

The Onalaska Evangel

A monthly Newsletter of
The First United Methodist Church of Onalaska

February 2009



– SPIRITUALITY...

Why are all the names for being “spiritual” derogatory? You know “Jesus Freak” “Holy Roller” “Spiritual Space Cadet.” My favorite (because I hear the former one’s) “He’s OK. He’s a Pastor.”

Why do we run down being a Disciple of Jesus Christ? Why do we run down being Spiritual like it is having the plague or something awful?

Maybe it’s because there have been people who really weren’t spiritual, but tried to ACT like they were. They pray long and loud, say “God Bless You” -- and not really mean it. They constantly quote the Bible, and tell you how bad you are. Who wants to be like that? Or, for that matter, have those folks around. Well, acting Spiritual is not BEING Spiritual.

Spirituality has probably gotten a bad rap because it is not about being selfish and self-centered. The world would tell you, “It’s all about Me!” If you subscribe to the ME way of living, you probably have a few friends and sit around and talk bad about everyone and everything that bothers the “Great Me.”

If you’re listening to the Great Me, it is hard to hear the Great I AM! (I AM is God is you are wondering.) I believe at the core of Spirituality is listening to the Great I AM. And that’s where Spirituality differs from *just living in the world and complaining about everyone else who don’t agree with you*. Spirituality differs because it involves OTHERS. The first “other” is the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God has been placed in your heart -- the core of your human being. Spirituality is, first, about listening to the “small still voice” that points the direction for your life. But you must “be still and know I AM.”

Are We There?...

So, yes, a part of Spirituality is prayer. I tell people about everywhere I go (and that’s because I have and continue to struggle with prayer) that there is more than one way to pray. We all need to figure out the most effective way to BE IN TOUCH WITH GOD. Because that is what prayer is about. What Spirituality is about.

Being in touch with God is what Spirituality is about. Because the Spirit of God is written on our heart and is a part of us, when we are in touch with God (Prayer) we are also attending to our human spirit. (Who we really are.) In other words, Spirituality is holistic -- involving God and our very being. Our spirit combining with God’s Spirit -- and that just makes us a better, joy-filled person. And, everyone wants that person around. We want them around because the way they act is a reflection of the Spirit of God that is within them, not a “persona” they just *put on* to try an impress me.

Bishop Rueben Job has written a very small book titled, “Three Simple Rules” The title comes from the General Rules of the United Societies in John Wesley’s time. They are now refer to as the General Rules of the United Methodist Church. Bishop Job summarizes these Rules saying, “Avoid Evil, Do Good, Love God.” I believe this is what we mean by being Spiritual. Everyone in this Church should read Bishop Job’s Book. “Three Simple Rules” will change your life. They changed my life before Bishop Job wrote the book -- because the Rules are a TRUTH ABOUT LIFE. I can say, “It works.” I became “Spiritual.” I still strive to be more Spiritual.

I am not satisfied with my Spirituality. I want more!! I want more of God.

Spirituality is not an ACT. Spirituality is about HOW we act. How we go about seeking more of God. More importantly it is about what we DO. It is about what motivates our actions. We have some RESPONSIBILITY in this. We have some RESPONSIBILITY for the way we live. We will ultimately be ACCOUNTABLE for what we have done and failed to do. Responsibility and Accountability works itself out in what and who we are following. Are we following the Great Me or the Great I AM? In other words, are you Spiritual. Spirituality is about a meaningful life following God in Jesus Christ.

Let me make you a promise. (I can do this because it is not my promise, it’s God’s.) If you will become more Spiritual --- your life will be better. Don’t we all want a better life? Will it be free from problems? -- NO! But, your problems will have solutions. They will have a beginning and an END.

Spirituality is not some “oggy boogy” mystical thing. Spirituality is not for SOMEONE ELSE --IT IS FOR YOU!!! Spirituality is a LIFE STYLE. Spirituality is GOOD. Spirituality is COOL! Spirituality is being the person God wants you to be and not letting the world define you who you are. --- And don’t ya think God would help you be the best person you could be???

Wouldn’t that be GREAT!!!!????!!!

(continued on page 2 col 1)

So -- Avoid Evil, Do Good,
Love God. Pray (even if you don't
know how-- God will hear you.)

After all -- This Church, this
People of God -- is *by the Water (the
Lake)* and by the Spirit (of God).

Maybe that would be a good
slogan for us. Onalaska First United
Methodist Church --- *By the Water
and by the Spirit.*

Whatdaya think??? Let me
know.

Let me just finish with one
other thing. --- We have a great
group of Church Leaders this year.
We have "Spiritual People" who are
following God. Talk to your Lay
Leadership -- tell them the hopes
and dreams God has placed on your
heart for this Church.

I've seen and heard some
vision "percolating" going on out
there -- keep it up. Again, talk to
your Lay Leaders!!

We really are *By the Water,*
and of the Spirit!!

I'm excited, I'm motivated,
I'm Spiritual. I hope you are too!!!

**AVOID EVIL! DO GOOD!
LOVE GOD!**

Joy!!!
Pastor Paul



DALE'S FEBRUARY DIAMOND

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 "Love ...does not behave rudely."



"DISRESPECT, AN EPIDEMIC?"



Have you noticed it where you live? On the highway? At sporting events?
During public performances?

Have we forgotten how to walk in the shoes of others, considering their
rights and needs?

Have we become brazenly "in your face" at the expense of being compas-
sionately "in your place"?

First Corinthians expands biblical love that is often overlooked. "Love
doesn't force itself on others, isn't always 'me first,' doesn't fly off the handle,
doesn't keep score of others."

We think of love's lofty, eternal, spiritual qualities and forget that the love
God puts deep within us shows courtesy and consideration toward everyone
we meet.

REMEMBER: "THE OIL OF COURTESY TAKES THE FRICTION OUT OF
LIFE."

Dale

The Sunshine Class

Do you ever want to know
more about the life of Jesus? We
study about Jesus and his life
here on earth. We read daily
Scripture passages leading up to
the lesson for each Sunday.

Do you ever want to meet
the needs of others. We fulfill this
need when we use our "offering"
to support the Kids Free Clothing
Exchange and The Methodist
Children's Home.

This class is small in
numbers, but our hearts are large.

If you feel the need to
learn more about Jesus and
share his love with others "come
join us."

the Sunshine Class
Submitted by: Marion



THANK YOU... TO A CARING CHURCH

We would like to thank
everyone for the phone calls and
cards we received after the deaths
Frances' Sister and Mother. Thank
again for everything.

Jim and Frances Bingham

and

I wish to thank everyone
for all the prayers, cards, telephone
calls and visits during the last sev-
eral months during Tommy's illness
and at the time of his death.

You are a great bunch of
people and I love all of you.

Thank you again.

Jo Ann Foster



SUNDAY SCHOOL OPPORTUNITY

Every Sunday morning three classes are offered. These classes are open to all who desire a deeper understanding of the Bible and how it relates to our lives today and are suitable for **all** levels of Biblical knowledge or understanding. Please come out and enjoy studying and discussing topics in the context of a supportive community of classmates.

Classes offered:

The Good News Class: 8:15 am in the Smith Building taught by Dean Blau. The curriculum is the *Adult Bible Studies** which is based on the International Sunday School Lessons for Christian Teaching. The class is a mixed adult class that also enjoys regular fellowship events.

The Sunshine Class: 8:30 am in the Smith Building taught by Marion McWhorter. This class is a group of women who also use the *Adult Bible Studies*.* They bring a Christian ray of sunshine to each others lives through study and discussion.

The Sojourners Class: 8:15 am in the Conference room taught by Pastor Paul Whitlatch. This mixed adult class is currently studying "Gifts" and how one's special talents can be used to make disciples for Christ. After studying all the talents needed in a church setting, the class will take a "test" to determine what gift each class member has to offer at FUMC.

We hope these three classes offer something for everyone. However, if you have a suggestion for a new type of class, just contact Sandy Croll (646-6923) and we'll get one up and operating ASAP. Christian growth and education are what we are all about.

The Spiritual Growth Committee

Sandy Croll, Chair

Nita Uptegraph, Vice Chair

*Adult Bible Topics for February:

February 1	A Shunammite Woman Helps	2 Kings 4: 8-17
February 8	Nathan Challenges David	2 Samuel 12: 1-7a, 13-15
February 15	Esther Risks Her Life	Esther 4:1-3, 9-17
February 22	Isaiah Answers God's Call	Isaiah 6:1-8

The theme for February is *Old Testament People of Commitment*.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN NEWS

Our First meeting of the new year was on January the 6th. District Attorney Lee Hon gave a very informative presentation of how the State of Texas and Polk County have used new laws, in addition to Jessica's Law, to prosecute and jail child abusers. Child abuse is a very REAL problem in our county and he assured us that law enforcement is taking the right steps to decrease the number of these crimes. The following items were discussed at our business meeting:

This year's fund raising projects will not include a bazaar. They served us well in the past but it's time for something new. 2009 will be the year of UMW FEASTS. We'll be serving Lunch during our fellowship time on four Sunday's this year, March 1st, May 3rd, August 2nd and November 1st. Every menu will be different.

We are hoping that each of you will make a donation for your meal. This will enable us to continue to support our mission projects as we have in the past. We'll remind you of these dates in the Church Bulletins.

The sign-up list is being completed for more volunteers to work at the Kids Free Clothing Exchange. Even if you aren't a member of UMW you can still contact Linda Kendall if you would like to help.

We would like to thank everyone again for preparing food and volunteering your services for the funeral of our Onalaska School Child. Once again, you have proven what a caring congregation we have at our Church.

On January 17th, nine women from our UMW unit attended District Training Classes for our local officers in Nacogdoches. As a District Officer, our own Marion McWhorter gave a welcome speech and taught one of the classes. It was a wonderful time of learning and fellowship with other units in our District.

Our next UMW meeting is on February 3rd with fellowship at 9:30 and the business meeting at 10:00 am. Our guest speaker will be

Ron Nelson, who will treat us to a little Southern Gospel Music. We'll even be singing along on several of these old time songs. Should bring back some fond memories. What a great way to worship our Lord !!!

Please come and join us. God Bless

Paulette Stinson

SCRIPTURES

February 1, 2009
Fourth Sunday After the Epiphany
(Green)
Deuteronomy 18:15-20;
Psalm 111 (UMH 832)
1 Corinthians 8:1-13
**Mark 1:21-28)

February 8, 2009
Fifth Sunday After the Epiphany
(Green)
Isaiah 40:21-31
Psalm 147:1-11, 20c (UMH 859)
1 Corinthians 9:16-23
Mark 1:29-39
Marion McWhorter Preaching

February 15, 2009 [Green]
Sixth Sunday After the Epiphany
2 Kings 5:1-14
Psalm 30 (UMH 762)
1 Corinthians 9:24-27
**Mark 1:40-45

February 22, 2009
Transfiguration Sunday [White or Gold]
(Last Sunday After the Epiphany)
2 Kings 2:1-12
Psalm 50:1-6 (UMH 783)
2 Corinthians 4:3-6
**Mark 9:2-9

February 25, 2009 [Purple]
Ash Wednesday (
Joel 2:1-2, 12-17
Psalm 51:1-17 (UMH 785)
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10
**Matthew 6:1-6, 16-2

**** Indicates Sermon Text**



Pastor's Notes: I think this is a fair reflection on the election of our next President. I believe, as Bishop White does, that this is a victory for humanity. We are about people, not categorizing people. God loves everyone. May God continue to love and guide our new President. May we continue to bring Christ to the World.

**REFLECTIONS: A letter to Martin
By Bishop Woodie W. White**

UMR Columnist

Editor's note: Each year, Bishop White writes a "birthday letter" to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. about the progress of racial equality in the U.S. Bishop White was the first chief executive of the General Commission on Religion and Race.

Dear Martin:

I began writing you on the anniversary of your birth in 1976! But until now, I have not written a letter when I've been as consumed with joy as I am today. Joy beyond description!

On the evening of April 4, 1968, when your tragic death was announced, I was at a point of total devastation. Millions joined in a community of grief. It was as though time itself had ended. Hope disappeared, and utter bewilderment took its place.

On the evening of Nov. 4, 2008, just four decades later, when it was announced that Barack Obama had been elected the 44th President of the United States—the first black American to be so elected—there was utter joy! Thousands cheered in Grant Park in Chicago, as did millions more across America. We wept unashamedly, men and women, people of all ethnicities and creeds.

Martin, it was an unforgettable moment! Even as I write, it is difficult to contain the joy or hold back the tears. You would understand.

As I watch President-elect Obama, a senator from Illinois, giving press conferences, announcing members of his Cabinet or speaking

to an urgent matter facing the nation, it still seems like a dream. But it is real. America has elected a black man to what is considered by many the most influential political office in the world!

It seems only yesterday that black people were battling for the opportunity to vote. Many died seeking that right. State by state, it eventually changed. But scarcely anyone glimpsed a future when a black man would be elected president of the nation.

Those days of marches and protests were aimed at simple but important goals: to eat at a lunch counter, to try on a garment before you purchased it, to attend a school in the neighborhood where you lived, to be hired for a job for which you were qualified, and yes, to exercise the most fundamental right of citizenship, to vote.

We sought to be accepted, and to be treated as a person and a full citizen in our own nation.

If you could see him, Martin, you would recognize that Mr. Obama is a man of unusual gifts, grace and character. He announced his intentions to seek his party's nomination on a cold January morning, in front of the state capitol in Springfield, Ill., the state he represented in the Senate.

Springfield, you will recall, was the site of two days of rioting in 1908. White mobs had burned the homes and businesses of black residents, causing thousands to flee the city. Eight people—black and white—were tragically killed.

That event prompted leaders to convene a meeting in New York City and resolve that a new organization was needed to address the nation's racial ills. The result was the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The organization will observe the 100th anniversary of its founding in the same year the nation witnesses its first black president being elected!

The election of Mr. Obama is much more significant than the transfer of power from one party to another. Its significance goes beyond the current economic crisis, where Americans

are looking to government for direction and leadership.

This election will impact an area that has been at the heart of America's failure as a nation. I believe it will bring to an end the dying ideology of "they."

American racism is grounded in an often unspoken declaration of innate inferiority and superiority. It is based on the claim that one's race is the determinative factor in ability and achievement.

But today, Americans can no longer assert that "they" are unable to hold this position or perform that role. The reality has always been that while a specific individual may or may not be able to achieve some goal, a blanket assessment on a group of persons is blatantly unfair and totally inaccurate.

Neither can it be held that the white community is monolithic in its race attitudes. The truth is, it has never been that way, even when it appeared to be so.

President-elect Obama's election is the result of the votes and support of persons of broad racial and ethnic diversity. He shattered fundraising records for a political campaign. He set records for numbers who attended his campaign rallies. He won votes in geographic areas where his political party has traditionally been defeated.

It can no longer be said that "they" won't vote, support or accept a person because of race or color. Some will or will not; but "they" is no longer descriptive or normative.

That said, it would be naïve to conclude that racism and bigotry in America is dead. It is very much alive. Racism dies hard. But its grip in the minds and hearts of Americans, Martin, is not as deep or as broad as you experienced.

We need to still challenge every expression of injustice, bigotry and racism in individuals and institutions. Mr. Obama's election should encourage us to continue rather than end these efforts!

On a personal note, Martin, I must say a word about our buddy, Joe Lowery, who was among the first Civil Rights leaders to endorse Mr. Obama's candidacy.

He often appeared to be a lone voice crying out in the wilderness. But as he campaigned for Mr. Obama across the nation, it seemed like a Moses-Joshua moment, with Mr. Lowery, 87, urging and supporting the new leadership of Mr. Obama, 47.

Joe will offer the benediction at the swearing-in ceremonies of Mr. Obama as President of the United States of America. It will be a moving moment!

Though this letter is far longer than I expected, I have not said all that is on my heart. But I am mindful that this moment of joy and celebration was made possible by what you and so many others did and said.

In so many ways, Martin, we are a better nation, a better people than you left. Not perfect, but better. And in some ways, the nation is moving beyond The Dream!

Thank you and happy birthday, Martin.

We are overcoming!

Woodie

Retired Bishop White is bishop-in-residence at Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, Ga.

METHODIST MEN'S ANNUAL VALENTINES DAY BREAKFAST

Saturday
February 14th

8:30 a.m.

Men bring your favorite lady as a guest, Ladies you are welcome to join us even if you don't have an escort...

Great Food
Wonderful Speaker
Fellowship
Fun...



The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;

Taking, as He did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His Will;
That I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
Forever in the next.

Amen.

Reinhold Niebuhr

What a prayer! May we all pray it and live it. God bless you all.
Marion McWhorter
Certified Lay Speaker

Methodist Men's Breakfast

Jack opened the meeting at 8:00 and asked secretary to read the article from December Newsletter with questions for the membership to consider.

The treasurer reported we had a balance of \$1,522.88 after this morning's expenses and donations. He also reported that checks for \$200 each were sent to KFCE, Methodist Children's home, Methodist Boy's home and the Mission in San Antonio.

Jack asked the group if they wanted to try moving our meetings to Saturday mornings and meeting at 8:30 instead of 7:30 – giving the cooks a respite. Many members were willing to try it for February which is traditionally our Valentine meeting with the ladies. One member said he usually had other plans for Saturdays but general consensus was that we could gain members from those who work 5 days a week. We voted to try it for two months and review where we are – so invite the ladies and let's have a special Valentine program we have an interesting speaker lined up. And spread the word that we are looking for members to join us on Saturdays in February and March

Pastor Paul was our speaker for the morning – opening his talk by saying "When there is no vision, people perish". What a wake up call! He suggested instead of asking someone to come to church (perhaps a bit intimidating) we should consider asking them to an event such as MMB as an ice breaker. That way they get to know a few people and might feel more comfortable making a church visit.

Speaking of visitors we had Steven Magid with us for breakfast, our former secretary...

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 a.m.

ONLASKA FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

2009 Church Leaders

Position	
Chair, Church Council	George Scott
Lay Delegate to Ann Confr	Dottie Lyne
Alt Delegate to Ann Confr.	Richard Lyne
Lay Leader	Richard Lyne
Finance Chair	Jeff Culpepper

ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Staff/Parish Relations Chair: David Johnson

Committee on Nominations and Leadership, Chair: Rev. Whitlatch

Trustees: Vice Chair for 2008: Pat Heldenbrand,

Chair for 2009: To Be Elected by the Trustees.

NURTURE, OUTREACH, AND WITNESS MINISTRY COMMITTEES

Committee	2009 Chairs
Church Life	Karen Sides
Hospitality/Advertising/ Assimilation	Patti Johnson
Missions	John Coville
Worship	Kay Thames
Spiritual Growth	Sandy Croll
Parsonage	Jack Lehenbauer
Shepherds	Shirley Sandlin
Vision/Long Range Plng --	Pastor
Caring	Jim & Mary Ingram
Bereavement	Martha Martin
Kitchen Coordinators	Linda Kendell
Prayer Coordinator	Dottie Lyne
Youth Coordinator	Karen Simpson