

February 1, 2012

The Oaks



Riverton First United Methodist Church, (217) 629-9721

A Moment of Silence

There is a story in the Bible about Elijah that has always fascinated me. It appears in 1 Kings , chapter 19. In the previous chapter (18) Elijah was portrayed as a mighty prophet of God. He challenged the king, Ahab, to let him stage a contest with the prophets of the false god, Baal. The object was to see which deity, God or Baal, would answer prayer by bringing fire to a sacrificial altar on top of Mt. Carmel. Elijah won a stunning victory when his God answered with fire after the prophets of Baal had failed in their efforts.

So we would expect that Elijah would be on top of the world in chapter 19. But he was not. Ahab's wife, Queen Jezebel, had threatened Elijah with death. So the prophet was running, afraid and depressed. (That's one of the things I like about the Bible. It portrays even the heroes like Elijah as real persons, with real human weaknesses and faults.) Elijah ran for his life – clear out of Israel, south across Judah, and on into the Negev Desert. There he took refuge under a broom tree and asked God to just let him die.

But God wasn't finished with Elijah and his ministry. Instead of letting the prophet die, God sent him on another 40-day journey, on south to Mt. Horeb (otherwise known as Mt. Sinai) where God had given the Law to Moses. There Elijah took refuge in a cave, and God promised to reveal himself to the prophet.

First there was a great wind, described as “splitting mountains and breaking rocks.” But God was not in the wind. Then came an earthquake, but God was not in the earthquake. Next came a fire, but God

was not in the fire. The came what one of our Bible translations calls a “sound of sheer silence.” The King James Bible called it a “still small voice.” Whatever it was, it was a palpable presence. Sensing it, Elijah covered his face with his mantle out of reverence. The voice of God then asked Elijah what he was doing, to which Elijah said something about like: I've tried hard to serve you, but I'm the only true prophet left, and they're all out to kill me. God's answer was simply to call Elijah once again to get going, and resume his work of prophecy. God was still in control in Israel, Judah and beyond, and by the way, there are still 7000 people on your side.

I like this story because it describes our very real human experience. We trust in God and try to do well, sometimes with very positive results. But let some Jezebel say something negative or threatening to us, and we all-too-easily go into a spiral of fear, self-pity and depression. We might even feel like we are on a 40-day trek through the wilderness, going south. But God is still there. We needn't look for spectacular signs in the wind, or earthquake, or fire. We can find God in the silence, if we will listen.

As we approach the season of Lent beginning this month, let's take a moment of silence, regularly. Let's make a point of listening for the still small voice in the sheer silence of open, meditative obedience. We can still pray and pour our hearts out to God, as Elijah did. But let's practice listening as well.

Pastor Jonathan Dixon

RFUMC Calendar – February 2012

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 9AM Quilting 7PM Choir Practice	2 First Thursday, Day of Fasting and Prayer (Groundhog Day)	3	4 6PM Family Valentine Dinner
5 9:30AM Worship; 10:30AM Sunday School	6 7:30PM Board of Trustees	7 6:30 PM Nunez Wedding	8 9AM Quilting; 7PM Choir Practice	9	10	11 7:30AM United Methodist Men
12 Consecration Sunday 9:30AM Worship; 10:30AM All Church Brunch; 6:30 PM Finance Committee; 7:15 PM Administrative Council	13	14 7PM United Methodist Women St. Valentine's Day	15 9AM Quilting; 7PM Choir Practice	16	17	18 Dungey Wedding
19 Transfiguration Sunday 9:30AM Worship; 10:30 Sunday School	20	21 Shrove Tuesday 6PM Pancake Supper	22 Ash Wednesday 9AM Quilting 7PM Service of Ashes	23	24	25
26 First Sunday of Lent 9:30AM Worship; 10:30 AM Sunday School	27	28	29 9AM Quilting; 7PM Choir			

Looking Ahead...

March 3, Chili Supper
 March 12, United Methodist Men's Annual Meeting
 April 1, Palm Sunday
 April 6, Good Friday Service Here
 April 8, Easter Sunday 7AM Sunrise Service at First Baptist; 9:30 Worship Here
 May 2, Mother – Child Banquet



Consecration Sunday Is Coming

Congregations that approach financial stewardship from a biblical perspective do not view the money Christians give to their church merely as a way to pay its bills. Rather, such congregations see financial contributions as a way to help people grow spiritually in their relationship with God by supporting their church's mission and ministry with a percentage of their incomes.

Our congregation's finance committee has selected the *New Consecration Sunday Stewardship Program* as a way to teach the biblical and spiritual principles of generous giving in our stewardship education emphasis this year.

New Consecration Sunday is based on the biblical philosophy of the need of the giver to give for his or her own spiritual development, rather than on the need of the church to receive. Instead of treating people like members of a social club who should pay dues, we will treat people like followers of Jesus Christ who want to give unselfishly as an act of discipleship. *New Consecration Sunday* encourages people toward proportionate and systematic giving in response to the question, "What percentage of my income is God calling me to give?"



During morning worship on Consecration Sunday, we are asking our attendees and members to make their financial commitments to our church's missionary, benevolent, and educational ministries in this community and around the world.

Every attendee and member who completes an *Estimate of Giving Card* does so voluntarily by attending morning worship on Consecration Sunday. We urge people to attend who feel strongly opposed to completing a card. The procedure is done in such a way that no one feels personal embarrassment if he or she chooses not to fill out a card.

We will do no home solicitation to ask people to complete cards. During morning worship our guest leader will conduct a brief period of instruction and inspiration, climaxed by members making their commitments as a confidential act of worship.

We will encourage participation in Consecration Sunday events through the Consecration Sunday team and governing board members. Since we will make no follow-up visits to ask people to complete their cards, we will make every effort to inform, inspire, and commit everyone to attend Consecration Sunday worship.

Thanks in advance for your enthusiastic participation in Consecration Sunday events.

Administrative Counsel Chairperson,
Jeri Sucech



February Bible Readings

Below is the reading schedule to continue our project of reading through the Bible in one year. I will continue to use passages from the week's readings in our worship together (although we vary from it some for a special day like Ash Wednesday). May we know God's blessing as we read and worship together using these readings.

	<i>Law</i>	<i>History</i>	<i>Psalms</i>	<i>Poetry</i>	<i>Prophets</i>	<i>Gospels</i>	<i>Epistles</i>
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Jan 30 - Feb 5	<i>Levit.</i> 10-12	<i>2 Kings</i> 1-5	<i>Psalms</i> 78-80	<i>Proverbs</i> 9	<i>Ezek.</i> 19-24	<i>Luke</i> 17-18	<i>Philip.</i> 4
Feb. 6-12	<i>Lev.</i> 13-15	<i>2 Kings</i> 6-10	<i>Psalms</i> 81-83	<i>Proverbs</i> 10-11	<i>Ezek.</i> 25-30	<i>Luke</i> 19-20	<i>Col.</i> 1-2
Feb. 13- 19	<i>Lev.</i> 16-18	<i>2 Kings</i> 11-15	<i>Psalms</i> 84-86	<i>Proverbs</i> 12	<i>Ezek.</i> 31-36	<i>Luke</i> 21-22	<i>Col.</i> 3-4
Feb. 20- 26	<i>Lev.</i> 19-21	<i>2 Kings</i> 16-20	<i>Psalms</i> 87-89	<i>Proverbs</i> 13-14	<i>Ezek.</i> 37-42	<i>Luke</i> 23-24	<i>1 Thess</i> 1-3
Feb. 27- Mar 4	<i>Lev.</i> 22-24	<i>2 Kings</i> 21-25	<i>Psalms</i> 90-92	<i>Proverbs</i> 15	<i>Ezek.</i> 43-48	<i>John</i> 1-2	<i>1 Thess</i> 4-5

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Keaton Martincic	2/4/2008
Carson Beattie	2/6/2007
Les Hendricks	2/8/1931
Lois Dunbar	2/10
Mel Allison	2/11/1947
Roberta Bernahl	2/11/1929
Steve Logsdon	2/12/1955
Aden Byers	2/14/2005
Melissa Pantier	2/16/1962
David Beckner	2/17
Jeri Sucech	2/16/1945
Devan Martincic	2/22/2001
Carly Shank	2/24
Katie Sutton	2/24/1979
Kim Rusciollelli	2/26/1954
Taylor Binion	2/28/2009

The United Methodist Women will meet:

Tuesday, February 14th 7 p.m.

Program: Marsha Sutton

Hostesses: Harriet & Kim Beckey

Upcoming Chili & Soup Supper March 3rd

We welcome all the ladies of the church.

Come see us in the fellowship hall.



UMW Installation of Officers, January 2012

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

Ron and Cheryl Atkins	2/11/1967
Butch and Pat Baker	2/14
Jerry and Judy McCullough	2/18/1970
Roger and Missy Pfeiffer	2/27/1988

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Address Correction Requested



Electronic Distribution of Newsletter

If you are unaware, please know that we have begun to distribute the RFUMC newsletter electronically. Electronic distribution saves resources and postage costs. If you would like to receive the newsletter electronically, please send an email to rvtnumc@sbcglobal.net requesting this method of delivery. Since emails do not always do so, be sure to identify yourself in the email so that we can know who you are.

We recognize that some people will prefer to receive the newsletter by U.S. mail; rest assured we will not discontinue a paper version for these individuals.

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Next Newsletter Deadline:
February 19, 2012
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