

The Sweet Spirit

Olive Branch United Methodist Church

November, 2013



Just a thought

The Glaring Problem with Our Prayers

By Steven Furtick, used with permission.

We don't pray enough.

Most Christians would readily admit this.

But I don't mean it in the way most Christians probably think about it.

Usually, we mean this in terms of the **length** of our prayers. - I need to pray ten minutes instead of three. Twenty minutes instead of ten.

Or the **frequency** of our prayers. - I need to pray more than once a day. More than three times a week. And so on.

I mean it in terms of the **breadth** of our prayers; their **scope**; their **size**.

Christians do need to pray longer and more frequently. But when we're praying, most of us still aren't praying enough because we're content with asking for things that could just as likely happen due to natural explanations, increased effort, or a swing of good luck.

A good day. A bonus. Slightly increased attendance at church.

That's not enough. It's not enough when we're getting to have face time with the Creator of the universe. It's not enough when you consider Ephesians 3:20: *Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.*

That's an astonishing promise. It describes a big God. But most forget the context of the promise and don't see that it coincides with a big prayer: *And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge.* Ephesians 3:17b-19b.

That's a logical impossibility. The Ephesians probably freaked out when they read it. Paul maybe even freaked out when he prayed it. You can't know the unknowable. While eloquent, it seems like that prayer is a waste of time.

But that's only if you're dealing with a God whose abilities are measurable; limited. Paul knew otherwise.

One of the most glaring discrepancies in the Christian faith today is between the size of our God and the size of our prayers. I think God wants us to pray in such a way that we have to immediately remind ourselves of God's infinite greatness so that we don't freak out. I think God wants us to push the limits of what we can ask or imagine.

The wildest dreams you can conceive don't even compare to the endless power of God. Yes, pray longer. Yes, pray more frequently. But what does it matter if you pray for five minutes or ten. Once a day or twice a day.....

If you're settling for scraps of God's power and grace.

Farewell and Welcome

Due to continuing health problems, Rev. Jeffrey Clemens is retiring from active ministry effective Nov. 1st. It is with heavy hearts we say "Goodbye." Jeff's term as our pastor was only for a short time. In that time we grew to know and love him as he brought us God's word and grace for as long as he could. We thank him for his efforts and he will be greatly missed but.....

With the retirement of Rev Jeff we welcome Rev. Jennifer Vestal Moore to our church and charge. Jennifer comes from serving with the National Hunger Ministry, Society of St Andrew for the past 6 years. She has completed Course of Study and is a Licensed Local Pastor. Rev Jennifer is married to Barry and has two teenage sons, Bradley (15) and Jacob (17). She lives in Lynchburg but will be in the charge several days a week. She is a trained Christian Educator and served as a youth minister for 14 years prior to being called into licensed ministry. She serves on a couple of Conference committees including teaching at the conference Lay Servant's Academy as well as being invited to be the keynote speaker at different events throughout the conference.

Thanksgiving Community Service, Nov 27



On Wednesday, November 27th at 7:00 PM the local community and their respective churches will assemble at Olive Branch UMC to celebrate, with thanks, all that God has done for us. Please plan to join us in this time of thanks and worship. Refreshments will be offered immediately afterward. Watch the bulletin for more details as the planning is still ongoing.

Church Pantry and Food Distribution

Please don't forget our Church pantry. We, currently serve 10 families on the second Tuesday and Fourth Friday of each month. Our brothers and sisters in the greater community are suffering and need help. We are blessed that Food Lion is willing to provide us with meats, vegetables, fruits, and baked goods but, it is up to us to fill out the dietary needs of the families we serve. Help keep our pantry stocked with your donations. Our pantry is now sorted by the expiration date on the items. Each shelf is denoted by the year it expires. Please, if you put goods away put them on the appropriate year shelf.

This is also the time of the year we prepare for the families' Thanksgiving Dinners. Please donate your weekly Food Lion coupons to the Outreach Committee. These coupons will help defray the cost of the dinners we will take to our families. We are particularly asking for stuffing, large cans of sweet potatoes, green beans, cream of mushroom soup, cranberry sauce, gravy and other items you would normally use at Thanksgiving. Also, if you would like to bake or purchase a pumpkin or Apple Pie, please let Ed, John or Kathy know. We will need 10 pies for Thanksgiving. I know you will open your hearts.

Administrative Council Meeting

Our Administrative Council will meet this month on the 12th of November at 7:00 pm. The Trustees are supposed to report on the plan to add ceiling fans to the sanctuary to help in the environmental costs of the church. Charge Conference has been postponed to a later date. Committee Chairpersons are reminded to come prepared to give your report. If you have an idea of how we can make OBUMC better, bring your ideas to the council and let's talk about them. We can only be as good as our participation in the way we do things! Council meetings are for each member of our church to be heard.

United Methodist Women

The UMW will meet this month on the 13th at 2:00pm. All women of the church are invited to take part in the mission activities of the UMW.

United Methodist Men

The United Methodist Men will meet on Saturday, November 16th at 8:00 AM. The UMM thanks all the men and women who took the time to help us with our stew. The funds will go to expanding the mission work done by the men. Right at this moment it is to purchase portable heaters to loan to those in the community who have little or no heat. If you know of a family or a person in need of heat this fall and winter please call Ed DiStefano or Ray Dyer for assistance. As we approach Christmas the men are planning the yearly Christmas Dinner for the wives and widows. At our meeting we will have breakfast, a devotion, and a business meeting. More information will be available this month. Watch the bulletin!

Sunday School

Sunday School is available each Sunday morning. The importance of Sunday School is that, though you may think hearing the word during the worship service will suffice for you, you really need to be in attendance at Sunday School to gather all the information that you can in an open discussion classroom. Jesus' word cannot be totally understood just by listening to a sermon. You have to interact with it and with other Christians to learn what He, as well as the other people of the Bible is saying to us. This is a life long study and you should take part. We are continuing a study on Revelation by Dr. James "Mickey" Efird. Dr. Efird is teaching us through video programming and afterwards we have a full and open discussion on his teachings. It is very interesting and we hope you will join us. Sunday School begins at 10:00 AM

Save Your Empty Ink Cartridges

A continuing mission project headed by Matte Bersch is to gather empty ink cartridges and send them away. The company that they are sent to then sends the church a check. Sooo, please save them and put them in the box in the fellowship hall. All funds go to continuing our outreach. Thank you Mattie!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Celebrating birthdays this month:

Rev Jeff Clemens, Kathy Dyer, Roslyn Johnson,

Mike Fross, Ray Dyer, Peggy Moore

Happy Birthday from your church family.

Quick Reminder

Daylight Saving Time ends November 2nd. Turn your clocks back 1 hour Saturday night. Would really miss you Sunday!

Make a Joyful Noise

And our choir does just that. We practice on Thursday's at 7:00 PM. We are 7 strong at this time and with the help of Shirley Everest we are beginning to learn to read music. Try that at our age!!! If you feel that you would like to make a joyful noise, please come join us. Let us all come together to praise the Lord in song at our worship services. If you would like to join us let Ed DiStefano know. 252-537-5705

Parting Shot

This month we celebrate Thanksgiving. It started out as a remembrance of a difficult time in the early colonial history of our country. It was a time of celebration for the good things that God did for those people after a time of starvation, illness and death. Some 242 years later our country was going through another time of struggle. A great civil war was going on and it felt like God had forsaken this country. President Abraham Lincoln looked to God for His grace not only for the US but the CSA. He issued a proclamation on October 3, 1863 that follows:

By the President of the United States of America.

A Proclamation.

The year that is drawing towards its close, has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come, others have been added, which are of so extraordinary a nature, that they cannot fail to penetrate and soften even the heart which is habitually insensible to the ever watchful providence of Almighty God. In the midst of a civil war of unequalled magnitude and severity, which has sometimes seemed to foreign States to invite and to provoke their aggression, peace has been preserved with all nations, order has been maintained, the laws have been respected and obeyed, and harmony has prevailed everywhere except in the theatre of military conflict; while that theatre has been greatly contracted by the advancing armies and navies of the Union. Needful diversions of wealth and of strength from the fields of peaceful industry to the national defense, have not arrested the plough, the shuttle or the ship; the axe has enlarged the borders of our settlements, and the mines, as well of iron and coal as of the precious metals, have yielded even more abundantly than heretofore. Population has steadily increased, notwithstanding the waste that has been made in the camp, the siege and the battle-field; and the country, rejoicing in the consciousness of augmented strength and vigor, is permitted to expect continuance of years with large increase of freedom.

No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently and gratefully acknowledged as with one heart and one voice by the whole American People. I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States, and also those who are at sea and those who are sojourning in foreign lands, to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for

our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquility and Union.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the City of Washington, this Third day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the Independence of the United States the Eighty-eighth.
By the President: Abraham Lincoln William H. Seward, Secretary of State

Have a happy God filled Thanksgiving from all of the Olive Branch Family

This is our newsletter. It is meant to be a way to communicate what your church is doing and what all the organizations are doing both in the congregation and the community. I am sending this electronically via email and copies will be made available for those who need a printed copy.

There are many organizations within our church and I hope they would like to have their achievements, plans, and meetings made known to the entire church. It is my hope that they will ask one of their members to drop a short note as to what they doing each month. The line of communication in the church needs to be open and full of what we are doing at Olive Branch to make disciples in our area. If you would like to send us something, please bring it to church or send me an email (revedumc@yahoo.com) and we will see that it gets published. Please, let's keep our church informed on what we are doing. See you at church and God bless. Ed DiStefano