

The Witness

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EASTER PICNIC AND EGG HUNT

Our annual Easter Picnic and Egg Hunt will be Saturday, March 27, 2010 at North Park in Denham Springs from 4:00 - 6:00 PM. The hunt is at the playground area (North end) of the park. **Fried chicken and desserts will be furnished. You are asked to bring a side dish, your beverages, blankets/quilts/ or lawn chairs.** No ANTS please. In case of rain, the picnic will be postponed. Be prepared to make new friends and "let your LIGHT shine" in our public park - a great opportunity to reach out to other children and families in the park.



DISTRICT YOUTH EVENTS

We are a connectional church, and one way we stay connected is through **district-wide events**. Our youth are encouraged to participate in the following events:

One Great Day of Service will be held at **Camp Istrouma** as an overnight event for all Baton Rouge District youth **April 16-17!!** You can register for the event at brdcym.eventbrite.com along with lots more details about the event. **Register by April 9th!!** Donation of \$5-10 for each participant.

April 28th, the LSU Wesley Foundation is inviting all high school juniors and seniors to experience worship with them and see what you have to look forward to in college. Worship starts at 8:00 p.m. For more information, e-mail them at wesleyfoundation.intern@gmail.com or check them out on the web at www.lsuwesley.org.



Family Camp

Everyone, no matter what family status or church membership, is invited to **Family Camp** at nearby **Camp Istrouma April 9th - 10th**. This is a perfect opportunity to invite friends who don't have a church home.

The 24-hour event begins at 5 p.m. Friday and ends at 5 p.m. Saturday. Three sessions will be led by Rev. Lee Allen from Broadmoor United Methodist Church on the subject: Family Relationships. The camp staff will provide special programming for children under 13 years old during the 3 sessions.

\$10 will hold your personal or family registration. No other fees are necessary. The Education Committee of the Church Budget will cover the cost.

Register at sign-up tables outside the sanctuary on Sundays, or by calling the church office Monday-Thursday during the week. When you register, you will need to indicate whether

- You (how many) will be present for dinner at 5 p.m. Friday;
- OR
- You (how many) will eat before coming and arrive by 7 p.m.

When Dreams Come True

"I know what I'm going to do for the next year, and the next year, and the year after that...I'm going to shake the dust off of this crummy old town and I'm going to see the world." – George Bailey in "It's a Wonderful Life"

Although it did poorly at the box office when it came out, the movie "It's a Wonderful Life" has become a regular staple of our Christmas season. It follows the life of George Bailey in his small hometown. Although it has a happy ending, it reveals a humbling and (at times) disturbing truth about lost or abandoned dreams. Like George, many of us had dreams of "seeing the world" and "kicking the dust off" of our ordinary lives and existence. In reality, the hopes, plans and dreams we have for our lives rarely are as good as our fantasies.

As we journey together through our Lenten "One Month to Live" emphasis, we are reminded of the fact that life entails broken dreams and forlorn hopes. Our path through both life and Lent eventually ends in death. It cannot be circumnavigated or avoided. Our journey puts before us a decision: will we surrender aspects of our fanciful dreams and allow God to guide us into the unknown? Margaret Manning wrote, "The discipline of Lent often reveals hands grasped tightly and tenaciously around ideals that must give way to new realities." Author M. Craig Barnes suggests that the journey away from our own sense of what makes for a wonderful life is actually the process of Christian conversion. "It is impossible to follow Jesus and not be led away from something. That journey away from the former places and toward the new place is what converts us. Conversion is not simply the acceptance of a theological formula for eternal salvation. Of course it is that, but it is so much more. It is the discovery of God's painful, beautiful, ongoing creativity along the way in our lives."

"Lent takes those who seek to follow Jesus on an unwanted journey to the cross, and it extends an invitation to follow his example of willing surrender," writes Manning. "For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it." As Jesus prophesied to Peter, this invitation is to a place "where you do not wish to go" (John 21:18). The journey away from "the former place" is hard because we don't want to abandon the places we think make for wonderful lives."

Yet, if we want to follow Jesus, we will have to abandon many, perhaps even all, of these cherished notions for our lives. We can choose to follow Jesus in his painful, beautiful death march to Golgotha—to die so that we may live—or we can retreat into what appears to be safe and certain ways of life. Significantly, Barnes argues that a wonderful life on our own terms is not a realistic option. "In spite of all our carefulness and hard work, we probably will not achieve the life of our dreams. In fact, our dreams are precisely the things that have abandoned us. But it is then that we hear the invitation of Jesus Christ, 'Now is the opportunity to step out, walk forward and give your life to God.'" It is a frightening invitation, to be sure, but one indeed that offers the possibility of a wonderful life.

As we follow Him,
Bob

Way to Go, Guys!!

Three of our youth: Bryttany Alwood, Holli Smith and Blayke Waldrep (piano accompanist) are members of Denham Springs High School Advanced Choir. This choir competed in a Choral Festival on Friday, March 12th and scored all 1's, the ultimate rank. The choir progresses to State competitions.

Congratulations to Bryttany, Holli and Blayke as they develop their God-given gifts and talents, as they also represent Our Lord and Our Church. Way to go Bryttany, Holli and Blayke! We're proud of you!

Thank You

The Claude Slaton family would like to thank the church for all of the love and support they have shown us during this difficult time. A special thanks goes to the Chancel Choir and others that supplied the food for our extended family. Also, to Rev. Bob and Rev. Ginny for their trips to the hospital during Claude's many stays. It is truly a blessing to be a part of God's church family here at First United Methodist. Please continue to keep us in your prayers.

Jeanita Slaton

SPECIAL GIFTS

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

In Memory of:

- **Claude Slaton** by Dot & Claud Davis; Richard & Lyn Easley; Fred & Roxanne Mulhearn; Sonny & Kathy Reeves; Piccadilly Restaurant.
- **Keith Hotchkiss** by Richard & Lyn Easley.
- **Shirley Callender** by Fred & Roxanne Mulhearn; Reggie & Sylvia Arnold; Dot. Wells.

In Honor of:

- **Ginny Allen** by Dot & Claud Davis.

Acolytes

Acolytes for Sunday, March 21st are the following:
8:30 a.m. – Kellie & Lauren Price
11:00 a.m. – Nathan Landry & Ashley Doggette

Food Pantry

Thanks to everyone for their generous support of our Emergency Food Pantry. The first Sunday of each month is designated as Food Pantry Sunday. During the month of January 62 families (205 individuals) were assisted by the Food Pantry. 9 Bibles were given out. During February 45 families (149 individuals) were helped by the Food Pantry and 9 bibles were given out.

CHILDREN'S CHOIRS

The children will sing at both worship services on **Sunday, March 28th**. It is NOT TOO LATE to rehearse on Sunday, March 21st at 4:00 p.m. Hope to see you there!

We give thanks to God with . . .

Our Prayers:

Members in Nursing Homes: Connie Brown; Stella Jones; Jo Roberts

Members in LaPlantation: Fay Kling; Wally Waldrup

Members in Hospital:

Other Concerns:

Bill Benton	Hilda Neal	Margarine Smith
George Smith	Wilbert Hutchinson	
John Blackman, recuperating from eye surgery		
Linda McDaniel, recuperating from hip replacement surgery		
Paul Enger, brain aneurysm surgery, friend of Ginny Allen		
Frank Villeneuve, surgery for brain tumors, friend of Terry Alwood		
Ethel Sheets, medical tests, Jan Allen's mother		
Kristi Rutherford, in critical care, friend of Lela Alexander		
Mike Hardin, in OLOL, Janice Azlin's son		
God's guidance – Youth Minister for FUMC-DS		
Liz Perrin, leukemia, mother of Kellen Perrin, fiancé of David Waldrep		

Our Sympathy:

Our sympathy is expressed to the following individuals:

- **Bonnie Opperman** and the family at the death of **Bob Opperman**.
- **Tedder family** at the death of **Warren Tedder**.

Our Presence:

	<u>Sunday School</u>	<u>Worship</u>
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MEXICO ORPHANAGE TRIP TO RANCHO LOUISIANA

Merrell Long, originally from Denham Springs, and now director of Rancho Louisiana orphanage in Victoria Mexico, is working with us to find dates that work for us and for them. She sent new dates during the summer for us to consider coming as a mission group to visit.

If you are at all interested in making this trip, come to an INTEREST MEETING immediately after 11:00 a.m. worship TODAY in the sanctuary. Bring your calendar.

YOUTH COUNCIL WILL MEET THIS SUNDAY, MARCH 21, 2010 AT 5:30 P.M. AT THE MATTIE ST. HOUSE.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE WILL MEET TUESDAY, MARCH 23rd AT 7:30 p.m. AT THE MATTIE ST. HOUSE.