable attitude. A slow decline has taken place. It has been a sad and slow, internal decline, much like a death. It is one of the saddest things I've ever witnessed.

I like what Pope Paul VI said, "Somebody should tell us, right at the start of our lives, that we are dying. Then we might live life to the limit, every minute of every day. Do it! I say. Whatever you want to do, do it now! There are only so many tomorrows."

I think tonight I'll go home and watch "The Bucket List," read Hebrews chapter 11, and think about living!

Pressing On,
Bob

*He said I was in my early forties, with a lot of life before me
And one moment came that stopped me on a dime
I spent most of the next days, looking at the x-rays
Talking 'bout the options and talking 'bout sweet times.
I asked him when it sank in, that this might really be the real
end*

*How's it hit 'cha when you get that kind of news?
Man what did ya do?*

He said

I went skydiving

I went rocky mountain climbing

I went two point seven seconds on a bull named Fu Man Chu

And I loved deeper

And I spoke sweeter

And I gave forgiveness I'd been denyin'

And he said some day I hope you get the chance

To live like you were dyin'

Tim McGraw

**Congratulations
On Your Retirement!**



Congratulations to **Greg Doggette**, who is retiring after **32 years** with Exxon. *Whoopie!!*

Thank You

Many thanks for the cards sent to me after my back surgery and also after the death of my brother. Thanks to those who visited me in the hospital and brought food to my home. Thanks especially to Brother Bob, who officiated my brother's service.

Jeannette Pickens

**PRAYER MINISTRY –
MEETING MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21ST**

If you are interested in being a part of an existing or expanding prayer ministry of the church, there will be a sharing meeting on **Monday, September 21st at 6:30 p.m.** in the Mattie House. Come to share about FUMC-DS' current prayer ministries, share your ideas of possibilities for expanding prayer ministry, and how we could be more effective and better understand prayer. John Wesley, the Anglican priest who founded Methodism, said, "It seems that God is doing nothing except in response to the prayers of the saints."

**Come & Sing
Christmas Music**

You are invited to participate in the Christmas Cantata, to be presented on December 13th. The music will be introduced at a **special rehearsal on September 27th from 1-4:00 p.m.**

Perhaps your schedule does not allow you to be in choir every week, but you would like to be a part of the Christmas Music -- *then come and sing!*

ACOLYTES for Sunday, September 20, 2009:

8:30 a.m. – Kellie & Lauren Price

11:00 a.m. – Justin Sumrall & Sarah Germany

Witness Newsletter

Please notify the church office at office@fumc-ds.org if you would prefer to receive your *Witness* newsletter by email instead of by U.S. Mail.

We give thanks to God with . . .

Our Prayers:

In Nursing Homes: Connie Brown; Stella Jones; Marilyn Lobell; Fay Kling

Members in Hospital: Oschner – Keith Hotchkiss

Other Concerns:

Wayne Brackin	Loretta Schultz	Hilda Neal
Shirley Callender	Jerry Pratt	Jane Crawford
George Smith	Ken Bolwin	Sonny Bell
Barney Thompson	Chuck Marten	Wilbert Hutchinson
Shannon Tanner	Lois Peairs	Joyce Ogea
Joe Melilli	Cookie Packson	Jerry Delrie
Bill Benton	Jimmy Bamber	Duane Amacker
Ben Johnson	Shirley Hammons	Greg Doggette
Katherine Wool	Hugh Page Underwood	Kevin Monceaux
Tristen Picken	Allan Darouse	Chesney Varnado
Padd Holdimon	Sally McClanahan	
Hazel Creamer, cancer, Shirley Callender's sister-in-law		
Gerald Soulier, Wendy Gibson's dad		
Tommy Ray's father, liver cancer, new treatment		
Brian Watson's father, cracked sternum from fall		
Louis Moore, OLOL, treated for Guillane Barr disease		
Gene & Karen Davis, Diane Boso's brother & sister-in-law		
Sabrina Sisk, brain tumor		
Gloria Phillips, injury from fall, Ginny Allen's mother		

Prayer Pager: (225) 378-4073 – Wendy Gibson's parents

Pray for the Gibsons, then call the pager. After 4 beeps, enter your numeric **zip code** and the # sign. The Gibson's pager will buzz with your zip code, so they can see where prayers originate and know how often they are being prayed for. This is an encouragement to the family.

PRAYER NEWS: We now have an online prayer request page link at the top of our home page: www.fumc-ds.org <<http://www.fumc-ds.org/>>

Our Joys:

We rejoice with Spencer & Victoria Varnado at the birth of their daughter, **Collette Leanne**, on September 10, 2009.

Our Sympathy:

Our sympathy is expressed to **Reggie & Sylvia Arnold** at the death of Reggie's mother, **Virgie Arnold**.

Our Presence:

	<u>Sunday School</u>	<u>Worship</u>
September 6, 2009	58	180
September 13, 2009	77	201

* * *

A Record of Our Faithfulness – September 13, 2009

<u>Operating Account</u>	
2008 YTD	\$301,882.58
2009 YTD	\$286,612.02
<u>Building Fund Contributions</u>	
Received 2009 year-to-date	\$186,202.87
Total funds available for construction	\$2,344,856.50