



News In Pews Newsletter

December 2010 Vol. 1 No. 4

1681 Dames Ferry Road
Forsyth, Georgia 31029
770-355-0050
Rev. Ted Keen, Minister

Pastor's Corner



Change That Can Do Us Good!

By Rev. Ted Keen

The uproar of the substitution of the greeting "Happy Holidays!" for "Merry Christmas!" a few years ago was deafening. Today, we may still hear a few people here and there get upset, but the volume seems to have lessened. I think at the time many Christians had become increasingly uncomfortable with the idea of sharing this season with other cultural celebrations. It became an effort to protect the honor of long-held traditions from being changed.

I am not sure why the concern seems to have lessened as of late. Perhaps we have discovered that attacks on our Christmas season ended

up having no teeth. There seems to be nothing in the world like snuggling under a blanket on Christmas morn while drinking hot chocolate, listening to carols and watching loved ones open gifts. Nothing will bring down the twinkling Christmas tree or the stockings hung lovingly on the hearth. Nothing will stop the feast shared with family. And, of course, nothing will stop the Almighty God from breaking forth in our lives with the good news of a child born in Bethlehem. We didn't have to be so worried about change, after all, did we?

In reality, however, Christmas is all about change. It was a change for the earliest Christians, who began celebrating Christmas in the fourth century. Easter typically occurred around the spring equinox and Christmas was celebrated near the Winter Solstice. Yet, the Winter Solstice already had an important pagan holiday called "The Day of the

Invincible Sun," which commemorated the lengthening of days after the Solstice. These Christians adopted some of the traditions of that pagan festival and designated the anniversary of Jesus' birth at the "Birthday of the Sun of Righteousness." That was change.

Most of us have different ways of celebrating Christmas today. Change occurred for me and Julie when we married and had to think of ways to blend our already existing Christmas traditions. This, of course, is true of most families. Change takes place over time as old traditions give way to new ones. While it can be difficult to change, there is perhaps nothing more appropriate for the season. One of my favorite Christmas hymns is one of change – how God changed the world and how we have been changed in response. Here is this beautiful poem:

(Continued on page 3)

"Inside the Teenage Brain"

By Jonathan McKee, president of The Source for Youth Ministry.

Ever wonder why teenagers might be better than us in video games, but seemingly inept at simple decision making and reasoning?

If only we could take a peek inside the teenage brain. Well... they have!

Parade magazine featured an excellent article yesterday about the teenage brain. I've written on the teenage brain before-- especially the fact that teenagers lack the neural circuitry in the frontal lobe necessary for decision making. Teenage brains are a "work in progress" until they are in their 20's. (That explains a lot, huh?)

This new Parade article encored that research, and also shared a few other interesting tidbits:

(Continued on page 2)

MYF YOUTH

"Ebenezer was no Scrooge in Christmas Parade"

The Ebenezer Youth entered a float in the 2010 Hometown Holidays Christmas Parade. The theme of the parade was "A Storybook Christmas," so the youth chose Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol." The float depicted a scene with a joyous Ebenezer Scrooge (played by Matthew Daniel) presenting the extra-large Christmas Goose at the dinner table of the Cratchits. Isabelle McLauren played the role of Tiny Tim. Youth riding the float and walking along, portraying members of the Cratchit family, were Rebecca Hopper, Shania Hawkins, Amy Boswell, Caitlyn Onstott, Frank Wilder, James Warren, Cole Ragin, Dustin Ramsey, Peyton Quick, Neil Johnson and Eddie Carroll. Signs on the float declared the

famous line, "God Bless Us, Everyone!" It was a great parade and Ebenezer UMC was well represented.

Thanks to all those who had a hand in decorating the float, and especially to Connie Copelan and Backlot Players for the costumes and props.

Upcoming Events:

Dec. 8 -- 6 p.m. -- Shopping trip for Angle Tree Kids

Dec. 15 -- 6 p.m. -- Youth meeting

Week of Dec. 20 --TBA -- Youth Christmas Gathering (watch for details)

** Youth will be participating in all the church-wide holiday activities as well

**** Dec. 29** -- No youth meeting

Jan. 5 -- youth meetings resume

Save the Date:

Saturday, Feb. 12 --

"UMYF Sweetheart Café".



God's Minute

**The Lord is gracious and righteous;
our God is full of compassion.
(Psalm 116:5 *NIV)**

THE PASTOR'S CAT

Dwight Nelson recently told a true story about the pastor of his church. He had a kitten that climbed up a tree in his backyard and then was afraid to come down. The pastor coaxed, offered warm milk, etc.

The kitty would not come down. The tree was not sturdy enough to climb, so the pastor decided that if he tied a rope to his car and pulled it until the tree bent down, he could then reach up and get the kitten.

That's what he did, all the while checking his progress in the car. He then figured if he went just a little bit further, the tree would be bent sufficiently for him to reach the kitten. But as he moved the car a little further forward, the rope broke.

The tree went 'boing!' and the kitten instantly sailed through the air - out of sight.

The pastor felt terrible. He walked all over the neighborhood asking people if they'd seen a little kitten. No. Nobody had seen a stray kitten. So he prayed, 'Lord, I just commit this kitten to your keeping,' and went on about his business.

A few days later he was at the grocery store, and met one of his church members. He happened to look into

her shopping cart and was amazed to see cat food. This woman was a cat hater and everyone knew it, so he asked her, 'Why are you buying cat food when you hate cats so much?'

She replied, 'You won't believe this,' and then told him how her little girl had been begging her for a cat, but she kept refusing. Then a few days before, the child had begged again, so the Mom finally told her little girl, 'Well, if God gives you a cat, I'll let you keep it.' She told the pastor, 'I watched my child go out in the yard, get on her knees, and ask God for a cat. And really, Pastor, you won't believe this, but I saw it with my own eyes. A kitten suddenly came flying out of the blue sky, with its paws outspread, and landed right in front of her.'

Never underestimate the Power of God and His unique sense of humor.

This particular story just made me laugh so hard! Every time I think about it, the vision of that poor cat just amuses me to no end. Hope the story leaves a bright spot in your day. Whoever said the Creator doesn't have a sense of humor?

**He will yet fill your mouth with laughter
and your lips with shouts of joy.**

Job 8:21 *NIV



Now does God have a sense of humor? Well it is written:
**He who sits in the heavens shall
laugh**

**Psalm 2:4
*NKJV**

(Continued from page 1 - Inside the Teenage Brain)

The skills you practice as a child and pre-teen become much sharper in the teenage years; and those practiced reluctantly, if at all, will diminish on your brain's hard-disk drive. "The brain is very efficient, allowing you to become more adept at the life skills you're going to use -- which is why these are the years to set good work habits in place," notes Ellen Galinsky, president of the Families and Work Institute and author of *Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs*.

The frontal lobes, and particularly the prefrontal cortex, are one of the last areas of the brain to develop. Researchers now believe that the prefrontal cortex -- responsible for things like organizing plans and ideas, forming strategies, and controlling impulses -- is not fully developed until the late 20s. (The article I wrote above cited research that said "early" twenties. Interesting that it's now the "late 20s.") Beginning in puberty and continuing into the early 20s, adolescents need from 8.4 to 9.2 hours of sleep on average a night.

Teens and adults used different areas of the brain to process what they were feeling. Teens rely much more on the amygdala, a small almond-shaped region in the medial and temporal lobes that processes memory and emotions, while adults rely more on the frontal cortex,

which governs reason and forethought.

My wife Lori and I talked about this article quite a bit when we read it. I was encouraged by a few things:

- Sometimes I second-guess myself when I'm not only teaching, but enforcing good work habits in our home. I wonder, "Am I being too strict?" It's good to hear that this window of time sets these good work habits in place for the rest of their life. I even asked my son Alec (17) his thoughts on the issue. He said, "Looking back, I'm glad you made me work hard and do some of this, because I probably never would have done it myself."

- Lori and I make our kids go to bed at 9PM. They always complain, "9PM!!! None of our friends have to go to bed at 9PM!" But when their alarm goes off early, they're always grateful!

- It also seems interesting that research keeps showing "full maturity" to be later and later. Early twenties, now late twenties. I can't help but wonder if we're pampering this generation too much, helping them not grow up. I've always experienced great results when I "raised the bar" just a bit with my kids, both in ministry and in parenting.

Hmmmmmm.

(Continued from page 1) *Change That Can Do Us Good*

In the bleak midwinter,
frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
water like a stone;

Snow had fallen,
snow on snow, snow on snow,

In the bleak midwinter,
long ago.

Our God,
heaven cannot hold him,
nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall
flee away when
he comes to reign.

In the bleak midwinter
a stable place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty,
Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels
may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
thronged the air;

But his mother only,
in her maiden bliss,
Worshiped the beloved
with a kiss.

What can I give him,
poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd,
I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man,
I would do my part;
Yet what can I give him:
give my heart.

If a shepherd can change...
If a Wise Man can change...
If the mother of Jesus can
change... If angels and
archangels can change...
If even the bleak midwinter can
change... Then, can't we all
change? Give Jesus your heart
this Christmas!



MYF YOUTH GROUP

December meeting dates:

Dec. 8
Dec. 15

The week of December 20th, the Youth will gather together to celebrate Christmas. Time and date to be announced.

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

Children's Christmas Play

December 19 at 6:30 p.m. the children will present their Christmas play in the sanctuary followed by the children's Christmas Party in the fellowship hall with a surprise guest - I wonder who it could be???

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

The Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service will be in the sanctuary at 5:00 PM. We will have a Lessons and Carols Service with the Christmas Story presented by the children. This will be followed by a special communion service. This worship service is one of the highlights of the Christmas season. We encourage you to invite your family and friends to attend.

"The Nativity"

There will be a screening of the 2006 film The Nativity in the fellowship hall at 7:30 PM on Christmas Eve. This movie beautifully portrays the events surrounding Jesus' birth in Bethlehem.

"Journey to the Manger Live Nativity" Christ United Methodist Church

Christ United Methodist Church will hold a Live Nativity - Journey to the Manger on Friday and Saturday, December 17 & 18 from 7 - 8:30 p.m. Be sure to include this in your list of things to do and see during the Holiday Season.



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..

Humble Thyself in the Sight of the Lord

Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord,
Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord,
And He shall lift you up,
Higher and higher
And He shall lift you up.
- Bob Hudson

Want an easy way to remember how to find joy? Consider this acronym for joy: **J**esus. **O**thers. **Y**ou. If you seek to put Jesus first in your life and then intentionally place the needs of others ahead of your own, you will discover contentment and happiness you didn't know was possible.

Jesus taught much about self-denial. He made it clear that His mission in coming to earth was to serve and not to be served. And His actions lived up to His words. He humbled Himself when He chose to enter our world. He lived among us --- experiencing pain, hunger, exhaustion. He washed the dirty feet of His disciples. He allowed Himself to be killed. Voluntarily

giving up His rights and privileges, He blazed the trail to ultimate fulfillment in this life and provided a path for eternal life.

Similarly, He called us to take up our cross and follow Him. He said that in giving we receive. He said that the last shall be first. He told us that if we seek to save our lives we'll lose them, but if we lose our lives for His sake, we'll find them. If Jesus had to humble Himself to make possible what God desired, we'd best follow His lead and humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord. And when we do, He promises to lift us up.

Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

James 4:10 NKJV



PRAYER

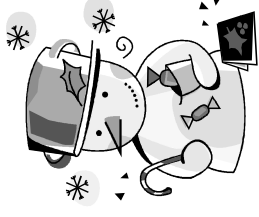
Admit your self-centered orientation to God (and yourself). Think of the ways your willfulness distances you from the Lord. Accept His forgiveness.

Ebenezer United Methodist Church December 2010



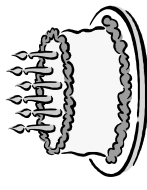
BIRTHDAYS!!!

- 12/05 Donna Quick
- 12/07 Betty Adams
- 12/10 Nancy Waller
- 12/11 Gavin Forrester
- 12/12 Pat Roguemoire
- 12/13 Sonya Chronmister
- 12/18 Terry Herndon
- 12/20 Cherie Ramsey
- 12/23 Amy Boswell
- 12/27 Kristen Martin
- 12/29 Beth Crissman
- 12/30 Bernice Lee



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!!!

- 12/13 Mr. & Mrs. Jeff Stark
- 12/20 Mr. & Mrs. Boyd Lee



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
November 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			1	2	3	4
5 Sunday School - 10 Worship Service - 11	6	7	8 MYF - 6 p.m. Choir - 6:30 p.m.	9 <i>Hanukkah begins</i>	10	11
12 Sunday School - 10 Worship Service - 11	13	14	15 MYF - 6 p.m. Choir - 6:30 p.m.	16	17	18
19 Sunday School - 10 Worship Service - 11 Christmas Play 6:30 p.m.	20	21	22 Choir - 6:30 p.m.	23	24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 5 p.m. The Nativity - 7:30	25 Christmas Day
26 Sunday School - 10 Worship Service - 11 Kwanzaa Begins	27	28	29 Choir - 6:30 p.m.	30	31	
January 2011 S M T W T F S 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						