

FROM BEHIND THE PULPIT by Rev. John Collins

I try to keep up with the blogs of several of my clergy colleagues. One of the issues that has been much discussed lately is worship. More specifically, what is worship and why do we worship. At first glance it seems like an easy question, but coming up with a compact, coherent answer is quite difficult. I'll begin by saying that I really resonate with much of what Anglican Bishop and New Testament scholar N. T. Wright said in his chapter on worship in *Simply Christian*. Wright observes that "when we begin to glimpse the reality of God, the natural reaction is to worship him. Not to have that reaction is a fairly sure sign that we haven't yet really understood who he is or what he's done." Wright asserts that "reading scripture in worship is, first and foremost, the central way of celebrating who God is and what he's done." I would summarize and assert that worship is, first and foremost, a natural celebratory reaction to who God is and what God has done in the creation, redemption and final consummation of all that is.

Others have different definitions and that does not surprise, nor particularly disturb me. What does surprise and somewhat disturb me is the complete lack of any mention of the third general rule. I believe that worship is primarily a celebration of who God is and what God has done, but I also want to talk about other aspects of worship as well. My desire to do so is rooted in my Wesleyan heritage. John Wesley gave the early Methodists (and by extension United Methodists today) three general rules: 1. Do no harm; 2. Do good; and 3. Attend to the ordinances of God. The ordinances of God included worship, the public reading of scripture, preaching, and the Eucharist. Clearly, public worship is a large part of the third rule. In all these things, Wesley believed (and I still believe) that we encounter the presence of the living God. But the ordinances of God are not ends in and of themselves. They are means to an end. That end is summed up in Bishop Reuben Job's rephrasing of the third rule as "stay in love with God." I believe that staying in love with God is an important reason, sufficient in it's own right, to worship God.

So although God is the primary focus in worship, that very focus affects those who are worshipping by conforming those who worship ever more closely to the pattern of Jesus Christ. When we worship, we encounter the presence of the living God—by the Spirit's power, and not any intrinsic power within the means or the worshiper. Worship is therefore the celebration of who God is and what God has done and has the result of helping us encounter and remain in love with the God we celebrate.*

Now, in my never-resting mind, this is still not completely satisfactory, because—as the content of the psalms (ancient and holy hymns) reminds us—vital worship has long included the lifting up of our sorrows, concerns, and woes to God. But perhaps we need only expand the definition of who God is and what God has done to encompass the understanding of God as the God who hears our cry and responds in mercy.

*A caveat in line with a Wesleyan understanding of the means of grace: I need to state that we do not necessarily encounter God every (or even) most Sunday mornings. God is sovereign, free to work or not work within and without of the means of Grace.

P R A Y E R C O N C E R N S

For Members of First United Methodist Church

Helen Banzet, Dorothy Beals, Grace Irma Cook, Charles Cornett, Cornelia Davis, Betty Gearhart, Virginia Hoppock, Maxine Hostetter, Mary Ellen Jordan, Earlene Stokesberry

For Family and Friends

Tracy Alban, Jim Bauer, Debbie Black, Julie Blaich, Will Canan, Don Clayton, Leland and Neva Coester, Jo Ann Cook, Susie Derryberry, Paula Eden, Nichole Gibbons and baby Jaxon, Becky Holmes, Abby Horton, Darby (Ketterman) and Mark Zahradnik, Mary Alice Knewtson, Aria Layton, Al and Jerry Liebert, Peggy Lundberg, Jay Millen, Elaine Morton, Kathleen Lou Neale, Shirley Popken, Jill Richardson, Arnold Roland, Chris Shore, Julia Smith, Ruth Walker, Willie Weinberg, Virginia Wise

For Those Grieving the Loss of

RaeDena Unruh, Rachael Cronkhite, Vera Peace, Burton K. Walker, Sr., Mary Hannah, Troy Borum, Elizabeth Lundry, Joyce McCray, Patty Ziegler, Vernie Baldwin, Warren Thomas, Doreatha Moon, Leo Pringle, Kent Brown, Melvin Banzet, Hilton "Tex" Davis, Craig Thomas, Earl Critchfield, Christopher Alexander, Gilbert Wooldridge, Zack Bromley

If you know of anyone who needs to be added to or deleted from the above list of prayer concerns please fill out the attendance/prayer concern sheet found in the Sunday bulletin, call the church office at 620-251-3240, or send an email to linda@coffeyvillefirstumc.org.

O U R G I V I N G

FEBRUARY 22, 2009

General Operating Fund	\$4,312.20
Board of Trustees	15.00
Sunday School Offering	27.50
Bridges to the Future	4.00
Emergency Assist. Fund	2.00
Youthville	1.00
Youth Fundraiser/District	95.00
CCC Scholarship Fund	50.00

MARCH 1, 2009

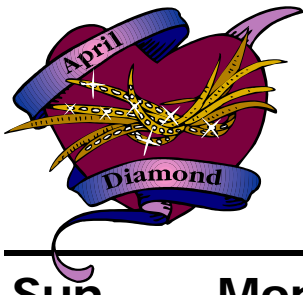
General Operating Fund	\$7,390.34
Board of Trustees	62.00
Sunday School Offering	31.60
Bridges to the Future	514.00
Emergency Assist. Fund	500.00
Youthville	1.00
Upper Room	12.25
CCC Scholarship Fund	500.00

MARCH 8, 2009

General Operating Fund	\$3,280.00
Board of Trustees	28.00
Sunday School Offering	34.75
Emergency Assist. Fund	2.00
Chair Lift Fund	50.00
Book Study	60.00
Youthville	1.00

MARCH 15, 2009

General Operating Fund	\$4,148.00
Board of Trustees	45.00
Sunday School Offering	24.95
Emergency Assist. Fund	2.00
Youthville	1.00
Bridges to the Future	10.00
Book Study	90.00



April 2009 Birthday Calendar



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 	2 Jeanne Page	3 Kathy Wood	4 Mildred Beiter Nancy Garton Charley Hayes
5 	6 Dolores Stallings	7 Maxine Thompson	8	9	10 Helen Banzet	11 
12	13	14 	15	16	17	18 George Pruitt
19	20 Susie Sprague Doug Winston Florence Witherspoon	21 Sue Carpenter Pam Jones Pat McCoy Paula Miller	22	23 Jane Mashburn	24 Kathy Levis	25 Keith Hunt
26 	27	28	29 Rodger Henderson Dorotha Taylor	30		



April 2009 Church Activities



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 April Fool's Day 11:30 Lenten Luncheon 1:00 UMW Exec. Board 1:30 UMW Unit 5:15 Trustees 6:-00 Choir	2 10:00 Who Stole My Church Study	3	4
5 Palm Sunday 8.10 Worship 9:30 S. School & Coffee Time 10:50 Worship 5:00 Youth	6 7:15 Men's Prayer Bkfst	7 Noon Al-Anon 5:15 Who Stole My Church Book Study	8 5:15 Vision Team 6:-00 Choir	9 10:00 Who Stole My Church Book Study	10 Good Friday 7:00 Good Friday Service	
12 Easter 8.10 Worship 9:30 S. School & Coffee Time 10:50 Worship 5:00 Youth	13 7:15 Men's Prayer Bkfst 9:00 Sal Army Volunteers	14 Noon Al-Anon 5:15 Who Stole My Church Book Study	15 Tax Day 1:30 Circle 1 6:00 Choir	16 10:00 Who Stole My Church Book Study 6:00 Circle 2	17	18
19 8.10 Worship 9:30 S. School & Coffee Time 10:50 Worship 2:30 Asbury 5:00 Youth	20 7:15 Men's Prayer Bkfst	21 Noon Al-Anon 5:15 Who Stole My Church Book Study	22 Earth Day 5:15 Vision Team 6:-00 Choir	23 10:00 Who Stole My Church Book Study	24	
26 8.10 Worship 9:30 S. School & Coffee Time 10:50 Worship 5:00 Youth	27 7:15 Men's Prayer Bkfst	28 Noon Al-Anon 5:15 Who Stole My Church Book Study	29 6:00 Choir	30 10:00 Who Stole My Church Book Study		

VBS IS COMING

Vacation Bible School is set for July 12-17, 2009, 9:00 am to Noon, and we need your help. Every year we need people who are willing to help with the different parts of VBS: Decorating, Story Time, Snacks, Recreation, Discovery Time, Assembly Time, Music, Crafts and Publicity. We also need volunteers to bring items for us to borrow during VBS to decorate the church. This year's theme is "Camp E.D.G.E.: Exploring and Discovering God Everywhere". So, this year we are looking for items to borrow to create a camping environment, such as: green artificial Christmas trees (without the lights), tents, sleeping bags, backpacks, canteens or water bottles, camping equipment, camp chairs, etc. Whether or not you have helped out with VBS before, if you are willing and able to help this year in whatever way, please let Pastor Jenny know at johnand-jenny@revcollins.com, or at (620) 251-3240. Thanks in advance for your support of this fun summer adventure! More details to come soon.

FROM THE PASTOR'S BLOG: FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS SOUGHT (March 11, 2009)

The Outreach Committee (previously known as the Missions Committee) met last night. In response to the worsening economic news and the layoffs in Coffeyville, the committee is trying to increase the items available in our food pantry. We'll be especially encouraging donations on March 15, March 22, March 29, April 5 and then the first Sunday of every month thereafter.

Suggested items include: non-perishable foods, such as tuna, peanut butter, canned vegetables, canned fruit, crackers, sugar, flour, etc; personal items such as bathing soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, and other personal items; and things that can't be purchased with a Vision card such as dish soap, toilet paper, Kleenex, paper towels and other paper goods. We also have a small amount of storage available for frozen food.

FROM THE PASTOR'S BLOG: MEMORIAL DONATIONS (March 13, 2009)

My theory about memorial funds has always been that the gifts were given to the church to be used (in memory of a loved one, a close friend, etc) and not to be tucked away in a checking account in perpetuity. So when we arrived at Coffeyville First and I learned that the church had \$23,496 at the end of 2004 my thought was we need to make good use of that. Well, we've spent some of it, but the memorial fund balance was \$33,131 at the end of 2008. Total memorial funds had grown by almost \$10,000.

That is not the direction in which we wanted the funds to be moving. So we're going to get a little bit more proactive in locating good uses for memorial funds. Last Wednesday the trustees approved a list that included the following projects: landscaping; a new altar table; new baptismal fonts; a new pulpit; a platform lift into the sanctuary (like an elevator); upgrades to children's facilities; paraments (altar cloths and pulpit scarves); furniture for the lobby; a historical display case; a new memorial book; new adornments for the original altar table; and the renovation of the "bride's room." Some of these projects are already complete or nearing completion, but it only recently occurred to us that they would make good memorials.

If you have a loved one in whose name memorial funds were given and you have a preference for one particular project please let us know.



FROM THE PASTOR'S BLOG: ACCESSIBILITY (March 18, 2009)

Coffeyville First now has an handicap accessible restroom in the "bride's room."

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LENTEN LUNCHESES

Community Lenten Luncheons sponsored by the Coffeyville Ministerial Alliance have been held each Wednesday during the month of March. The last one for this year will be on April 1st. The First Baptist Church at 9th and Elm has been the host church this year. Food Service will begin at 11:30 am and a devotional service will follow. The cost is \$3 per person.

Preaching:

Steve Griffith — April 1, 2009

Lunches prepared by:

First United Methodist — April 1, 2009

LIONS CLUB

The Lions Club is accepting old eye glasses and old hearing aides. These will be used to help those who cannot afford these items. There is a box in the church office to place these items or you may contact: Myron Kelso, Helen Brown, Bill Ketterman, Dick and Dorothy Conklin, or Jim and Dorothy Beals. Thank you for your help.

DISTRICT UMW MEETING

Just a reminder: The District UMW Meeting will be in Independence at First United Methodist Church on Saturday, March 28, 2009 starting at 9:00 am.