

# *The Sweet Spirit*

## *Olive Branch United Methodist Church*

*October, 2013*



### **Just a thought**

#### **Mark 1:4-11**

*And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And this was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."*

Approximately three-hundred years before John the Baptist came on the scene God had promised through the prophet Isaiah that a person would come and announce the coming of the Messiah. Isaiah said he would be: "A voice of one calling in the desert: prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God." And John is this man! John was a man of the wilderness. He was a simple prophet who pointed to someone beyond himself!

In order to prepare the way for Christ's coming, God had the people go back to their beginnings with God...He had them return to the wilderness - Just as Israel had long ago been separated from Egypt, from slavery in Egypt by a pilgrimage through the waters of the Red Sea. John the Baptist is calling them to once again experience separation -- this time it is separation from their slavery to sin. This is a second exodus for Israel. One prepares them for a new covenant with God.

We might ask: "Why did God have them return to the wilderness?" I think it is symbolic in the sense that they were called to return to a place where their dependence was solely on God and in order to truly repent they, like all of us, had to exchange their pride for humility!

John was "preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." And this baptism was the symbol of repentance. The mood, the spirit, the act of repentance is the main thing! Repentance is more than 'penitence' or 'godly sorrow for sin.' Repentance is not merely remorse, admitting mistakes, not just saying

to ourselves, "I have been a fool!" Repentance is more. It is even more than being 'sorry' for our sins. Repentance is a moral and spiritual revolution! And because of this, genuine repentance is one of the hardest things in the world to do and yet it is essential if we are going to be restored to a right relationship with God. Repentance calls for the complete breakdown of pride, of selfishness, of the hunger for the prestige which can come from wealth and fame, and of the self-will.

Nothing short of repentance can lead us out of disaster. Our wills must be set in a new direction. We must turn away from the fatal scramble for power, prestige, and advantage.

In the forefront of John's call for repentance was his knowledge of the coming of the only One who can and will forgive anyone who truly repents of their sins. John's entire message was about pointing beyond himself to Jesus Christ the Messiah! And this should be our entire message as well!

When we speak to others are we trying to get them to be impressed by us or by Jesus Christ? When we serve others are we just looking for recognition for ourselves or do we want them to know that it is not I doing this, but Christ Who lives in me? How badly do we want others to come to know the liberating and transforming power of Jesus Christ?

When we point beyond ourselves to Jesus Christ we are not only freed from the heavy--self-conscious--burden to impress but our entire lives are turned outward as we are transformed into joyful and expectant disciples of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords! Do we ever remind people of Jesus Christ? Are we pointing beyond ourselves?

### **Fishers of Men monies blessed on September 8<sup>th</sup>**

Catherine Minks, as part of our Outreach Committee, called us to continue our "Coins for God's Ministry," calling us to be "Fishers of Men". The committee collected the monies during worship services on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September and they were blessed by Rev. Jeff. A special thanks to all who took this ministry to heart as the funds will be used for reaching out to God's forgotten people in our community. The final sum was in excess of \$350 dollars. Again thanks to all who took part in this ministry. We will still be collecting coins and will bless them in January 2014.

### **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. Help keep our pantry stocked with your donations and God bless. We still have a need for canned goods and I know you will open your hearts. 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.

### **Administrative Council Meeting**

Our Administrative Council will meet this month on the 8<sup>th</sup> of October at 7:00pm. We will be discussing the church's leadership for the coming year. The Council will have to vote on those people who will serve in leadership roles during 2014. Along with that, it will have to decide on our budget and how we are going to meet the needs of the church. We are looking for the Finance Committee report on the setting of an honorarium for visiting clergy. 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. Please join us as this meeting will set the nominations of our leadership that will be approved at Charge Conference on the 26<sup>th</sup> of this month. 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.

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### **United Methodist Women**

The United Methodist Women Second Sunday Salad luncheon on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September was a success. The salads of all kinds were well received. The Ladies are thankful to all who were able to support them in furthering the ministries of the UMW. The love offering is appreciated. The UMW will meet this month on the 9<sup>th</sup> 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 Friday, Oct. 18th to begin the process of preparing a Brunswick Stew. The donation will be \$7.00 per quart and it will be ready at noon on the 19<sup>th</sup>. All funds will go to expanding the mission work done by the men. All men of the church are invited to join us as we continue our year of reaching out. We continue to work on our heating mission. We have purchased heaters to be used by those in the community who don't have heat moving forward. 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.

### **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 currently doing 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!

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## **HAPPY BIRTHDAY**

**Celebrating birthdays this month:**

**B.J. Grigg, Alice Johnson, Irene Sadler, A. B. Clary,**

**Monty Evans, Lilly Loher, Catherine Minks, Frank Abernathy**

**Happy Birthday from your church family.**

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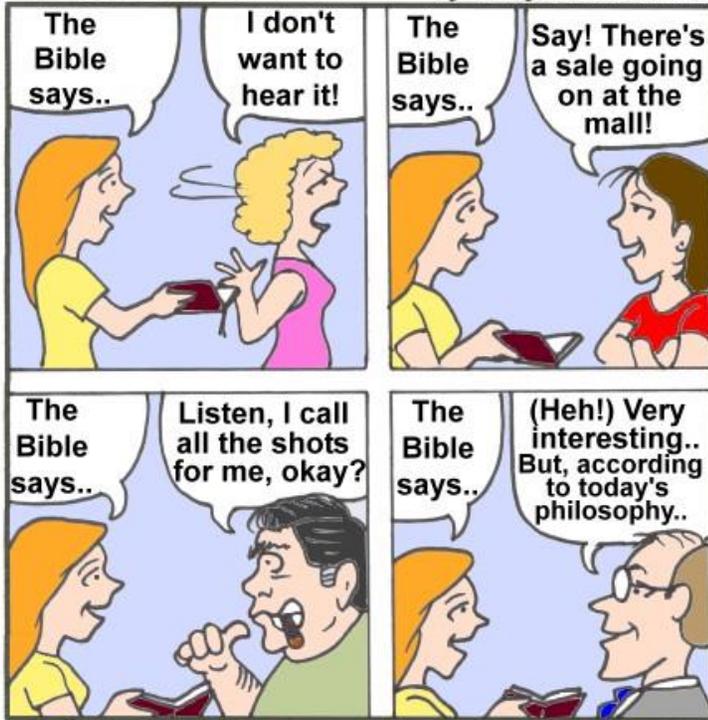
### **Make a Joyful Noise**

Yeah that's the name of our choir. We will be practicing on Thursday's at 7:00PM. We are 7 strong at this time. We are looking forward to beginning our presentation season on the 13th of October. 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

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# Bulletoon

by Trudy O. McConnell



**"Four methods people use to keep from hearing the truth..." (Rev.3:20)**

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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](mailto: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