



FIRST WORD

ReThink

What God Is Doing at First Church - Steps Toward a New Life Cycle

I was blessed recently with what was, for me, a first-time experience. Our "Russian daughter" and our granddaughter visited with us and it dawned on me that I was in the presence of four generations of women in our family: my mother-in-law, my wife, our Russian daughter, and our granddaughter. Each generation represented a point on the cycle of life; toddler, young adult, middle aged adult, and senior adult. The cycle begins with birth, and finally ends in death. Organizations, including church congregations, have a similar lifecycle.

"The difference between the lifecycles of humans and the lifecycles of congregations is that the human lifecycle is pretty much one way. We can slow it down, have periods of better or worse health, but time marches on. With congregations, while there is a typical pattern, congregations can, if their leaders choose, renew themselves and actually go back to the beginning of the cycle." (Office of Congregational Transformation, Florida UMC Conference, "Where is Your Congregation in its Lifecycle?")

At any point along the declining right side of the lifecycle of the diagram below, a congregation can go through transformation and resurrection, resulting in a *new life cycle!*



**All Church
Clean up Day
Saturday AUGUST 7th
Lets get started at 8 am**

Trustee Meeting

There will be a Trustee Meeting
Thursday August 5th, at 7 pm
Please attend if you are able.

Leadership Training

Congratulations to all the graduates of the Leadership Training held this past July.

Four Tuesday evenings, brought thought provoking discussions and ideas of how to lead FUMC into the future. Scott Kiddle and Mike Gilmor did an outstanding job. A huge thank you to Alan Bozich for cooking for Taco Tuesdays! We appreciate you so very much.

"The whole experience was ah..mazing."
-Leadership Training Graduate

Youth Ministry

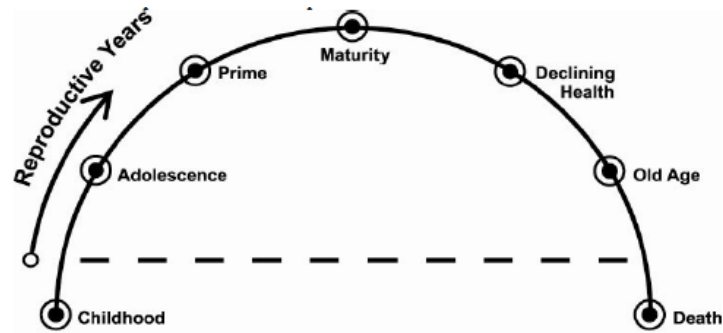
Youth Ministry has begun. You will start to notice some new and some younger faces around in the upcoming months. Say Hello and greet any new people you see. Be glad they are here and pray for the success of the new ministry here.

July 28th the youth group traveled to CoCoKey Waterpark, came back to the church and had devotional time and pizza. A great time was had by all. Church kids we know, grandchildren, friends and new youth all participated we had 47 youth attend our event! What a blessing! What a great way to spend your Summer day!

In August the youth will decorate their room, have youth group and have a carwash, that will help fund their upcoming activities.

Youth Group Carwash

August 14th 10 am-2 pm



(Diagram courtesy of Rogers-Martin, Tim. "Life Cycles and Church Health", 2007)

First Church, like so many Methodist Churches in our conference, and across the US, has been on the declining side of the cycle. Without a transformation and resurrection, the cycle will follow its natural course, which no one at First Church wants. Pastor Lydia has had a vision to move us toward that new life cycle, and has been positioning us for that moment.

Here's a small timeline of what God has been doing at First Church to bring us to the transformation and resurrection!

Sept 2008 – Pastor began preaching through whole Bible to saturate the congregation in the Word of God.

The study was mirrored, and reinforced in the Upper Room Sunday School.

Apr 2009 - Wednesday Night Alive small group began; a sense of urgency created with the "One Month to Live" study.

Sept 2009 – Hope Kitchen founded in the first step to becoming and outwardly-focused, missional church.

Jan 2010 – The church structure simplified & streamlined by creating ministry teams. The ministry team charter was written.

Jan 2010 – An off-site leadership retreat was held on church lifecycle and vision.

Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations training was held in Wednesday Night Alive.

Lay Leadership Development Training conducted by the Conference was held off-site to develop and equip key leaders. This was an eight month study that included reading eight books by key Christian leaders.

Making Disciples Training was conducted in Wednesday Night Alive.

Taco Tuesday Training (mini Lay Leadership Training) is in its third of four sessions at this writing.

Lighthouse program for children – expansion of outreach and ministry to children. This includes starting a bus ministry to kids in the community.

Youth Group Initiative – summer youth program headed by our new youth minister

Lay Leadership Development Training – new round of off-site classes available in September to equip additional individuals that want to become more effective in leadership

New members – God has given us thirteen precious new members over the course of this process.

Adult baptisms – God has also granted us two adult baptisms, one of which was a miraculous conversion to Christ in our midst.

As you can see, God has been doing more at First Church than you might have ever imagined. He's birthing a new life cycle that we believe will be characterized by fresh vision, enthusiastic growth, and greater fruitfulness than ever before. If you've not gotten involved yet, I encourage you in the Lord to contact Pastor Lydia, Mike Gilmore, or me to become part of this Great Adventure!

Scott Kiddle

Honor Flight Network

On April 28, 2010 I had the privilege of being part of a group of WWII veterans to make a trip to Washington DC to visit the war memorials and particularly the just recently built WWII memorial. This trip for WWII vets was sponsored by the Honor Flight Network organization who provided the trip free of charge to give the vets an opportunity to see the memorial built to honor them. We left Kansas City at 6:00 AM with 31 veterans and 20 guardians. Of the veterans I'm 84 years old and was the youngest of the group. There were 16 wheel chairs. The guardians were along to help the vets who needed physical help and were volunteers and family in some cases. The journey was arranged by Kendallwood Hills Estates, a retirement facility. Two staff ladies from the facility were the organizers and traveled as our leaders. One was a nurse. It seemed an unlikely group to make a one day trip to Washington. On the day before the trip the veterans and spouses or family were invited to a luncheon at the Estates to hear the details of the trip and to get acquainted. The goal of the organizers was to make the trip one of the most memorable experiences of our lives and they succeeded.

As we disembarked at Washington airport 150 to 200 people met us at the gate waving flags and cheering. As we walked through the airport to our bus many shook our hands and thanked us for our service.



We first went to the WWII memorial where we were met by Mr. Ike Skelton our representative from the House of Representatives. We then went to the Vietnam, Iwo Jima, Korean, Lincoln memorials. Next on to Arlington National Cemetery where we viewed the changing of the guard at the tomb of the unknown soldiers. Also a laying of wreath ceremony for recent burials with family members participating took place at the tomb. There are more than 300,000 graves in the cemetery with an average of 28 funerals every day. One can hardly imagine all the sacrifices, sadness and tears this place represents. Every teenager should make this trip so they could see and better understand the sacrifices of war. We were bussed to Baltimore where we boarded a flight to Kansas City. We arrived in Kansas City intact about 8:30 PM. A large group was there to meet us waving flags and cheering. What a humbling and memorable day.

George Hanson

Hope Kitchen: New hours

First United Methodist Church in Raytown delivers and serves over 90 meals a week. We do not check IDs neither do we ask about your income. Come every Saturday starting at 12:30 until 1:30 and get a nutritious dinner for yourself and your family. These are new hours! Spread the word. Walk Ins are welcome!

Volunteers please arrive at 11:00 am

For more information please call.

816-356-2027

Lighthouse Kids

We are excited that we had some new children last Sunday! We hope to see them again this Sunday! Remember to invite the children in your neighborhood and let them know about our children's church, bible stories, crafts, memory verses, snack, games and cool songs! We will pick them up and take them home.

Call Betty or Rachel at 358-2454 or 356-2027 for a ride. Come one COME ALL!

If you took the Safe Sanctuary Training in June, please get your forms turned in to the Conference Office Please send your forms to:
Safe Sanctuaries Office
3601 Amron Court
Columbia, MO 65202

United Methodist Women

Mark Your Calendar

UMW Annual District Meeting September 25th
UMW First United Methodist Church
September Meeting
Sunday September 26th.
Luncheon meeting will include:
School of Mission Report,
Election of Officers for 2011,
UMW Budget 2011

Our Friends At Home

Alberta Bone
Alma & Harold Corum
Carrel Dutt ** No mail please**
Jean Hart
Alpha Higdon
Stella Ireland
Pat Lowe
Ruth Johnson
Ray Money
Jim Young



Our military & their families:

J.W. Anhuis
Steve Beck
Anthony Coughenour
Brandon Fisk
Rich Graham
Penny Griswald
Michael Hart
Rhonda Johnson
Randall Ralls
Danny Scott
John Warner
Daniel Wiseman

Database Upgrade

The Memorials Committee has purchased a new tool for ministry for the church. We were blessed by a church family with the purchase of organizational software that will keep us connected technologically. This is such a blessing. We want to stay connected with all our friends members and visitors. We will be able to do some amazing things with this new tool.

If you would like to add a serviceman or woman to this list please let the church office know by email or give us a call.

Grandview takes service outside

By FRED KOENIG

On Sunday, May 30, Grandview United Methodist Church in Grandview combined its two Sunday services into one mid-morning outdoor praise service. Seated on the front lawn of the church, the congregation enjoyed praise music provided by the praise singers of the church and guest musicians "Just Short of Glory". The liturgical dancers provided a dance to "Shackles," and the church dedicated six flood recovery buckets. Following worship, the congregation enjoyed barbecue and a covered dish lunch on the lawn. Sue Reames, the Senior Pastor

*I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.
Psalm 34:4*

Festival of Sharing

10/16/2010 Starts 8 a.m. Ends 3 p.m.

An interfaith in-gathering for hands on mission. Over 3,000 persons from churches all over the state attend, bringing their collected cash and material goods for ministry projects. The event includes a quilt auction, church food booths, sacking of beans, rice and potatoes, informational displays, sales of crafts and fresh breads, YouthFest, KidFest, worship, and the collection, packing, and distribution of material resources.

Missouri State Fairgrounds
2503 W 16th Street Sedalia, MO 65301

of GUMC says, "We invited the entire neighborhood to worship and eat with us. We had some drop in guests and saw some folks singing and dancing to the music in their own front yards. It was great to see such a response."

Every July the church begins its Vacation Bible School with an ice cream social and ends it with a cook out and picnic. "These events are other ways we tell the community we are an active church and the events make great outreach tools to the surrounding neighborhood," Pastor Reames adds.

Month in Review

July 4

Attendance 54
Visitors 05
Deposit 2760.55

July 11

Attendance 53
Visitors 04
Deposit 1040.44

July 18

Attendance 63
Visitors 08
Deposit 2561.30

July 25

Attendance 59
Visitors 02
Deposits 1574.75

Birthday Challenge!



There were no additions to the Birthday Challenge in July. For our members who don't know what this is; just for the week of your birthday write a check for the amount of your age, and mark it 'Birthday Challenge'. We will publish your name in the newsletter, but will never reveal the amount of the check or your age. All monies from the challenge go into the budget, to be used as needed. Since the beginning of the challenge in September, 2008, we have added \$1,987 to the budget. Thanks to everyone who has accepted the challenge; and we welcome all other members to do the same.

"Always go the extra mile -- it's never crowded there." -Sue Jones

August Birthdays

7th Dolores Hanson
14th Rebekah Wegley
17th Meghan McCurren
19th Skip Dutton
23rd Lydia Istomina



If you have been omitted from this list we sincerely apologize. By September we hope to have our new data base up and running. If we missed your birthday please let us know. Thank you!

VBS 2010

We are excited to report that we had a Super Cosmic Adventure Praising God this week at Galactic Blast! Each day we learned about something God created in space ~ the earth ~ the moon ~ the stars ~ comets and supernovas! We learned that the moon is always with the earth, just like God is always with us. We learned that the stars always shine, but we don't see them in the day because the sun is so much brighter, just like God's glory! We learned that just as a comet glows brighter as the dirty particles fall off, so we glow brighter in the light of Jesus' love as our dirty parts (sin) fall off~ letting us reflect that light to others. Jesus changes us just as the sun's heat changes the icy comet into a beautiful glow. We made great crafts and did



some really cool experiments! Our Bible stories we about Creation Elijah and Mt Horeb, Pastor Lydia gave a wonderful enactment of the Samaritan Woman at the well, we learned about the Blind Beggar and the Two on the Road to Emmaus. Our verse for all week was, "Let everything that has breath, praise The Lord!" The Children learned a new praise phase every day. We would like to thank all the helpers Clara, Dawn , Meghan, Shirley, Crystal, Jean Jessica, Lauren.... And a special thanks to Dorothy and Judy we couldn't have gone into space without your help! We want to thank FUMC for the opportunity to share God's love with these children! Praise God!

Thank you to Ms. Rachel for all her leadership with VBS, She was given flowers at the July 18th Worship Service. Thank you for all of your time.

Go To The Mattresses

My sister and her husband came to visit, and I decided to buy an air mattress for them to sleep on. In the morning, she complained that the mattress deflated in the middle of the night and that John had to pump it up again. My brother-in-law got us a new sofa sleeper in the morning. Since the mattress didn't hold air I tried to return it to the store.

"You can't return the air mattress. Here is our policy." The lady tightened up her lips and pointed at the wall.

"But the mattress is defective: it doesn't hold the air."

"You can't return the mattress but you can buy another one, for a higher price."

"Why would I want another mattress if I do not need it?"

"This is our policy!" The woman said, politely but sternly.

I went to the air mattress aisle and got a more expensive mattress. The Customer Service lady completed the transaction yet, instead of giving me a receipt, she first opened the box and wrote "OPEN." That was odd, but I already made up my mind to come back the next day and return the new mattress.

The next day, I was back in the store, hoping that there will be someone else behind the counter. Hopes do not always come true - the same lady asked, "How could I help you?"

"I would like to return this mattress."

"Is anything wrong with the mattress?" The lady acted like she didn't know me, tempting me to lie to her face, but I honestly ad-

mitted that she sold me the mattress yesterday and now I wanted to return it.

"We do not take opened mattresses."

"This mattress was never opened. We didn't use it."

"The box is open. I can't take it back."

"But you are the one who opened it yesterday." My intestines started moving up to my throat. That was a bad sign.

"Ma'am, we do not accept used mattresses. Here is our policy."

The Customer Service clerk artistically stretched her left arm and pointed at the poster on the wall.

"But you know that I didn't open this box. You opened the box. I want to return the mattress."

"Is anything wrong with the mattress, ma'am?"

"How do I know? I didn't even open the box. We simply do not need it! We got a new sofa yesterday!"

"The only thing we can do for you is to allow you to exchange it toward a more expensive mattress. Please, proceed into the mattress aisle and pick out a more expensive mattress."

"I do not need air mattress anymore! I want to return it!"

"We do not accept opened mattresses, here is our policy..."

"I would like to talk to a manager."

"I am fully in charge and I tell you we can't take the mattress."

"I would like to talk to your manager."

The manager came, and what looked for a moment like temporary insanity became chronic.

What nonsense! I requested another manager and, after a long debate, I finally was allowed to talk to the third manager. The young man came to me, listened to my story and laughed, "And then you buy another mattress and another for a much higher price just to bring it back to exchange it for another, right?" I liked how he thought. I liked what I heard next even more, "What nonsense! We will give you store credit. Sorry about that."

The lady silently issued me a plastic card, which was the best gift before my next paycheck.

What mattresses have to do with church growth? The answer is everything!

"Go to the mattresses!" – remember this phrase? The phrase wasn't well known outside of the USA and Italy prior to the Godfather movies, to mean "preparing for battle."

The battle we face is not the battle with customers. The customer is always right, right? The battle we face is the battle with who we were.

We need more leaders like that young manager who was able to see a human face behind the rules. It is time to practice true Christian hospitality, true Christian love and true Christian compassion. Go to the mattresses!

With my prayers,

Pastor Lydia

First United Methodist Church of

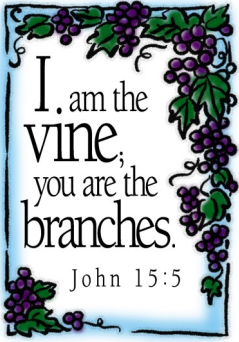
5413 Blue Ridge Cut Off

Raytown, MO 64133

816-356-2027

Email: raytownfirstumc@sbcglobal.net

Website: www.raytownfirstchurch.org



July Answers

1. blasphemy
2. The Sound of Music
3. Fanny Crosby
4. Revelation
5. It doesn't (seraphs and cherubs had wings) The angels mentioned in the Bible were either invisible or appeared to be like humans.
6. We don't know, They brought three gifts, but we will never know how many wise men there were.
7. Mother Theresa
8. Advent
9. His goose is cooked.
10. Michael (found in the book of Daniel and also the leader of the angels in Revelation.

How many can you answer?



How many can you answer?

1. What Old testament character is afflicted with many ills by Satan?
2. Why is holly associated with Christmas?
3. The Bible was written in three languages? Do you know them?
4. Who supplied the voice of God in the film, "The Ten Commandments?"
5. I lived 1862-1935 and was a professional baseball player, I was converted in 1886 and became an evangelist. I probably preached to a hundred million people. I spoke against evolution and prohibition. It has been estimated that a million or more people came to Christ as a result of my preaching. Who am I?
6. What are Jesus' series of blessings found in the sermon on the mount commonly called?
7. According to tradition who was the only apostle not to die as a martyr?
8. What righteous man was also known as the first drunk?
9. What do we call a cross, bearing an image of the body of Jesus on it?
10. In a painting that shows an elderly bald man being crucified upside down, who is being portrayed?

Answers will be in next months First Word and also on bulletin board in hall.

Submitted by Clara Fisher