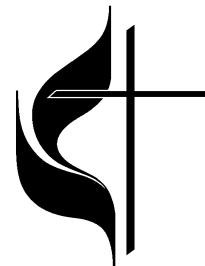


# THE

# FIRST

# WORD



The Weekly Newsletter for Members and Friends of First United Methodist Church, Newton, North Carolina  
Phone (828) 464-8422

Fax Number (828) 464-8423

[www.fumcnewtonnc.org](http://www.fumcnewtonnc.org)

## PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Not long after Jack Welch retired as the CEO of General Electric, the *USA Today* ran an article about the autobiography that Welch wrote to commemorate his retirement. The headline of the article read, "Welch Angry at God after Mom Died." In the article Welch explains how he gave up his lifelong relationship with the church following his mother's death after her third heart attack. He admits, "I felt cheated, angry and mad at God for taking my mother away." About his faith, Welch concludes, "I lost my heart for it ... who knows why."

Jack Welch concluded that God was the source of his suffering and, as a result, he turned his back on God and quit the church. Welch lost his heart for the Christian faith. Needless to say, no one can argue about whether Welch had a right to be angry and upset about his mother's death. But did he have a right to be angry and mad at God for supposedly taking his mother away? Welch blamed God for his suffering and pain. However does God cause suffering?

One day Jesus was questioned by a crowd about a tragedy that happened to some Galileans on their way to worship (see Luke 13). Those in the crowd wanted Jesus to explain why the Galileans had been murdered by Pilate. We don't know why they asked Jesus for an explanation. Maybe it was because human beings are prone to ask why in the face of suffering and hardship. After all, it's human nature to look for a cause and effect.

Perhaps those in the crowd who asked the question wondered if the Galileans somehow deserved what had happened to them as they prepared to worship. Those who asked Jesus that question would have been mindful of those Old Testament passages that basically teach that you get what you deserve and you deserve what you get.

Jesus heard their questions and then posed a couple of his own. He asked, "Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way that they were worse sinners than all other Galileans?" And then Jesus continued, "Or those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them – do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem?"

What Jesus seems to be saying in this passage is that those Galileans did nothing to deserve what had tragically happened to them. And those workers in Siloam did nothing to deserve their death. Rather than explain why, Jesus simply reminded those in the crowd that everyone should turn their lives toward God without further delay. When you read this passage in Luke, it is clear that Jesus doesn't suggest that every experience of human suffering is the direct action of God.

Some popular theology that we hear today says that everything (including suffering) that comes into our lives is sent from God or willed by God. And there are some biblical texts that support this idea. However when I read the four gospels I have a hard time embracing the popular theology that assigns all of life's

suffering and hardship and pain to the ultimate will of God. After all, Jesus gave us the very best look and understanding of who God is and how God acts and what God desires. Think about it. Jesus never caused anyone to become sick; he healed diseases. Jesus never caused anyone's death; he only raised people from death. He never sent a disaster to a city; he only wept over the calamity that he knew was bound to come into people's lives as a consequence of sin.

In his book, *Disappointment with God*, Philip Yancey tells the story of a friend named Douglas. Yancey explains that Douglas has lived the most Job-like existence of any person he has ever met. Yancey says this because soon after Douglas made the sacrificial decision to enter into full time ministry, his wife was diagnosed with cancer. Then to make matters worse, Douglas' funding for seminary was eliminated and he and his twelve year old daughter were badly injured in a car wreck. Finally, his wife succumbed to the cancer that had caused her so much pain and hardship.

One day Philip asked Douglas to describe his disappointment with God. Douglas replied, "I learned a long time ago ... not to confuse God with life. Douglas continued, "We tend to think that life should be fair because God is fair. But God is not life. If we develop a relationship with God apart from our life circumstances, then we may be able to hang on when the physical reality breaks down. We can learn to trust God despite all the unfairness of life."

In spite of all the hardships and difficulties he has faced, Douglas does not feel cheated and angry at God like Jack Welch does. Douglas didn't walk away from his faith because he refuses to confuse God with the circumstances of life. Douglas realizes that sometimes we are just not able to fully explain why certain things happen the way that they do. So rather than blaming God or being disappointed with God, Douglas leans on God and trusts that God's grace will be sufficient to sustain him come what may.

On one occasion Jesus said that the last word is going to be joy, but in the meantime we'll have to deal with pain and hardship. He didn't attempt to explain away pain and suffering. Apparently, they are just a part of life. And no one knows this any more than Jesus. After all, he went through some of the greatest pain and suffering anyone has ever experienced.

The German theologian, Jurgen Moltman, once said, "God weeps with us so that we may one day laugh with him." Those first followers of Jesus wept on Good Friday. Then they laughed with joy on Easter Sunday. I believe that we can find meaning for our lives when we allow our faith to rest on this pattern. I believe that we can find the strength to carry on in the face of great hardship and adversity when we remember that the worst thing is never the last thing – Calvary's cross did not have the final word. Easter did. And because of that fact nothing that happens is irredeemable.

**David**

**HEALTH KITS FOR HAITI UPDATE**

Thank you for your overwhelming response to the health kit project. First UMC collected 99 kits! Church member, Dwaine Morgan, is the Director of the Mission Resource Center in Mooresville. Dwaine picked up our kits and delivered them to the Center. From there they will be shipped to Haiti to help meet the needs of the Haitian people. Thank you for your generosity and compassion.

**AT WORSHIP NEXT SUNDAY**

February 14, 2010

**THE SHARED WORD: Rev Lara "Willis" Greene**  
**"Exodus"**

Selected verses from Exodus

**STEWARDSHIP REPORT, February 7, 2010**

Attendance: 8:45 a.m. 91      11:00 a.m. 151  
 Sunday School 173    9:00 a.m. Praise Service 95

Offering:	Tithes & Offerings	\$19,922.00
	Disaster Relief Fund	810.00
	Hunger Fund	479.50
	Children's Dept.	50.00
	Care Ministry	25.00
	Renovation Fund	<u>115.00</u>
		\$21,401.50

Weekly Budget Needs	\$10,963.00
Budget Needs as of 2/7/10	\$65,778.00
Contributions Received as of 2/7/10	54,274.00
Under Budget for Year	-\$11,504.00



**NEEDED!! A FEW GOOD MEN**

We are in need of a few good men who are willing to spend an hour or two with some male youth. The young men need a positive male in their lives. You could take them bowling, fishing, to the mall or what ever the two of you decide together. It may be just going to get ice cream. Would you please contact Peggy at 464-8422 or 336-940-7246 if you are interested. These young guys really need you in their lives. I have been praying about this and I hope you will join me. If I don't hear from you soon, I may call on you. Thank you for all your support and help in our youth ministry here at First UMC.

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEXT WEEK**

**\* February 14-20, 2010 \***

SUN.	8:45	Worship Service
	9:00	Praise Service
	9:30	Sunday School
	11:00	Worship Service
	4:00	Middle School Youth
	5:00	Senior High Youth
MON.	9:00	Preschool
	7:00	Youth Praise Band
TUES.	9:00	Preschool
	6:30	Griefshare
	7:00	Disciple I
WED.	6:45	Prayer Breakfast
	9:00	Preschool
	12:00	Ladies Luncheon
	3:10	Kids for Christ
	7:00	Ash Wednesday Service Chancel Choir
THURS.	9:00	Preschool
	1:00	Prayer Shawl
FRI.	9:00	Preschool

**UNITED SINGLE ADULTS (USA)**

The USA Singles will be enjoying a night out together bowling at the Pin Station located in Newton starting at 7:00 pm. The Pin Station is only one mile from the church and is beside Honey's Supermarket. Since many of you know where First Methodist Church is located, Kenny will wait at the church from 6:30 until 6:45 pm. Each of us will then drive there, and you will have the freedom to stay or leave when you desire.



**HONORARIUM**

Joe and Nancy Killian have given a donation to the UMW Scholarship Fund in honor of **Melba and Brooks Nichols**.

**LADIES LUNCHEON RESERVATIONS**

**Wednesday, February 17, 12:00 p.m.**

Cost: \$6.00

Number \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**RECENT VISITORS:**

Kimberly Britt, Millicent Crawford, Janice Davis,  
Celia Drum, Dexter & Karey Warren, Leslie Foster,  
Burton Hoage, Robert & Tiffany Abernethy

**HOSPITAL REPORT:**

Sam Irby is in the clinic at Abernethy Laurels.

Frances and Helen Raymer are at Abernethy Laurels,  
rooms 710 & 711.

**UMW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** will **not** meet  
on February 15th.

**2010 ACOLYTES AND CROSS BEARERS**

Children in grades 2-5 are welcome to serve as acolytes during the 11 a.m. church service and children in grades 6-8 are cross bearers. We are developing the 2010 acolyte and cross bearer schedule. We have the following children who have volunteered to serve the church in this way for 2010:

Morgan and Alex Butler, Ben and Rolan Benson, Hannah Lowder, Kasey Boger, Holly Cable, Annecy and Haleigh White, Chandler and Damion Setzer, Jarrett and Alex Mull, Caroline and Charlie Smith, Ethan, Elizabeth, and Evan Branton, Chase Boston, Will and Megan Johnson, Amy Bandy, Elizabeth and Carter Greene, Will and Alex Yoder, Hunter Bray, Erin Killian, Erin Kelley, and Reece Peacock.

If there are other children that would like to be acolytes or cross bearers or children on this list that no longer want to serve in this role, contact Donna Mull at 466-1556 or [donna\\_mull@ncsu.edu](mailto:donna_mull@ncsu.edu).

The following children are scheduled to serve as acolytes and cross bearers for February:

- Feb. 14th: Caroline and Charlie Smith
- Feb. 21st: Ethan Branton (no cross bearer during Lent)
- Feb. 38th: Evan Branton (no cross bearer during Lent)

**MEMORIALS RECEIVED RECENTLY****Renovation Fund:**

**Dr. Allen H. Bandy, Sr.**  
FUMC Hickory, Joy Outlook Class

**Men's Bible Class—Radio Fund:**

**Dr. Allen H. Bandy, Sr.**  
Karen & Martha Lowder

**UMW Scholarship Fund:**

**Dr. Allen H. Bandy, Sr.**  
Joe & Nancy Killian

**LENTEN PRAYER PARTNERS  
FOR THE SEASON OF LENT**

We will be having new prayer partners for the season of Lent. We will pair up an adult with a child or youth for 40 days of Lent, beginning Feb. 17th. Each pair will have 2 mailbags in the covered breezeway between the buildings upstairs. The mailbags are for letters of encouragement, prayers, and positive communication across the ages. Adults will be given the name of their partner, but we want the adults to remain anonymous until Palm Sunday. On Palm Sunday we will have a church wide spring event to reveal partners and share in a fun filled day of fellowship, egg hunts, and more at Greg and Beth Phillips' farm. If you would like to become a prayer partner, please fill in the insert in any bulletin this Sunday or on line. Fill in a separate insert for every member of your family and remember this is a short-term commitment for every age of our church.

**PRAYER CONCERNS****Pray For:**

Ryan Fitzgerald  
Dot Feimster  
Jerry McGee  
George Deal  
Pat Kincaid  
Sam Irby  
Helen & Frances Raymer  
Family of Louis Sloan (grandmother of Lisa Johnson)

**Requested By:**

Peggy Correll  
Harriett Wyatt  
Merv McGee  
Shelley Hayes  
Harriett Wyatt  
Friends  
Friends

**Out-of-Country Military**—Scott Beal, Jacob Campbell, Brent Cossich, Gary Hogan, Todd Houtz, Rodney Woody and National Guard 626 Maintenance Co.

**In-Country Military**—Bobby Benson, Andy Blanton, Stan Josey, Corey Lail, Laird Lambeth, Brad McRee, Tai Orange, Kyle L. Sigmon, Ryan Windham, President Obama & Leaders

**THE 2010 CHURCH DIRECTORY** may be found on tables at the entrances to the sanctuary. One is available for each family.

**PLEASE CALL AND SIGN UP TODAY!**

Sunday, Feb. 14: Taco Salad \_\_\_\_\_  
Sunday, Feb. 28: Hot Dogs Donna Mull  
Sunday, March 7: Lasagna \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to thank everyone who has been furnishing meals for our youth. You may choose the meal you would like to fix or use my suggestion. Whatever you would like to furnish is appreciated. Our group has grown in numbers, so I really encourage everyone to pair up in order to keep your cost down. Thanks so much for your support. **Peggy**

**YOUTH SCHEDULE**

Each youth was given their Bible Study for this week. Please parents, ask them about it and encourage them to follow through. Thanks for your help and support. Remember!! **Parents have your youth at church.**

**SUN., Feb. 14** Middle School Youth—4:00-5:30 PM  
Senior High Youth—5:00-6:30 PM  
(Bible Study is Session 4.)

**SUN., Feb. 21** 1:00-2:30 PM Bowling at Pin Station

**SUN., Feb. 28 & SUN., March 7:** Regular Youth

**March 12-14:** Camp Hanes (No Youth that Sunday)

**ROTATION SUNDAY SCHOOL-February 14, 2010**

*"Occupations In Bible Times"*

4 Years: **Art**

Grades K-1: **Drama**

Grade 2-3: **Cookery**

Grades 4-5: **Music**

**Teachers: January 10-February 28, 2010**

Storytelling: Caroline Sitzer Art: Susan Reinhardt

Drama/Games: Lisa Johnson/Gayle Lowder

Cookery: Cindy Boger/Terra Butler

Music: Debbie Bandy

Movie: Rhonda Pawlik Computer: Gina & Scott King

Science: Michelle White/Amy White

**NEWS FROM PEGGY:****ATTENTION****PARENT'S OF MIDDLE SCHOOL YOUTH**

I am so proud of our all our youth. Our Middle School Youth group is growing and this is wonderful. I believe everyone enjoys our time together. Middle School Youth is over at 5:30 PM. I need parents to pick up their youth by then so I can start my time with our Senior High Youth. So, parents, pick your youth up at 5:30 PM. Thank you for all you do and most of all for your support.

**CAMP HANES—MARCH 12-14**

I know this date seems far away, but I need to know by **Sunday, March 7** if your youth is planning on attending this retreat. Your cost will be \$50.00 and the church will pay the remaining amount. I will be the speaker for the weekend and the theme is "**Who Is Jesus?**". We are going to learn together who Jesus is and what he means to us. **PARENTS, PLEASE LET ME KNOW ASAP IF YOUR YOUTH IS GOING OR IF THEY ARE NOT GOING!!**