



News In Pews Newsletter

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Rev. Ted Keen, Minister

Pastor's Corner



The Art of Sharing By Rev. Ted Keen

As I have worked on my sermon for this week, one thing about Jesus has continually struck me: His generosity and willingness to share his life with others.

When reading Matthew's story of Jesus' Baptism at the Jordan, I've always wondered *why* Jesus needed to be baptized by John. Like John, I am one who believes that *no* human is worthy of even touching the sandals of Jesus, much less baptizing him. Jesus' answer to John is that it is necessary to "fulfill all righteousness," but I've never fully known what that meant.

Perhaps what Jesus meant is that, by baptizing him, John is helping Jesus fulfill his mission to bring people closer to God. If righteousness is defined as a "right

relationship" with God, then don't we need to know more about the One with whom we are to have a relationship. That must have been one of Jesus' goals as a living, breathing man: To show us who God really is. This story is the beginning, the inauguration of such a mission.

Yes, two of the gospels share stories of Jesus' birth and one tells of the twelve-year-old Jesus teaching in the Temple, but with angels, a bright star and the visit of kings, these stories largely tell us how amazing Jesus is. Here, in the waters of the Jordan, the people standing around see Jesus sharing his life and purpose with them. Whether they have already been baptized or are still waiting to be baptized, these people now see Jesus as one of them, soaked by the same waters and touched by the same hands of John. Jesus' invitation comes with a very special message from God: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am

well pleased." How could each of them not wonder if they too are the beloved sons and daughters of God.

This theme of sharing his life so that others can better understand God will continue to follow the ministry of Jesus Christ. When he heals the lepers and the blind, Jesus shares the power of God for very human purposes. When he teaches in parables about such mundane, everyday things as coins and sheep, Jesus shares the truth of God in a very human way. Even when he does the miraculous such feed the multitude and calm a storm, Jesus shares God to alleviate very human problems: hunger and fear.

Sharing God in human ways is one of the purposes of Jesus' life. And it is one of ours as well. As we go through the new year following the stories of Jesus in the Bible, I encourage all of us find ways to share God through our faith, through our words and through our behavior.

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Internet Evangelism Day

The amazing growth of digital media is transforming the world and changing the way we communicate and even think. There are growing opportunities for digital evangelism.

Internet Evangelism Day offers a one-stop online resource guide to help Christians understand these varied opportunities. Topics covered include: how to build a church website that is 'outsider friendly', using Facebook and Twitter in evangelism, and keeping a small portfolio of video clips on your mobile phone.

Internet Evangelism Day is an initiative of the Internet Evangelism Coalition, based at the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton. It is supported by a wide range of Christian leaders and groups. "I am glad to commend Internet Evangelism Day," says John Stott.

More information: www.IEDay.net

Googling the Gospel Russ Bravo, editor Inspire

How do you connect to people? It's a question I've been thinking about increasingly in recent days, as life gets more hectic and the pressures of work make time ever more precious.

As with so many things, the internet can be a blessing or a curse. It can deliver information to our fingertips at the click of a mouse, give us access to knowledge, understanding, entertainment and much more at very modest cost – and help us communicate faster, wider and more creatively than ever before.

But we all know some of the downsides: pornography, paedophiles, junk e-mail, 'phishing' scams where crooks try to hijack your bank account. It can also be addictive, divide families and lure many into gambling

habits and more.

Too much time online can see you neglecting family relationships. Yet interest groups via e-mail, hobby websites, instant messaging and more can see you make plenty of new friends. And the constant interaction can see you feel you know these people better than many you see day to day.

Relationships need time, and they need regular feeding. In our stopwatch lifestyles, leisurely conversation is a prized gem that so often seems just out of reach. Even texting and instant messaging can so often be just brief exchanges of information.

So it's good news that many of those leading the way in the online Christian community are promoting an Internet Evangelism Day focus day on the last Sunday of April. They offer churches downloadable resources to enable

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God's Minute

Welcome to the year 2011

This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Psalm 118:24 *NKJV

What do you think this day, or any day means to our Heavenly Father? For the answer to that let us turn to the Bible where it is written; **But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. (2 Peter 3:8)**

It is also written; **For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it is past, and like a watch in the night. (Psalms 90:4)**

You see even though a thousand years is a very long, long time to us, it isn't when compared to God's Eternal Existence.

Now when we think about it, we actually live one moment at a time, not a day at a time, do we not? For none of us carry a guarantee of the future, even if that future is only an hour or two away. So try to do your best in the moments that you have each day, remembering that a lot can be accomplished in only a moment. Therefore cherish each day that God has given to you, and try to be the best person that you can be each hour of every

day. Amen.

Now I would like to share the following poem with you, and to wish you a Wonderful New Year filled with God's Love, Hope and Faith. May God Richly Bless You Indeed in 2011.

Each Day

**A new year just beginning,
Each day a fresh, new start,
To fulfill your hopes
And pursue the dreams
Sustained within your heart.**

**Put God in charge;
He'll plant the seeds
Of affection, love and care.
Like a garden, your life will grow
With kindness flowering there.**

**And as you face the wonder
Of each day's mysteries,
You'll see God's hand
Unfolding, daily, possibilities!**

**And as each day comes to a close,
Dream a dream or two,
Then with a prayer thank dear God
For each day given to you.**

Poet, Gael Phaneuf

(Continued from page 1 - Googling the Gospel)

them to create their own web awareness program – a focus day to inform and envision their members. Increasingly, the world's population is getting online – more than half the West's population has web access, and there are over 100 million internet users in China, 60+ million in India, 20 million in the Middle East.

It is a massive harvest field of seeking, searching people. Behind many of the searches on Google, the world's biggest search engine, are people looking for meaning, purpose, hope, community. Yet the vast majority of all Christian and church websites are for our benefit, not theirs.

Mission is coming home, to a PC near you. Will we hear the call?

May 15 is Worldwide Web Focus Day for Churches

“The last 15 years have changed our world for ever,” claims Tony Whittaker, co-ordinator of Internet Evangelism Day. “Digital media are transforming the way we communicate, behave and even think. If Facebook was a country, it would have the third largest population in the world.”

Internet Evangelism Day is a strategic resource to help the worldwide church understand these issues and use the Web to share the good news. It is both a year-round online guide and an annual focus day – to be held in 2011 on

Sunday 15 May.

Churches are encouraged to use Internet Evangelism Day resources to create a presentation for their members on that Sunday (or any time in May). The IE Day site offers free downloads: PowerPoint, video clips, handouts, drama scripts, music and posters. These enable any church (or homegroup, college, or conference) to build a customized program, lasting from five minutes to fifty.

2011's focus day will be the seventh to be used by churches around the world since the initiative's launch in 2005. Over this period, digital media have developed dramatically, with the advent of YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, and the growing use of mobile phones to access online services. The outreach opportunities have multiplied too.

IE Day's website is also a one-stop resource covering many subjects, including how to build a church website that is 'outsider friendly', using Twitter in evangelism, and blogging. Perhaps surprisingly, you do not need to be technical to share your faith online. And you can volunteer to be an email mentor to inquirers with several large online outreach ministries.

Internet Evangelism Day is an initiative of the Internet Evangelism Coalition, based at the Billy Graham Center, Wheaton. It is supported by a wide range of leaders and groups. “I am glad to commend Internet Evangelism Day,” says John Stott.

For more help, visit the website:

IE Day's website: www.InternetEvangelismDay.com.

(Continued from page 1) *The Art of Sharing*

I would like to leave you with a small homework assignment. The Lenten season begins on Wednesday, March 9th. I would like to create an Ebenezer Church Lenten devotional booklet for everyone to use. I visualize this book as a way for each person to read devotions written by others in the church, not only as a practice of faith but also as a practice of community.

Each devotion should be about 350 words or less (even 100 words would be fine). If you would like to include a scripture passage and a one or two sentence prayer, that would be great. Otherwise, I can pick these out for you. If I need to lightly edit your devotion, I will send you the changes. The deadline for the devotions is February 20th. They can be given to me in any form, handwritten or typed, and they can be mailed, emailed or given to me on Sunday mornings. I hope I will have forty people write forty devotions, but I may need some people to write two. I'll let you know how things are coming along. My email address is ted.keen@ngumc.net.

Beautiful words to live by.....

Prayer is not a "spare wheel" that you pull out when in trouble; it is a "steering wheel" that directs us in the right path throughout life.

Do you know why a car's WINDSHIELD is so large & the rear view mirror is so small? Because our PAST is not as important as our FUTURE. So, look ahead and move on.

When GOD solves your problems, you have faith in HIS abilities; when GOD doesn't solve your problems HE has faith in your abilities.

A blind person asked St. Anthony: "Can there be anything worse than losing eye sight?" He replied: "Yes, losing your vision."

MYF YOUTH GROUP

January meeting dates:

Jan. 5
Jan. 12
Jan. 19
Jan. 26

The MYF Youth group need volunteers to provide dinners for the above dates.

Mark your calendar - The Sweetheart Café is right around the corner, Saturday, February 12.



The annual snow tubing trip is set for the weekend of February 19-21.



Tea Party with Mark Ballard

Ebenezer United Methodist Church is hosting an "In The Pink Tea Party" and program featuring Mark Ballard.

The event is Saturday, February 5th, at 11:00 a.m. Tickets are \$25 and all proceeds benefit *Relay for Life*.

We are also looking for enthusiastic volunteers to serve on our 2011 Relay Team. For tickets or to volunteer: Call Dorothy at (478) 994-5832 or Judy at (478) 994-6675.

Don't forget to wear pink!



Family Game Night

Build a hotel on Boardwalk...Land on Payday...Visit Gumdrop Mountain...Accuse Miss Scarlet with a Wrench in the Dining Room?

Whatever your taste, come out and have some fun! Join us for Family Game Night on Friday, February 21st, at 7:00 PM. All ages are welcome, and light refreshments will be provided.



SPACE AVAILABLE

Got something you would like to say or saw something you would like to share? Send it to Susan at dance567@bellsouth.com, give it to her at church or call her at 994-0674..

Draw Me Close to You

Draw me close to You,
never let me go.

I lay it all down again
to hear You say
That I'm Your friend.

You are my desire,
no one else will do,
'Cause nothing else
could take Your place,
To feel the warmth of
Your embrace.

Help me find the way;
Bring me back to You.

You're all I want;
You're all I've ever needed.

You're all I want;
Help me know You are near.

— Kelly Carpenter

Long ago and far away,
when the story of our
salvation was still being
written, a teenage boy tended his
father's sheep. His name was David
and his passion was praise. As he
reclined by the campfire keeping
watch over the sleeping flock, he sang
poetry he'd compose to the Lord.

Perhaps, as he drew a lamb onto his
lap, he thought of how he desired that
God would draw him close and never
let him go. Perhaps laying back and
looking up at the moonless sky dotted
with countless stars, David thought of

God — desiring closeness, friendship,
a warm embrace. "Draw me close to
You, never let me go. You're all I
want."

Then maybe, as a restless sheep
awakened from its sleep and voiced
discontent, the young shepherd
ceased his lofty thoughts and attended
to the needs of the flock. And maybe
then a quiet voice within David spoke
to him. "I know you and love you.
Your praises fill My heart with
delight. I am just as concerned for
you as you are for your sheep. David,
I am your Shepherd. When you are
with Me, you will never want for
anything."

We don't exactly know what
prompted David to pen Psalm 23. But
it isn't beyond reason to think it was
such a scenario. What we do know,
however, is that as long as the Lord
was his shepherd, David was not in
want.

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be
in want.*

Psalm 23:1

PRAYER

*Picture yourself a lamb cradled
in a Shepherd's arms. Tell the
Lord He's all you want and need.
Then ask Him for the faith and
ability to believe that with Him,
you "shall not be in want."*

Ebenezer United Methodist Church

January 2011



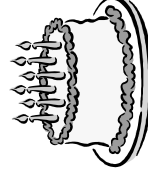
BIRTHDAYS!!!!

- 1/01 Andy Jenkins
- 1/01 Kendall Pophan
- 1/01 Debbie Bush
- 1/01 Tabitha Reid
- 1/02 Angie Proctor
- 1/03 Danny Adams
- 1/04 Daniel Fishback
- 1/04 Devon Fishback
- 1/07 Rebekah Smith
- 1/08 Sheila Stark
- 1/09 Jacob Smith
- 1/10 Elizabeth Copelan
- 1/12 Erica Martin
- 1/12 Michael Proctor
- 1/15 Payton Quick
- 1/17 Laura Howard
- 1/18 Connie Copelan
- 1/18 Jim Roquemore
- 1/20 Katie Daniel
- 1/22 Larry Christopher
- 1/27 Frank Smith
- 1/27 Anna Beth Williams
- 1/28 Dusty Ramsey



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!!!

- 1/01 Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Proctor
- 1/17 Mr. & Mrs. Daryl Remick
- 1/19 Mr. & Mrs. John Roquemore



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
December 2010 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	3	4	5	6	7	8
Sunday School - 10 a.m. Worship Service - 11 a.m.			MYF - 6 p.m.			New Year's Day
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Sunday School - 10 a.m. Worship Service - 11 a.m.			MYF - 6 p.m. Choir - 6:30 p.m.			
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Sunday School - 10 a.m. Worship Service - 11 a.m.	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day		MYF - 6 p.m. Choir - 6:30 p.m.			
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Sunday School - 10 a.m. Worship Service - 11 a.m.			MYF - 6 p.m. Choir - 6:30 p.m.			
30	31					
February 2011 S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28						