

# The Onalaska Evangel

A Monthly Newsletter of

The First United Methodist Church of Onalaska

May 2009



## She Needed Her God...

### *With a Little More Skin...*

I ponder the Resurrection of Christ a lot. Probably because it is a mystery. But, I also know I can understand some of the mystery. I can understand what happened. I can understand why it happened. I can even understand a portion of "how" it happened, but not all of it.

Even though we can understand some of the mystery, I think we get caught up with what we do not understand. When we focus on what we do not understand we don't get the benefit of what we do.

The first thing we know (and need to be reminded of from time to time) is Jesus was human. Jesus was flesh and blood. Jesus walked and talked and went through all the stuff of life we go through. Jesus died a human death. And, that should be a comfort to us. Jesus understands us. Yes, Jesus was also God. This the part of the mystery we don't understand. We don't understand "how" Jesus was both human and divine, but that has been the best answer for around two millennium now.

Believing Jesus was both human and divine is not some recent concept. In 325 A.D. around 250 to 325 bishops of the Christian churches throughout the known world gather in a play called Nicea. (present-day [Iznik](#) in [Turkey](#))

The purpose of the Council was to agree and begin to define unity of beliefs for the whole of Christian Church regardless of denomination. In other words, to set out beliefs that all who believe in Christ hold in common.

The result of the Council was the Nicene Creed. The Creed is still used today. We use it periodically in our worship here at Onalaska

Onalaska First. The Creed is located in the back of the United Methodist Hymnal at #880.

I prefer the Nicene Creed as an Affirmation of Faith because it informs us of the role of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit in the overall activity of God. The Creed explains the Trinity. How God has chosen to express Himself. All of the elements of the Trinity are important. One part of the Trinity can not be made more important than the other.

Our tendency is to focus on the Holy Spirit today. God has sent His Spirit into our heart and claimed us as Children (See Romans 8: 11-21). But, Paul in this passage also talks about the Spirit that raised Christ Jesus from the dead as the same Spirit that dwells in you. So, we must come back to Jesus to understand.

God worked through Jesus reconciling the world to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19).

And, God sent Jesus into the world as a human. Why? Because God has chosen to work through humans. Sinful, messy, worldly humans. You and Me!! If God has chosen to work only through the Holy Spirit there would have been no need for Jesus. There would have been no reason to have Jesus as our example of what humanity can be. What humanity can do.

The problem is we are not Jesus. But, we have a part to play. Each of us is gifted by God to play our part. (See 1 Corinthians 12: 22-13:1) That is why we call it the Body of Christ -- the Church. The Church is where we come together to be the

Body of Christ. We are united in the Spirit of Christ, organized, and sent into the world to make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

This is why the Church is so important, why common beliefs are important. Why we must do those human things that organize us to do God's work in the world -- because God has chosen to work through us.

This is like the story of the little girl who could not go to sleep at night. Both her Father and Mother went in to reassure her that they were right outside and everything was OK. Finally, when she called again the Father went in and again told her Mom and Dad were right in the living room and besides God was right here with her as well. The little girl said she couldn't see God. The Father responded that even though she couldn't see Him, God was in her room. Finally the little girl said, "That's fine Dad that God is here even though I can't see Him, but what I need right now is God with a little skin on."

Jesus was God with skin on. God came to us and wallowed around in our messy humanness, died a human death, and was raised from the dead and appeared in human form. All that our humanness might be abundant.

None of us will ever be perfect. None of us can effectively do God's work alone (we need each other and each others gifts). The Church will never be perfect because it has humans in it.

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## She Needed Her God

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We come together to be the Church to celebrate what we believe in common, pray, and be thankful to God for what God has given us and done for us in Jesus Christ.

And, this motivates us to be the Church --- God with a little skin on.  
Pastor Paul

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## Just What The Doctor Ordered

Medical research studies conducted in the past fifteen years, such as the Stanford Forgiveness Project, have shown that forgiveness is about more than mending broken relationships. It is also good for a person's health.

Here are a few of the physical benefits that people who forgive may enjoy:

1. Less (up to 50 percent) stress and anxiety
2. Better sleep
3. Lowered risk of heart disease and heart attacks
4. A stronger nervous system
5. Lowered blood pressure
6. Fewer headaches and stomach-aches
7. Improved circulation
8. Less depression

Holding on to anger and resentment marks of unforgiveness has been shown to have the opposite effects on the human body.

Choosing forgiveness may be one of the smartest decisions a person can make for improving quality of health!

*W.B. Freeman (Facts, stories, and Humor from the Good Book)*

## UMW News

Our April meeting was very special and we had a great turnout. We even had a special visit from Pastor Paul to watch our skit. "Thank You" to the ladies who did such a wonderful job.

May will be a very busy month for the UMW. We have our May luncheon ( which you will be enjoying as you read this newsletter). Our May meeting will be held on the 5<sup>th</sup> with fellowship at 9:30 and the business meeting beginning at 10:00. The program this month is "Who are You?" presented by Billie Garrison and Karlyn Hicks. May 24-26 is the Texas Annual Conference held at the Woodlands UMC. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of May at Conference is the UMW Luncheon. Planning and preparations will also be taking place for our Annual Membership Luncheon at our June Meeting.

See you at the May meeting, and remember, we always have room for more members !

Paulette

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*"Forgive Them Father For They Know Not What They Do" were the words prayed during the crucifixion.*

Can we be as forgiving as our Jesus? Can we forgive actions done by others, or do we practice "vengeance is mine sayeth the Lord" in our daily lives, Think about it!



## CHOIR NOTES

The choir spent many hours on the Easter music. Which didn't end on Easter Sunday. Each Sunday until Pentecost, you will hear the story told in song. The choir travels about a bit, (no a lot) but still doing a good job with the music on Sunday. Members have been traveling in all directions. Saudi Arabia, Europe, Bahamas, Kentucky, Tennessee, four or five went to Florida, and all different parts of Texas. Several are back and some still traveling.

If you like and can sing we would love to have you and if you think you can't sing, but like to, we would love to have to have you. We can help you and we have a robe for you. Choir Practice is on Wednesday evenings from six to seven. We have lots of fun and teaching aides and get great direction. Barbara is just filling in (and doing a great job) until we can hire a Director full time. How about you? And do you like the sound with the men up front? Till next time,

Dottie Dean Lyne

## Prayer Warriors Needed

Did you know that Onalaska First United Methodist Church has a ministry on the computer. We call it the Email Prayer Warriors. There are about twenty on the mailing list as of now. We would like for you to join in on this wonderful ministry. We pray for those who are facing surgery, loss of a loved one, comfort, any reason a person is in need of prayer. It does not need to be a member. Prayer is so powerful and the more folks to lift up a name to the Lord and ask his blessings, comfort and peace will be so good. If you would want to be a part of this call Dottie Dean Lyne 936-646-3622 or the church office. Or email

dedean@suddenlink.net

Dottie

## WORK OF THE SPIRITUAL GROWTH COMMITTEE

**Missions Statement:** The Spiritual Growth Committee will provide all ages with a foundation of Christian knowledge and opportunities to grow close to God, themselves, and others.

**Members:** Sandy Croll (Chair), Nita Uptegraph (Vice-Chair), Barbara Denyer, Eloise Hassler, Linda Kendall, Dolores Scott, Karen Simpson, Jim Wilder, Wendie Wilder.

This new committee has been busy preparing educational programs for the church. Also, a new nursery has been established in the former conference room. Please stop in and see "The Ark", which is our new name. Nita has agreed to handle this project. (Our thanks are extended to all who donated time, money, materials, and furniture. We couldn't have done it without you!)

When there are children present, we are prepared with Children's Church for them during the pastor's sermon. Two new Bible study groups have been formed which meet on Tuesday evenings at 7:00 pm at either Karen Simpson's home or Karen Sides' home. Please call the church office for more details. We'd love to have you join us. So far about 26 people have participated.

We are planning a Sidewalk VBS, some fall tutoring/mentoring of elementary children, and some presentations for grandparents raising their grandchildren, which seem to be very prevalent in this area.

Are any of you interested in forming a book review group? If so please see Sandy Croll. It is so interesting to share interpretations of what we read and then grow in Christian knowledge.

Sunday Bible classes still meet in the Smith Educational Building at 8:15am and 8:30am. Many thanks are given to our dedicated teachers, Marion McWhorter, Dean Blau, and Pastor Paul. Thanks also to Billie Garrison who runs her Thursday Bible study. Please check the bulletin periodically for her class registration.

We are only four months old, but we are busy with many plans. Won't you join us in one or more of our current opportunities for spiritual growth? Do you have any new ideas that you'd like us to try? Just let us know. We meet the third Wednesday of each month at 7:05 pm in Fellowship Hall. Feel free to visit us with your suggestions.

This article has tried to answer the who, what, where, when, and why of our committee. If you have any questions or suggestions, please see a member of the committee.

Sandy Croll, Chair

## Lectionary Readings

### May 3

*4th Sunday of Easter*

Acts 4:5-12

Psalms 23

1 John 3: 16-24

John 10: 11-18

### May 10

*5th Sunday of Easter*

Acts 8:26-40

Psalms 22: 25-31

1 John 10: 7-21

John 15: 1-8

### May 17

*6th Sunday of Easter*

Acts 10: 44-48

Psalms 98

1 John 4:7-21

John 16: 9-17

### May 24

*7th Sunday of Easter*

Acts 11-11

Psalms 47

Ephesians 1:15-23

Luke 24; 44-53

### May 31

*The Day of Pentecost*

Acts 2:1-21

Psalms 104: 24-34

Romans 8:22-27

John 15: 26-27

## Christmas Stamps...

A blonde goes to the post office to buy stamps for her Christmas cards. She says to the clerk, 'May I have 50 Christmas stamps?' The clerk says, 'What denomination?' The blonde says, 'Goodness, has it come to this?'

Well, give me 6 Catholic, 12 Presbyterian, 10 Lutheran and 22 Baptists.'

## REFLECTIONS: When the soul hurts

Bishop Woodie W. White,  
Jan 28, 2009



By Bishop Woodie W. White  
UMR Columnist

He grasped my hand tightly during a routine handshake. But his words were far from routine. In a calm but quiet voice, he said, "My soul hurts!"

These were unusual words to express pain. He could have used clinical language to say, "I am depressed." Or even more emotional words, such as "I am angry" or "I am in pain." But instead he joined the spirit with the physical and said, "My soul hurts!"

We spoke in a corner of a huge ballroom, he intensely, and I, more reflectively. I understood, not from the details, but from having experienced the same thing: a hurting soul. I felt more than empathy. I was recalling my own soul-hurt.

Can there be any greater pain than a hurting soul? The soul is a place that is often difficult to define and more difficult to locate. Many consider it to be nonexistent; mere superstition. But I concluded long ago not to argue the matter, but instead to simply declare it and describe the discomfort or troubled spirit.

Of course, it is quite common to hear of a broken heart. Many will acknowledge this shared reality. It is more difficult, however, for some to use what is considered religious language.

But I connected with the wounded man. I became restless that night as what I heard earlier in the evening was co-mingled with that which was still close to me, though long ago.

Then I began to ponder the soul.

So many have tried to describe the soul. Perhaps it is the place where one meets, finds and encounters God. It is personal and unique, a kind of spiritual DNA. Human souls illicit their own responses and reactions, even to the same stimuli. No two souls hurt the same, yet both have the capacity to hurt. The soul is not exclusionary, but it is restrictive. Thus, to acknowledge "my" soul is to declare that which is utterly unique.

Each has a soul place. No two are identical, yet they each share a mutual composition.

The soul is a special God-place, a space where God meets the essence of human existence. Perhaps it is what makes each of us made in the image of God. It is a duality that is fully spiritual and fully human, physical and spiritual. It is both psychological and physical, yet more than both.

Thus when the soul hurts, the pain is all consuming, while at the same time difficult to locate.

Have you known soul hurt? If so, you would have understood the stranger's pain without having experienced the origin of his. To know your own would be sufficient. It is distinguished from all other emotional, psychological or even physical pain.

There are obviously all kinds of pain, and each requires a specific balm, a different remedy. The remedy is found in the origin of the disease. I suppose that is why there are so many physician specialists. Each one is pain-specific.

But it is possible to misdiagnose, and thus possible to misprescribe the treatment. To misdiagnose soul pain and to then misprescribe, leaves a soul still hurting. What remains is a restlessness, a sense of incompleteness, a gnawing pain that simply will not go away. Thus, one simply declares, "my soul

hurts!"

Perhaps that is when one discovers that soul pain is God's domain! Soul pain is spirit pain, and relief is found in God's tending. Some are able to point to the sources of God's healing. Others find it alone by wrestling with God.

In any case, the pain place is given totally and unreservedly to God. One's own remedies are laid aside and discarded; they have been proven inadequate. Now it is God's turn!

No one knows the soul, nor the pain, quite like God. There is nothing, absolutely nothing, like God's tending.

The man called my hotel room very early the next morning, and simply said, "Bishop, my soul doesn't hurt anymore! My soul doesn't hurt anymore!"

I understood.

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

**Mark your  
calendars for June  
27th—the date of  
the annual Methodist  
Men's Fish Fry.  
Great food,  
fellowship and fun,  
eat in the  
fellowship hall or  
take home.**

**Tickets are on sale  
now just see any  
member.**