

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

The Downtowner



Pastor's Corner

Dear Friends,
The process of planting a garden is quite fascinating. Just this week, we began preparing the ground for our community garden with our Faith in the City partners Temple Israel and Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. Our labors began with prayer and quickly turned to raking, shoveling and getting dirty!

The land is not always as fertile as we might like it to be. Even our friends from biblical days discovered that. And without good land, the planting will not be fruitful. Therefore, we spent a whole day just getting the ground ready for what will be planted this fall in this new garden

home. Stones were taken up, weeds pulled, land leveled and cleared. It was a bit disappointing at the end of the day to see so little accomplished but we knew the real work had been done below the surface – the same place the seeds would begin to grow not long from now.

Spending a little time with the land reminds us of why there are so many images of planting in scripture. Check out a few of these teachings of Jesus to see: Matthew 13:1-9, Matthew 13:31-32, Luke 6:43-45, John 15, 1-11. One of my favorites is the passage from Matthew 13 where Jesus tells the parable of the sower. He sows seed on different kinds of ground but only certain seeds "take." It recalls the importance of preparing the soil for the sowing of seeds that we intend to grow. The seeds cannot take root and flourish without good, vital soil underneath.

As Christian disciples, how is it that we "prepare the soil?" I certainly spend my share of time getting upset about the "seeds" not taking root and growing as I spend time planning programs, preaching sermons and teaching. But perhaps I haven't taken the necessary time to prepare the ground for those seeds. Have I built relationships with the people I seek to reach? Have I shared in a small group setting with them where trust can be built? Have I prayed for them and for our labors? Have I attempted to remove as many "stones" as possible; those roadblocks to growth like mistrust, inhospitable habits and lack of passion?

I would invite you to pray on these things with me as we prepare the ground not only for a community garden but also for a healthy crop of new Christians to come to know a life-giving relationship with Jesus Christ through our congregation. I am excited to be preparing this ground and planting these seeds with you. God bless the gardening!

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 Seeks Grantwriter ~ Work from Home!

First Methodist Church is looking for a grantwriter! In today's society, there are many available funding opportunities which could help us further our mission in serving the Downtown Miami community. We are looking for someone who can help write grants so that we might receive some of those funds to support our outreach ministries.

If you or anyone you know has experience writing grants, and are interested in applying, please contact Pastor Cynthia Weems by calling 305-371-4706 or emailing cweems@fumcmiami.com.

If you've never written a grant before, we still want you! We'll give you the opportunity to train and learn.

This is a great chance to work from home while helping FUMC in our mission. Please contact the church office today!

APPLYING BIBLE PRINCIPLES

By Kenneth L. Williams

An anyone who has ever been personally involved in the construction of a building knows that the foundation is of utmost importance. The finest architectural design and the best construction materials are of little value if the foundation is not built correctly.

The same is true of life itself and of our giving. Concerning the rich, the Apostle Paul instructed Timothy to ". . . command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future". (1 Tim. 6:17-19).

Do not misunderstand: Jesus is the foundation. He is the Cornerstone. When it comes to the matter of our salvation, Christ and Christ alone is the "sure foundation." Nothing we can do < not even giving of our resources > can add one bit to that foundation.

But we can follow the counsel of the Apostle Paul concerning our giving. Through our giving, we can send our treasure on ahead. We can follow the admonition of the Lord Jesus and through our giving, we can "lay up treasure in heaven." John Bunyan summarized both teachings in this statement: "Whatever good thing you do for Him, if done according to the Word, is laid up for you as treasure in chests and coffers, to be brought out to be rewarded before men and angels, to your eternal comfort."

Our giving, then, becomes a foundation, not concerning salvation, but rather, concerning our investments. Suppose for a moment that you had invested 100% of your life's savings in the stock of a company. Would you not be watching with great eagerness how that company was performing? Would you not be checking up on how well it was doing, on management's goals for the future, and on how it was faring against the competition? In a similar way, our investments in the work of the Lord not only indicate where we are placing our emphasis, but also, they will determine where our interest lies. We will be checking up on them, evaluating their performance, and giving thought to the day when they will yield eternal dividends in our behalf.

(continued on page 4)

A Modern Parable
(Luke 15: 1-2, 4-7—The Parable of the Lost Sheep)
 [Inspired by Dr. Cynthia Weems]

By *Larry Winebrenner*

One day a shepherd discovered one of his sheep was missing. He called the media—newspapers, radio announcers, television hosts.

"One of my sheep is missing," he told them.

"Gee, that's tough," said the reporter.

"Yeah," joined in the radio announcer. "Let us know if you find her."

"Here's my cell number," offered the TV host.

Since shepherds know sheep-habits, and where the sheep most likely wandered, it wasn't long until he found the poor lost lamb. He carefully laid it across his shoulders to return it to the flock.

As he passed the newspaper office, the reporter came running out, sleeves of his shirt pushed up, and a pencil behind his ear.

"Hey," he yelled. "I thought you said that rascal was lost."

"Lost and found," grinned the shepherd. "I'm on my way to celebrate with my friends."

"Wait a minute. Wait a minute.," said the reporter impatiently. "I want to interview the prodigal sheep."

"Not prodigal," murmured the shepherd. "Just momentarily lost."

The reporter was insistent.

"Lamsy, babe," he said. "What does it feel like to be lost?"

"It was real scary," said the sheep.

"Then why did you run away?" demanded the reporter.

"You must have gotten upset about something. Did the shepherd mistreat you."

"I didn't run away," said the lamb. "And the shepherd is real good to me."

The reporter lit up a cigarette. He had a smirk on his face. In a low, confidential voice he said, "Afraid to talk in front of the boss, huh. Don't worry. I'll keep it confidential."

The radio announcer was driving by just at that moment. When he saw the reporter talking to the lamb, he screeched on his brakes and jumped out of the car.

"No fair!" he shouted as he ran toward them. "You don't get an exclusive on this. I asked the shepherd to let me know what happened." To the lamb he said, "What did you tell this pa-looka?"

"Nothing," said the lamb.

"Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. C'mon. Give."

"But I didn't say anything," said the lamb.

"What happened when you sneaked off? How'd you get away without the rest of the flock seeing you?"

"Please," said the shepherd. "I just want to take this lost sheep back home and celebrate with my friends."

"Trying to protect her, eh?" snarled the announcer.

"We know what kind of mischief these run-a-ways get in to. What was it this time? Drugs?"

"Did I hear drugs?" asked the TV personality as he walked up. "I figured it was something like that."

The three media men continued to pound on the evils for a long time. They could not be convinced that there was no nefarious purpose behind the lamb's disappearance. The poor shepherd never did get a chance to celebrate with his friends. He simply had to take the little lost lamb home and hide until the excitement died down.

Seems the media experts weren't into celebrating the return of the lost—kinda like the Pharisees. Kinda like (blush blush blush) me.



(Applying Bible Principles –Continued from page 2)

One writer expressed it this way: "We can trade temporal possessions that we cannot keep anyway to gain eternal possessions that we cannot lose. This is like a child given a chance to trade bubble gum for a new bicycle, or a man offered ownership of the Coca-Cola company in exchange for a sack of bottle caps. Only a fool would pass up this opportunity. What we keep we will lose. What we give and share and do in Christ's name will ultimately come back to us in heaven in a far better and permanent form."

Remember, Jesus Christ is the "sure foundation." Jesus is the Cornerstone. As we work and as we give, we are building on Him and on what He accomplished on Calvary. What kind of builder are you?

A minister in a little church had been having trouble with the collections.

One Sunday he announced, "Now, before we pass the collection plate, I would like to request that the person who stole the chickens from Farmer Condill's henhouse please refrain from giving any money to the Lord. The Lord doesn't want money from a thief!"

The collection plate was passed around, and for the first time in months everybody gave.



"God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:7

CHURCH UPDATES

SUNDAY SCHOOL PROMOTION

On Sunday, August 23 we celebrated "Promotion Sunday" with our children and youth. Each were promoted to their new Sunday School classes for the 09-10 school year. **These classes begin on Sunday, August 30.** We encourage our children and youth to participate as often as possible.

For adults: In addition to our regular Sunday School classes for adults, **the Library** (2nd floor) will be open each Sunday morning for conversation and sharing among those who gather. Feel free to come and use this peaceful space for learning and fellowship.



UPDATE ON CHURCH VAN

At the end of August, the Church Van was sold to a local company that plans to use it for bicycle rentals on Virginia Key. The Florida Annual Conference has encouraged us for some time to sell the 15 passenger van because of repeated reports as to its potential dangers. The Trustees will hold the proceeds for a period of time until it is decided how best to use them.

CALLING ALL YOUTH!

Mark your calendars for a **Fall Kickoff & Cookout on Sunday, September 20** at the home of the Huff family (Mr. Wiley will be at the grill!).

890 NE 98th Street
5:00 p.m.
All 6th – 12th graders and their families are invited



R.S.V.P. to the church office at 305-371-4706 and contact Pastor Cynthia Weems with any questions.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

FAITH IN THE CITY COMMUNITY GARDEN—THE ADVENTURE HAS BEGUN!!



On Wednesday, August 19 a group of volunteers from FUMC, Temple Israel, Trinity Episcopal and Lotus House gathered to begin preparing the plot of ground that will be our community garden. Much work was accomplished as we got our hands dirty together! **The next work day will be September 13 and the Garden Dedication and Planting Day is scheduled for Sunday, October 25, 2009 at 12:30 p.m.**



ATTENTION YOUTH



"Go and pray to God for me and for the people . . ." —2 KINGS 22:13a

This year's See You at the Pole™ theme is very simple—**ENGAGE: Go and Pray . . .**

GO to your school flagpole on **Wednesday, September 23, at 7 a.m.**, and **PRAY** for your friends, family, school, community and the world.

This year's See You at the Pole™ challenge is simple:
ENGAGE your school
ENGAGE your community
ENGAGE your world . . . for His glory!



See You at the Pole™ is a great place to:
ENGAGE God,
ENGAGE with other believers, and
ENGAGE His heart for your campus in the name of Christ.

See You at the Pole™ connects believers together at the beginning of the school year, so you can stand strong together throughout the year.

Let everyone at your school know!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHURCH COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Trustees: September 2 at 7:30 pm
Education: September 9 at 7:30 pm
Church Council: September 16 at 7:00 pm
Finance: September 23 at 7:30 pm



ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS

Church office will be closed Monday, September 7 in observance of Labor Day.



CHOIRS RESUME

The Bells and the Chancel choir will resume on Thursday, September 10th.

Kids choir will resume Sunday, September 13th.



The United Methodist Women (U.M.W.) will NOT meet in September.

Circle information:

- ◆ Miriam Circle will meet Thursday, September 10, at 2:30 p.m. in the Epworth Village Green Room.
- ◆ Esther Circle Meeting will meet Friday, September 11, at 11:30 a.m. at Cauley Tea Room for lunch and program to follow.
- ◆ Ruth Circle Meeting—To Be Announced



KEENAGERS

Keenagers will meet Friday, September 18, at 11:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall.



THANKS FOR YOUR FAITHFULNESS

- ◆ A gift in memory of Dennis Cronk in was received in from John T. Schultz.
- ◆ Gifts in support of the Breakfast Club and the General Budget were received from Emilio and Hilda Chaviano.
- ◆ A gift in support of the Breakfast Club was received from Evelyn Green.
- ◆ A gift in support of the Special Kitchen Fund was received from Larry Winebrenner.
- ◆ A gift in support of the General Fund was received from Louise Quinon-Teza.

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

YOGA CLASS!

There will be NO Christian Yoga classes during the month of September. Yoga classes will resume in October.



SYMPATHY



Our congregation joins in prayers of sympathy for Virgil Zimmerman and family for the loss of his daughter, Gloria Russell, who passed away August, 10, 2009.

May the Lord's peace and comfort be with all who mourn.

SEPTEMBER 2009



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 9:00am Hot Meals Program	2 9:00am Hot Meals Program 5:45 Fellowship Dinner 6:45 Prayer/Praise 7:30pm Trustees	3 9:00am Hot Meals Program	4 6:30am Homeless Ministry	5 9:00am Hot Meals Program 11:00 am NO UMW 7pm Contemporary Service
6 <u>SERVICES</u> 7:30am Homeless Breakfast 8:30am Informal 10:55am Traditional	7 9:00am NO Hot Meals Program OFFICE CLOSED	8 9:00am Hot Meals Program	9 9:00am Hot Meals Program 5:45 Fellowship Dinner 6:45 Prayer/Praise 7:30pm Education	10 9:00am Hot Meals Program 2:30 pm Miriam Circle 6:45 Bell Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir	11 6:30am Homeless Ministry 11:30 am Esther Circle	12 9:00am Hot Meals Program 7pm Contemporary Service
13 <u>SERVICES</u> 7:30am Homeless Breakfast 8:30am Informal 10:55am Traditional	14 9:00am Hot Meals Program	15 9:00am Hot Meals Program	16 9:00am Hot Meals Program 5:45 Fellowship Dinner 6:45 Prayer/Praise 7:00 Ad Council Mtg.	17 9:00am Hot Meals Program 6:45 Bell Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir	18 6:30am Homeless Ministry 11:30am Keenagers	19 9:00am Hot Meals Program 7pm Contemporary Service
20 <u>SERVICES</u> 7:30am Homeless Breakfast 8:30am Informal 10:55am Traditional	21 9:00am Hot Meals Program	22 9:00am Hot Meals Program	23 9:00am Hot Meals Program 5:45 Fellowship Dinner 6:45 Prayer/Praise 7:30 Finance Comm.	24 9:00am Hot Meals Program 6:45 Bell Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir	25 6:30am Homeless Ministry	26 9:00am Hot Meals Program 7pm Contemporary Service
27 <u>SERVICES</u> 7:30am Homeless Breakfast 8:30am Informal 10:55am Traditional	28 9:00am Hot Meals Program	29 9:00am Hot Meals Program	30 9:00am Hot Meals Program 5:45 Fellowship Dinner 6:45 Prayer/Praise			



BIRTHDAYS FOR SEPTEMBER

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 Antoinette Ivey | 16 Nancy Galvez |
| 3 Robert DeVarona, Jr.
Nicholas Galvez | 18 Richard Aspinwall
Beverly McCorquodale |
| 4 Yakelin Rojas | 20 Sharon Buckland |
| 5 Patricia Scott | 21 Rachel Boyett |
| 6 Maria Lopez | 22 Caral Allen |
| 7 Ramon Bello | 23 Rita Achury
Glenda Lebrun |
| 8 Diego Pabon
Carvel Dunn | 27 Linda VonCannon |
| 10 Stacy Oliver
Harry Ott | 29 Ceal Diaz
Mary Matson |
| 12 Joel Cuison | |
| 13 Cora Seymour | |
| 14 Vivian Bridges
Tremayn Christopher | |
| 15 Donald Boyett
Donna Dareff
Val Forde | |



ANNIVERSARIES FOR SEPTEMBER

- 15 Bonnie & John Massey

SPECIAL DATES

- Labor Day, September 7, 2009
- Patriot Day (remembrance of Sept. 11), September 11, 2009
- National Grandparents Day, September 13, 2009
- National Hispanic Heritage Month, September 15-October 15, 2009
- First Day of Autumn, September 22, 2009

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CHURCH STAFF

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Church Administrator	Mayra Hernandez
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

NO United Methodist Women's meeting

September 10 — MIRIAM CIRCLE 2:30 p.m. in the Epworth Village "Green Room".

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

September 18 — Keenagers will meet with a covered dish luncheon. Doors open at 11:30 a.m.

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

Let me live by faith

Dear God, let me live by faith:
Not faith in myself, but in You;
Not faith in my own abilities,
But faith in Your Power and Wisdom.
Help me to faithfully
Walk past any playing field flooded with the glare of
my own self-centeredness,
And walk toward the unknown pathways which
You have charted for me —
some less visible than candle glow.
In the midst of the unknown
I shall find Your gifts to me;
In the midst of darkness,
I shall find the Light of Your Love.
And in the midst of Faith's victory,
I shall find Your abiding Grace.
Dear God, let me live by faith!



—Peggy Ferrell