

open hearts
open minds
open doors



THE MESSENGER

Rev. Donald N. Dial, Senior Minister

April 9, 2008

Rev. Edward A. Kellum, Associate Minister

GATOR-ING & GATHERING—by Dr. Wayne Earnest

“What did you think about that Gators’ game yesterday?” “The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him.” There’s a world of difference (literally) between these two statements and so some kind of transition between the “hubbub of the world” and worship of the Almighty is necessary. This issue is one with which many churches have struggled [mostly unsuccessfully] for a long time. Indeed, it was a topic of discussion for one of our fairly recent Worship Committee meetings. The following questions and statements were considered. (1) There is too much noise and congestion in the narthex prior to the service. (2) We cannot hear the prelude. (3) What’s the function of the prelude? (4) We should be focusing on worship. (5) We want to visit with friends prior to the service.

Clearly, both “gator-ing” (in the figurative sense) and “gathering” (preparing for worship) are important. So, over the past several weeks, several means of using gathering hymn(s) – prior to the prelude and service but after the “gator-ing” – have been tried. We took feedback from each of the experiments and have found one that received wide acceptance. It is described as follows. The congregation gathers in the sanctuary, engaging in casual conversation till about 5-7 minutes before the worship time. Led by the choir standing by the communion railing, they are then invited to sing a gathering hymn, which actively engages everyone in the preparation for worship. With the congregation quiet and focused on worship, the prelude then functions, not only as a time for the choir to position themselves in the narthex in readiness for the processional hymn, but also as an extension of that preparation for worship. As the processional hymn is being sung, we are then fully participating in that one most important act – worship of Our Lord. How awesome!

Our Caring Fellowship

Keep in your prayers...Melvin Williams, Ted Reiter, Georgia Whitston, Theresa Yankocy, Betty Alexander, George Hart, Lelah Fields, Walter Brown, Pat Hart, Aliene Mills, Shirley Hendricks, Imogene Edvenson, Margaret Seago, Sara Demaree, David Young, III, Heinz and Charlys Klahm and Maxine Schelfhout.

The Wednesday Night Dinner Menu for April 16, 2008

B-B-Q Sandwiches, Baked Beans, Cole Slaw, Cookies, and Ice Cream. Make your dinner reservations by calling the church office by noon on **Monday, April 14**. The cost of the dinner is \$6.00 and the children’s meal is \$3.00.

Deadline for included information/material in the April 23, 2008 Messenger is Wednesday, April 16, 2008. Please submit all information to: sue@fumcocala.org or to the Church Of-

Our second CONCERT WITH A CAUSE will be played by harpist Jan Jennings on Sunday, April 20th at 3:00 p.m. Admission is free and a free-will offering will be taken at intermission, all (100%) of which will benefit Florida United Methodist Children’s Home. Following the concert a “Spring Fling” reception will be held in the Family Life Center. It will include food and beverages, games, fellowship, and live music by our Children’s Choir, Chancel Choir, and Praise Band.

This is “Membership Time” for First Church’s United Methodist Women. If you are a young woman with small children or an older woman with custody of children without a full-time babysitter, we have a Circle for you and the Nursery is open to take care of your charges. If you are a newcomer, don’t know many friends and want to meet the women in our church, our Circles are all friendly and anxious to meet you. If you’re a knitter, we have a place for you as well. Members make the prayer shawls that are given away to people who need to know we care. If you have just lost a loved one and need the loving and caring empathy that the ladies of this organization can provide, we have a place for you. If you work and are very busy but would like to expand your connection with God, we have a place for you. There are circles that meet at night, for those that work during the day. If you are handicapped and cannot always attend meetings because of their location, we have a place for you that is filled with love and is always convenient. If you have really been planning to join, especially since you read about all our good works, **WE NEED AND WANT YOU NOW!** Call me, Marjorie Renfro, 694-1010 and let’s talk!!!

Parish Nurse Notes...helping you care for your health...by Fran Widick

What do the Vials of Life and H.I.P.P.O.S. Alert have in common? Both can provide important health related information in an emergency! Both are being sponsored by the Emergency Medical Services Alliance; you know, the EMSA you see on ambulances in Marion County. And both are free! **The Vial of Life Program** is simple to use and comes to you as a plastic bag containing two empty pill bottles (vials), two medical questionnaire forms, one sticker and one magnet. You fill out each of the forms with the same information and place one in each vial. Put one vial in your refrigerator and put the magnet on the door of the fridge. Put the other vial in the glove compartment of your car and place the sticker on the outside of the glove box door. The purpose of this is that if you are unable to answer questions in an emergency, EMTs and Paramedics will have access to this information immediately. You need to keep the form updated as your personal situation and your medications change. The Vials are available in the Church Office. **H.I.P.P.O.S. Alert** stands for Health Information Packet Posted On Seat and is a safety and education program designed for parents, grandparents, aunts or uncles, or anyone who has children who are young enough to be riding in a car seat or booster seat. This can make a big difference in the event that the driver is involved in an auto accident when young children are in the vehicle. Most of the time the children are too young or scared to be able to provide information about themselves or their parents if the driver is incapacitated. There is a 4" x 6" information sticker which is filled out and placed on the back of the car seat so it is not visible when the seat is in place. There are two H.I.P.P.O.S. stickers which are placed on each side of the seat and a cling sticker which goes inside the rear window of the vehicle. The stickers alert rescuers to your participation in the program. These packets are available through the preschool, Kids For Christ, the nursery, and the Church Office. **Registry of Persons with Special Needs...**This is to help Marion County Emergency Management Services to be aware of those who would need assistance during evacuations and sheltering because of physical or mental handicaps so that assistance and resource allocation can be planned for. If you are someone who would need such care or the caregiver for such a person, please call Emergency Management Services at 622-3205. Do it now...before the storm is on the way.

CHU—Connecting Students with Christ – Sign-up for the CHU Summer Mission Trips has ended. Our Middle School Group will be going to Tampa and our High School Group will be going to San Francisco. If you missed the sign-ups and would like to go please see Art to place your name on the waiting lists for both trips.

CHU Small Groups are coming!!! Have you heard that our Spring Small Group Ministry for students will soon begin? Well listen up – if you want to be a part of a small group sign up on the board in the Renfroe Youth Building. We will set you up with a great group led by peers. You can invite your friends to your small group too. All groups are single gender and are limited to ten students. We have openings in high school guys, middle school girls, high school girls and middle school guys groups right now. So get some information and be a part of the fun as we grow together and grow closer to Christ. ***Small groups rock!!!***

Graduation Sunday is May 18th. In order to recognize all of First Church's students graduating from High School and College we need all of our graduates to call Art at 622-3244, ext. 232 with your name, the school you are graduating from and the degree that you have earned.

Stephen S. McCready Scholarship Fund...First priority for this loan shall be given to applicants who will be preparing to enter a professional church or church related career. This includes, but is not limited to ministers, Christian education professionals, music ministers, and individuals going into church sponsored mission fields. Also, first priority shall go to members of First Church. Applications for the Fall, 2008 school term are due in the Church Office by June 1. You will be notified when to come for your interview with the scholarship committee. A new application must be submitted for each year you need assistance. This scholarship is offered as an interest free loan to be paid back upon graduation.

ATTENTION LADIES: You are all invited to join the Prayer Shawl Ministry in the Welcome Center at 2:00 p.m. on the second Sunday of each month. This ministry was started in 1998 by a group of women who participated in the first Women's Leadership Institute at Hartford Seminary, Hartford, Connecticut. Since that time, women of all denominations have lovingly donated their time and talents by creating hand-knitted and crocheted shawls that have comforted and nurtured so many people. For further information, please call Della Tuck, 622-8074.

“BAPTISMS”

First Church celebrated the baptism of Thomas Parker Northey, III during the 8:30 a.m. worship service on March 23, 2008. Thomas is the son of Thomas and Melissa Northey, Jr., and the grandson of Thomas Parker Northey, Sr., LuAnn Lewis, Guy Iannone and Patricia Russell.

First Church also celebrated the baptism of Seth Alan Hyde during the 9:40 a.m. worship service on March 23, 2008. Seth is the son of Jeffrey and Lisa Hyde, the brother of Jacob and Wesley, the grandson of Phil and Nancy Hyde, Kathleen Reinke and Lynn Reinke and the great-grandson of Mary Loebel.

*The First United Methodist Church Staff
wishes to extend
our appreciation and thanks
to the many volunteers
who serve our Church
so faithfully.*

Check out our new and improved FUMC Web Site. For the latest information and news on church events, programs and ministries, go to www.fumcocala.org.

On Saturday, April 12, 2008 the Florida United Methodist Children's Home will sponsor a **“Day on Campus.”** Everyone is invited to experience the life of the children through music, worship, fellowship and a tour of the campus. See first hand how valuable your contributions are to the Children's Home. To reserve your spot, please call Nancy in the Church Office. We will leave the Church parking lot at 8:00 a.m. sharp and return by 4:00 p.m. Lunch is provided at no cost.

Passionate Worship: Divine Inbreaking, is a conference held on worship April 11-12, 2008 in Gainesville and will focus on the elements of what makes passionate worship, providing resources for congregations with practical worship, exploring the use of theology, liturgy and the sacraments in worship, and reaching those outside the church. Join us in traveling to Gainesville April 11 & 12 for this workshop. Transportation will be provided from the church. Call the Church Office (622-3244) if you plan to attend and to enroll. The cost of this conference is \$65.00.

Interfaith is in need of the following items:

- Shampoo
- Canned Meat
- Canned Fruit
 - Pastas
- Pasta Sauces
- Peanut Butter
 - Jelly

Please bring your donations for Interfaith to the Church Office.

**Habitat For Humanity T-Shirts
on Sale in the Church Office**

Habitat For Humanity T-Shirts are available in the Church Office for \$12.00 each. Adult and Children sizes are both available. The proceeds will go towards the building of First Church's second Habitat House.

Work on our Habitat House is done on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from 8:00 to 2:00 p.m. with lunch provided. Come be the hands and feet of God as we continue to work towards completion of this house. For more information, contact Larry Drake at 266-1613.

Scripture Readers are needed for the 8:30 a.m. worship service. If you would like to participate, please contact Mary Ann Hamrick at 629-5177.

“Thank-you”

Greetings, The medical whirlwind is now calm and this is the time for healing. Thanks to each of you at FUMC who expressed and are expressing concern, support and prayers.
Aliene Mills

Dear Friends, I want to thank everyone for all of your love and concern after my car accident. I am doing much better and appreciate all of your help.

Lovingly, Martha Jean Mansfield

It's for me a pleasure to reply to your lovely letters in which you let us know you are praying for our church. We are doing our best to reach for Christ all of this land of Taguasco as God has promised in His word. On the other hand let me tell you that we are also praying for you. By the way we would like to know your spiritual needs in order to pray for each and everyone of you. We know that everything is under God's control and we trust in Him and stand in His promises. Amen.

Your servant, Pastor Gé López

ATTENDANCE:

for Sunday, April 6, 2008— 477
8:30—117; 9:40—156; 11:00—204;
Sunday School—279

GIVING:

for Sunday, April 6, 2008—\$22,498
Year to date—\$281,725

Join us for a Walk to Emmaus Gathering on Saturday, April 19th at 5:30 p.m. We will meet in Old Fellowship Hall to share a covered dish together, celebrate new pilgrims, and meet with God in praise and worship, Holy Communion, and fourth day testimonies. If you have experienced a Walk or want to know more, YOU are invited. For more information, call Dave Werner at 351-0518 or e-mail Dave at dwerner@atlantic.net.

An Evening with Shakespeare... We meet again Sunday, April 13th at 5:00 p.m. in the Church Office/Library to view and discuss Shakespeare's play, *Pericles*. Superficially this play reads like a fairytale with people being shipwrecked and miraculously saved, gods and goddesses appearing in visions, and princesses who seem dead but are restored to life. The story of *Pericles* is an epic journey, both real and spiritual in nature, about the Prince of Tyre and his quest for a wife. John Wain wrote "The allegory is conveyed by the simple emotions: grief, happiness, fathers and daughters, husbands and wives. For those who wish it there is metaphor. For those who wish it there is fairytale. Either can be ignored without detriment to the experience, or both accepted." Rev. Mac White and Norma Romeo will lead us as we watch to discover Shakespeare's Christianity and humanity. Join us in the church office/library as we view this play and then find parallels to situations we see and face today. Bring a brown bag supper or snack and/or a drink if you like. For more info call Virginia Oswald at 622-6798.

The Missions Committee of Ocala West UMC is having a Mission Fair on Saturday, April 19th from 9:00-2:00 p.m. Several people will speak on many countries, including Zambia and Cuba, and our Katrina Mission Team will discuss their recent trip to Mississippi. Lunch will be provided. If you have questions, please call Ann Pelham 861-2715 or Jane McGrath 237-4972.

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