

"The Church in the heart of the city with the city in its heart."

The Downtowner



Pastor's Corner

Dear Friends,
I am delighted to be marking my first month among you with this opportunity to share some reflections. I continue to feel remarkably blessed to be sharing in ministry with you.

Henri Nouwen (1932-1996), author and Catholic priest, has written about the different dynamics at work between our emotional and spiritual lives. He says that the "ups and downs" of our emotional lives depend a great deal on our surroundings: we are happy, sad, angry, excited, depressed or vengeful because of things that happened long ago or things that are happening now. What is "surrounding" us in the past or present.

He then says that the ups and downs of our spiritual lives depend on something different – our obedience. He defines obedience as "our attentive listening" to the movements of God in our lives. He argues that without this listening, "our spiritual lives eventually become subject to the windswept waves of our emotions."

Being someone who tends to be "emotional" (I cry at sappy TV commercials about laundry detergent), I am taken by what Nouwen writes. It makes me think about how often my spiritual life reflects my emotional "waves."

I like to pray while I walk in the mornings. I find the outdoors to be the place I can best center myself in prayer. I am easily distracted and when I am outside alone on a walk, there is not much else to get in the way of my prayer time. However, there are days when those morning prayers are filled with the emotional surges of my current disposition – full of my frustration, my anger, my hurt or my stress. On those days, I feel as though a precious time with God has been wasted.

In scripture, there are many examples of "attentive listening" that happen while people are praying. We trust that God meets us in our times of prayer. But, obedience to God's movements is actually meant to be a daily routine. God can move and speak to us at any time – and through any avenue: a person, an event, a song, a sorrow. My feeling that a time with God has been "wasted" comes from a limited understanding of God compartmentalized into one particular time of day. Nouwen's remarks remind me that my obedience as "attentive listening" is something I should be doing all day and all night. And, through that greater obedience, my spiritual life will more often reflect the "up" that comes from the Lord rather than my changing emotions.

Blessings to each of you in this month ahead. Let me know how your attentive listening is going!

Pastor Cynthia Weems

Our Vision

God's transforming grace in Jesus Christ calls us to become one dynamic church of diverse people in downtown Miami, offering a new life of Christian discipleship to the community.

Our Mission

To proclaim the gospel in all we do; to encourage and build disciples.

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SERVICE TIMES

SUNDAY

Informal Service	8:30am
Traditional Service	*10:55am

WEDNESDAY

Fellowship Dinner	5:45pm
Prayer and Praise	6:45pm

SATURDAY

Contemporary
7:00pm

*NURSERY PROVIDED

FUMC AUDIT COMPLETE

The Finance committee worked with CPA William Cuervo to complete an audit of our financial records. The report was presented at the Finance committee meeting on July 22, 2009.

The report was positive and the auditor saw no discrepancies in our records. Here are a few of the recommendations made:

- ◆ To decrease our dependence on our Endowment for operational costs.
- ◆ To set a clear invoice approval policy for expenses.
- ◆ To create a clear method for backing up electronic data and storing the backup off site.

The Finance committee will work to respond to all recommendations made.

Dick Weden,
Chairperson
Finance Committee



APPLYING BIBLE PRINCIPLES

By Kenneth L. Williams

Describing the Macedonian Christians, Paul wrote, ". . . during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a generosity on their part. For . . . they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond" (2 Cor. 8:2-3).

What does it mean to give beyond our ability? In some ways, it means to discard our treasured calculators and push our giving to the point where the numbers don't add up. It means to give when the proverbial bottom line indicates we shouldn't give. It might also mean to give away not just the luxuries, but also some of life's necessities.

Let's face it < most Christians (including most of us) do not give beyond our ability. Most of us do not give out of proportion to our income. In effect, we claim 1 Corinthians 16:2 as our life's verse concerning giving, where we are admonished to give as God has prospered us or in direct proportion to our income. Make no mistake about it < that's a good pattern for giving, a pattern that every child of God should be following. But sometimes, God calls us to give out of proportion to our income. He calls us to give sacrificially in order that His kingdom might advance and prosper.

Such giving is unguarded, spontaneous, and uncalculated. This type of giving refuses to count the cost of giving, but instead, counts only the joy of fully obeying how God has directed in our lives. Such giving is frequently lavish and represents an act of love and discipleship. Such giving is exemplified by the widow who gave all that she had (Mark 12) and by the Macedonian Christians.

David Livingston, pioneer missionary to Africa almost two centuries ago, was described as having "sacrificed" his life in service for Christ on that continent. His response is highly relevant to our living and our giving:

Can that be called a sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of the great debt owing to our God which we can never repay? Is that a sacrifice which brings its own reward of healthful activity, the consciousness of doing good, peace of mind, and a bright hope of a glorious destiny hereafter? It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege . . . when we remember the great sacrifice which He made who left His Father's throne on high to give Himself for us.

As you consider your giving, are you giving less than your ability, according to your ability, or beyond your ability?

Telling the Story

(Story based on **John 20:1-18** and **Mark 16:1-8**)

By *Larry Winebrenner*

It is passing strange that the earliest gospel written (Mark) and the last (perhaps) written (John) should give such different accounts of the events at the empty tomb. Perhaps Mark, who is believed by many scholars to be a reporter of Peter's reminiscences, reported what Peter said. And John, if he is the actual author of the Gospel attributed to him, was reporting from first hand knowledge.

But none of that matters. Not whether Mark actually did report Peter's words. Not whether the Gospel of John was actually written by John. Not whether they agree on the details.

What matters is the empty tomb and the risen Christ.

Go to any court trial and listen to eye witnesses tell what they saw. Rarely do different persons see exactly the same thing. And even when a person reports exactly what they thought they saw, they may be mistaken.

I recall a time when I was in a converted TBM that had the gun turret replaced by a radar greenhouse. We were flying off the coast of Molokai in the Hawaiian Islands, practicing radar navigation.

I was an aircrewman, a radar instructor. I had been trained in careful observation of phenomena. It was important that all observations be critically correct.

Now this was a time when the flying saucer "sightings" were at their zenith. This seemed especially true in the Islands. As a sensible, objective individual, I pretty much felt these were hysteria, hoaxes, or misunderstood natural phenomena.

Imagine my surprise, then, when I looked out the greenhouse and saw a red lighted object flying along side the aircraft. It wasn't out of the corner of my eye that I saw it. I looked directly out at it, quite beyond the end of the wing tip. It kept steady pace with us.

Light on a radio tower? I began to navigate.
"Easy right."

The pilot slowly turned right. The light followed.
"Steady as she goes."

The plane straightened out. So did the light.
"Easy left."

The plane and the light turned left. Uncannily, the craft flying along side us mimicked our every move.

Finally, I pulled my mike to my mouth and called, "Mr. Mitchy." I wanted verification. But as I made the call, the craft simply disappeared right in front of my eyes.

"Yeah, Winebrenner," he said.

Was I going to tell him what I just saw? Was I going to be one of those goof-balls imagining a sighting of a flying saucer? Was I going to face the ridicule of officers and white hats alike when Mr. Mitchy laughingly told them what I said?

Not on your life!

I lowered the mike. The light reappeared! I quickly raised the mike. It disappeared.

Slowly I began to raise and lower the mike. Then it dawned on me, I had been seeing the reflection of my radar's pilot light.

Believe me, until that moment of realization, I was ready to go on record as actually seeing a flying object knowing I'd have a trained pilot to back up my story.

The point is, what I saw was not real and Mr. Mitchy would have reported something differently.

But we both would say we were in a converted TBM flying off the coast of Molokai. That was the reality.

In the garden, the empty tomb was the reality. The details of what was seen was not the event. The empty tomb was the important fact that day—and forever!

PARENTS CORNER

Pick of the Pack

Your MOST important back-to-school investment: the right backpack.

A top-quality backpack will last your child several years, and may prevent serious back injuries as well.

Many children lug backpacks that weigh almost as much as they do, says the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, resulting in thousands of visits to the emergency room each year for back injuries.

Here's what to look for when choosing a backpack for your child:

- Pick a lightweight bag with multiple compartments that is the proper size for your child; children should never carry more than 15 percent of their body weight.
- Help distribute the load of heavy books; opt for a waist strap for added support.
- Padded, adjustable shoulder straps ensure maximum comfort. Make sure your child uses both straps so the pack fits snugly against his or her back.
- Reflective trim offers increased visibility at night.

By Wendy Helfenbaum

Source: *The Costco Connection*, August 2009

Back to School Shopping Don't let back to school shopping ruin the last days of summer for you and your kids.



Back to school must-haves for kids

When the back to school brochures are piling up on the kitchen counter and every second television advertisement boasts about the "next big thing in the schoolyard," you know that the new school year is just one week away.

The last week of the school break means only one thing for kids - new stuff that just HAS to be better than everybody else's. The last week of the school break means something entirely different for the parents of those kids, however - losing the battle over buying that Barbie pencil case with FREE Barbie flip-flops inside. It is when you step inside the store and you are bombarded with "Can I have this, mum?" over and over that you realize that your child has an infinite number of wants, but what does he or she actually need?

Here are the necessities every child should have to start the year:

The Clothes. Be sensible. However much your daughter wants that sparkly pink jacket and however much your son is desperate for the shirt that says "I eat homework for breakfast," are these really sensible options for school? Steer toward items that will withstand the day-to-day wear and tear of school. Jeans and pullovers are necessities, but you can let your child choose a shirt that best captures his or her individual style without going over the top. As your child grows older, give him or her more freedom when choosing [clothes](#) (but still reel it in occasionally).

The Shoes. The number-one factor to keep in mind when choosing [kids shoes](#) is durability and comfort; your kids are going to be in these shoes all day.

The Bag. As with shoes, the bag needs to be comfortable and durable. A good school bag should be adjustable to accommodate growing children and should be large enough to fit a lunch and books inside. Keep in mind that heavier items should sit closer to your child's back to avoid strain to the neck and back.

The Lunch. Now is the time to stock up on healthy "brain food" for back to school. Fruit and nuts are excellent brain food for your child. Fruit can be fun! Consider getting a FruityFaces fruit case. These are inflatable zip-up cases to make fruit more fun for little ones and reduce bruising. Don't deny your children a treat every so often, though. A chocolate bar or a packet of cookies can be seen as a reward for good grades.

The Electronics. A personal computer for older children starting high school may be a good option. It gives them an incentive to get their homework done on time. Get younger children used to computers at an early age. Consider educational software that works at your child's own pace and can help him or her throughout school life.

The Stationery. No matter how good your computer is, it is no match for good old pen on paper. Children of all ages and stages need pens, pencils, erasers, sharpeners, scissors, highlighters and a pencil case to put them all in. Perhaps consider buying some inexpensive, colorful grips, which are cylindrical in shape and slip over your pen or pencil to make it more comfortable and fun to hold. Avoid light-up or talking pens - imagine the disruption in class!

The Cell Phone. As your children get older, it is comforting to be at peace of mind that you can contact your children at any time and vice versa. Don't restrict mobile phone use, just set up a system in which you will pay for emergency calls or calls to the home phone or the cell phones of family members and your son or daughter will pay for any social calls he or she makes to friends. For younger children, it is important that they know how to use a public phone and that they have some money on hand in case of emergency. You and your young children may benefit from an i-Kids handset that includes a GPS device for parents to keep track of their youngsters.

A Good Work Environment. Every child needs a space of his or her own to do homework. When purchasing a child's first desk, buy one that will see your child right through college. Teenagers may appreciate indoor plants that give any room a relaxed, serene feel. Limit music volume in a work area for improved concentration.

These last two necessities for going [back to school](#) cannot be found in the stores or brochures. They are personal qualities that both you and your child must share:

Discipline and Praise. Talk to your child about self-discipline and the concept of work before play. At school, a disruptive student will be punished; this should remain the same at home. You, too, have to be disciplined and remain consistent to be a role model for your child. When a good report card comes home, make your child feel very special and respected with lots of praise.

A Clean Slate and a Good Work Ethic. Let your children know that each school year is a clean slate. Whatever may have happened the year before in terms of grades and behavior is in the past. Tomorrow brings a new school year and a new opportunity to do the best possible.

By L. Singer

Source: *kidica.com*

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A testimony from May's Footwashing... (originally sent via e-mail to a group of friends)

I feel compelled to tell everyone how moving and spiritual it was for me to participate in last Saturday's ministry at First United Methodist Church. It was moving beyond words and at the same time a major surprise, as I told Petra on the way to the church that while I would go and "help out" there was no way that I was going to wash the feet of homeless people.

Surprise! I did wash the feet of the homeless. Why? I don't know. Ten people were needed and somehow I raised my hand, as did Petra and Lucia.

Throughout the afternoon I washed the feet of the homeless, old and young, male and female, people who spoke English and some who did not, all of which could not thank me enough for what I was doing and constantly referred to me as, "sir". Once I was recognized by some who had been to one of the Trinity feeding programs, and Petra even received a tip from one of the gentlemen. After a great deal of convincing on Petra's part he took the tip back, but it was a hard sell. Imagine a homeless person so thankful he gave a tip.

It took about ten minutes to wash and dry each person's feet but it was plenty of time for a brief conversation to exchange names and to learn a little about each person. Where they were from, where they were living and how they felt.



I must admit it was one of the most moving experiences that I have participated in during my church life and would recommend to everyone to take opportunity to be part of next year's program. Yes First UMC does it each year!

The folks at First United Methodist are extremely committed to helping the homeless and the less fortunate; and they deserve all the help Trinity can give to them. We are most thankful that they allow Trinity to use their facility to feed in the mornings and even have some people there to assist. As I said they are very committed.

I learned a few things on Saturday afternoon. The homeless did not go away, the city did not solve the homeless problem, and the homeless still need help.

250 pair of shoes and socks were given to people, some had their feet washed and then treated by podiatrist from Barry University, and then got a hot dog and a soft drink. 250 pairs of shoes given away and then we ran out of shoes, leaving some not so fortunate.

I know we made a lot of people very happy and most importantly it made those of us who participated even happier.

Phil Consolo
Trinity Episcopal Cathedral

Congratulations to our very own **Opal Winebrenner** for being recognized with two awards at the recent PACT awards ceremony on July 27. PACT is "People Acting for Community Together," an organization with which FUMC has worked for a number of years. Opal was honored for "High Achievement" and "Long Service" to the organization. It is an honor for our church to claim her! Please give Opal your congratulations the next time you see her.

FAITH IN THE CITY COMMUNITY GARDEN UPDATE

FUMC, along with Temple Israel and Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, will embark together on the adventure of planting and maintaining a community garden. The garden will be located on the Temple Israel property. It will be tended by persons from our congregations. And its produce will go to Lotus House, a home for homeless women and children.

How can you participate?

On **Tuesday, August 18 at 5:00** there will be a final planning meeting before the first workday on **Wednesday, August 19 from 8:30 – 2:00**. Planting day is scheduled for **Sunday, October 4**. Please contact Pastor Cynthia Weems at cweems@fumcmiami.com if you are interested in helping with this project. All are welcome!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHURCH COMMITTEE MEETINGS

SPR: August 2 at 12:15 pm
Trustees: August 5 at 7:30 pm
Education: August 12 at 7:30 pm
Church Council: No Meeting
Finance: August 26 at 7:30 pm



ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS

Keenagers will meet Friday, August 21, at 11:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.



YOGA CLASS!

There will be NO Christian Yoga classes during the months of August and September. Yoga classes will resume in October.

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS

The United Methodist Women (U.M.W.) will meet Saturday, August 1.

11:00 a.m.— General meeting. Program topic: "WHO AM I AT THE TABLE?." This program offers a guided meditation and an opportunity for women to reflect on their gifts, graces, challenges and passion. All are welcome.

12:15 p.m. Luncheon in Fellowship Hall.

All are invited. Please make lunch reservations with Circle Chairperson or with the Church Office.

Circle information:

- ◆ **Miriam Circle will meet Thursday, August 13, at 2:30 p.m. in the Epworth Village Conference Room.**
- ◆ **Esther Circle Meeting will meet Friday, August 14, at 11:30 a.m. at Cauley Tea Room for lunch and program to follow.**
- ◆ **Ruth Circle Meeting—To Be Announced**

THANKS FOR YOUR FAITHFULNESS

- ◆ *A gift in support of the Homeless Ministry was received from Richard Norwood.*
- ◆ *A gift in support of Missions was received from Larry Winebrenner.*
- ◆ *A gift in support of the Breakfast Club was received from Evelyn Green.*
- ◆ *A gift to the Ken Carter Family Remembrance was received from Margaret Kern.*
- ◆ *A gift to Pastor's Discretionary Fund was received from Dr. James Hutson.*
- ◆ *A gift in support of the General Fund in memory of Francisco Radillo was received from Betty Purkey.*
- ◆ *A gift in support of the Hot Diggity Dog Event was received from Walter & Wilma Baggesen.*

A special thank you to all these people for their generosity and continued support of our church and its ministries.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

HOMELESS FEEDING

We need help preparing the breakfast sandwiches and bags that are given out to homeless residents. **Preparation** takes place on Thursdays and Saturdays at 2:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. It only takes about one hour to prepare the meals. We also need volunteers to help with the actual distribution of these meals. **Distribution** takes place on Fridays at 6:30 a.m. and on Sundays at 7:30 a.m.

AUGUST 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
2 SERVICES 7:30am Homeless Breakfast 8:30am Informal 10:55am Traditional	3 9:00am Hot Meals Program	4 9:00am Hot Meals Program	5 9:00am Hot Meals Program 11am Yoga Class 5:45 Fellowship Dinner 6:45 Prayer/Praise 7.30pm Trustees	6 9:00am Hot Meals Program 6:45 Bell Choir 7.30 Chancel Choir	7 6:30am Homeless Ministry	8 9:00am Hot Meals Program 11:00 am U.M.W. 7pm Contemporary Service
9 SERVICES 7:30am Homeless Breakfast 8:30am Informal 10:55am Traditional	10 9:00am Hot Meals Program	11 9:00am Hot Meals Program	12 9:00am Hot Meals Program 11am Yoga Class 5:45 Fellowship Dinner 6:45 Prayer/Praise 7.30pm Education	13 9:00am Hot Meals Program 2:30 pm Miriam Circle 6:45 Bell Choir 7.30 Chancel Choir	14 6:30am Homeless Ministry 11:30 am Esther Circle	15 9:00am Hot Meals Program 7pm Contemporary Service
16 SERVICES 7:30am Homeless Breakfast 8:30am Informal 10:55am Traditional	17 9:00am Hot Meals Program	18 9:00am Hot Meals Program	19 9:00am Hot Meals Program 11am Yoga Class 5:45 Fellowship Dinner 6:45 Prayer/Praise NO Ad Council Mtg.	20 9:00am Hot Meals Program 6:45 Bell Choir 7.30 Chancel Choir	21 6:30am Homeless Ministry 11:30am Keenagers	22 9:00am Hot Meals Program 7pm Contemporary Service
23 SERVICES 7:30am Homeless Breakfast 8:30am Informal 10:55am Traditional	24 9:00am Hot Meals Program	25 9:00am Hot Meals Program	26 9:00am Hot Meals Program 11am Yoga Class 5:45 Fellowship Dinner 6:45 Prayer/Praise 7:30 Finance Comm.	27 9:00am Hot Meals Program 6:45 Bell Choir 7.30 Chancel Choir	28 6:30am Homeless Ministry	29 9:00am Hot Meals Program 7pm Contemporary Service
30 SERVICES 7:30am Homeless Breakfast 8:30am Informal 10:55am Traditional	31 9:00am Hot Meals Program					

BIRTHDAYS FOR AUGUST



- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 2 Elizabeth Carter | 17 Sheldon Rattigan-Grey |
| Robert DeVarona | 18 William Flowers |
| Ken Weilbacher | 19 Charles Winebrenner |
| 4 Buddy Atchison | 20 Sharon Buckland |
| Marcus Phillips | Gene Carter |
| 7 Erica Fink | Patricia Curry |
| John Whiteman | Allyn Lockett |
| 8 Mildred Wright | 21 Belinda Bacon |
| 10 Nancy Arnold | George Stocking |
| 11 Aida Johnson | 22 Joel Brandon |
| 12 Paul Gooch | 23 Jason Bacon |
| Cameron Roe | Rose Rey |
| Matthew DeVarona | 28 Jarrod Grey |
| Dorene Jackson | 29 Pam DeVarona |
| 15 Ashley Ames | 31 Shelton Thomas |
| Kathryn Fink | |
| Minnette Pitts | |



ANNIVERSARIES FOR AUGUST

- 8 Ann & Buddy Atchison
- 12 Beverly & Don McCorquodale
- 25 Opal & Larry Winebrenner

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CHURCH STAFF

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Director of Music	Mihai Valentin Bogdan
Financial Secretary	Chantal Falby
Chef	Raul Abuchaibe
Custodian	Maria Lopez
Missionaries	Marilyn Beecher Delbert and Sandy Groves

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EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

August 1 — United Methodist Women's meeting at 11:00 a.m.

August 13 — MIRIAM CIRCLE 2:30 p.m. in the Epworth Village "Green Room".

August 14 — ESTHER CIRCLE 11:30 a.m. at Cauley Tea Room for lunch and program to follow.

August 21 — Keenagers will meet with a covered dish luncheon. Doors open at 11:30 a.m.

Circle Meeting: RUTH CIRCLE— **To Be Announced**

A church garden

First, plant five rows of peas:

Presence
Promptness
Preparation
Purity
Perseverance.

Next to these, plant three rows of squash:

Squash gossip.
Squash criticism.
Squash indifference.

No garden is complete without turnips:

Turn up for meetings.
Turn up with a smile.
Turn up with new ideas.
Turn up with determination to make everything count for something good and worthwhile.

