

# The Messenger



## Pastor's Ponderings

I have had a few days off over the past few weeks. My family and I didn't go anywhere 'special' this year. But it has been special to be with the family and hang out.

What regularly happens when I slow down is that I hear God's speaking more clearly. It happened during this 'slow down' as well and I'd like to share one of the insights and invite you to ponder it with me. Here we go . . . "in the Church there is no such thing as a volunteer."

Does that strike you as an odd concept? It did for me at first. But the more I have pondered and listened, the greater the truth I've realized in that statement.

So if in the Church we do not technically "volunteer," then what do we do? The Bible talks to us about being ministers, about being slaves, about being bondservants. But I have yet to find volunteerism promoted in the Bible.

A few weeks ago, Dennis Ozier announced that Habitat is in need of volunteers and that the great thing about being a volunteer is you can work when you want, and as much or little as you want. And he is right! That is our culture's view of volunteering. Volunteerism (in our culture) often contains a sense of being a warm body to fill an open slot . . . and the one needing the job done should be happy they have anybody.

But that is not what the Bible talks about for Christians. That does not describe what life in a community of believers (the Church) is to be. Jesus did not die on the cross, and the Father did not raise Him from the dead and send the Holy Spirit for His people to be volunteers. The Godhead made their divine move so that the His people would be ministers/servants of their Leader, Jesus the Christ! And that is very different from our cultural understanding of volunteering.

Volunteers work when it best fits into their schedules; Ministers work when it best meets the others' needs. Volunteers tend to help because it 'feels good'; Ministers seek to help as an expression of love and thankfulness for what God has done. Volunteers often embody an attitude of 'good enough'; Ministers are to embody an attitude of 'never enough.' Volunteers are ultimately accountable to themselves; Ministers are ultimately accountable to God.

Because volunteers and those who minister in/through a church are often not paid, many mistakenly think they are equivalent. But the why and for whom are typically vastly different between a volunteer and a minister.

Christians have received the Holy Spirit and have not only been forgiven much by God, but also have been given spiritual gifts. And as Christians we are not given a choice to serve or not . . . we are called to minister in Jesus' name. We will be judged by God with respect to what we do with what we have been given (remember the Parable of the Talents—2 functioned as 'ministers' and 1 functioned as a 'volunteer'). Your service is a way to express your gratitude to God for all He has done and to represent who God is by sharing His love with others.

So how will you be functioning . . . as a volunteer or a minister? May God bless you and your ministries this month, this week, this very day! ☺

--Pastor Renner

# Library Update

---



The following books have been donated or purchased for our library during the past month:  
Half the Sky by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn  
(Education for Mission)

A Cousin's Promise by Wanda Brunstetter (Indiana Cousins - Book 1)

A Cousin's Prayer by Wanda Brunstetter (Indiana Cousins - Book 2)

A Cousin's Challenge by Wanda Brunstetter (Indiana Cousins -Book 3)

Vicious Cycle by Terri Blackstock (Intervention Series - Book 2)

Red-Tails in Love by Marie Winn (A Wildlife Drama in Central Park)

Learning by Karen Kingsbury (Bailey Flanigan Series - Book 2)

In the Presence of My Enemies by Gracia Burnham with Dean Merrill

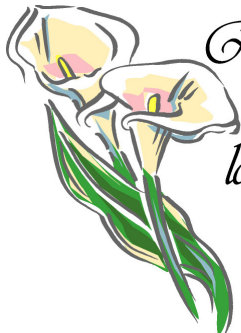
Dennis and Judy Ozier have loaned several books on travel to our library. They are on the bottom book shelf on the east side of the wall just inside the library door. I will have library cards that say "Travel" on them in the check-out box. If you wish to check out any of these, just put the name of the book on the card and your name. This is quite an extensive collection, so I hope you take advantage of them.

We have a lost book, Facing the Lion by Joseph Lekuton. If you find this book, could you please return it to the library?

Thanks.

**Keep on reading!**

Lois Shuman



*Remember these lost loved ones* ***“Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth” (Psalm 124:8)***

*May the Lord’s comfort and blessings be with the families and friends who mourn the deaths of Kelly Price & Dave Stone.*

# Wednesday Nights

Coming back on August 17<sup>th</sup>!

All are welcome to come and  
enjoy fellowship during dinner at 5:30.

Other events include:

5:00 praise band practice

Pre-K - 5<sup>th</sup> grade bible lessons, choir, and gym time

7:00 Adult Choir practice

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

---

## Education Update

Multiple small group gatherings are/will be happening. Below is a list and a sign-up will be available on the back of our communication cards' on Sundays August 7 & 14:

Sundays 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. with Jim Rentfrow

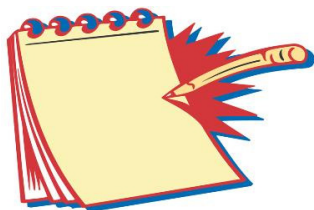
10:30 - 11:30 a.m. with Laura Elder

Mondays 6:00-7:00 p.m. with Pastor Renner

Wednesdays 6:00-7:00 p.m. with Lyn Renner

Thursdays 5:15 - 6:15 p.m. Joy Group

6:30 - 7:30 p.m. with Susan Connor



## **Notes from the Nurture Committee**

At the beginning of May, The Nurture Committee sent cards of encouragement to the college students of our church family as they prepared for finals.

At the end of June, cards were sent to our military personnel thanking them for their service.

Put August 17 on your calendar now for the annual church Ice Cream Social. There will be good desserts and great fellowship.

---



Jim and I want to thank everyone for their support during his recent hospitalization. Your cards, calls, positive thoughts, and prayers lifted us and renewed our spirits. We were reminded once more how important our church family is to us.

Ann and Jim Wheeler

---

Thank you for giving me a place to worship and grow in my faith. When people ask me how my faith grew so strong, I reply, "The mission trips catalyzed my faith."  
God Bless! Jordan Boyer

Thank you so much for letting us use your van for our trip. It was so nice that we could all be together in one vehicle!  
Girl Scout Troop #3081

---

Your generosity to the C.E.F.S. Food Pantry is remarkable. I commend you for the effort and energy put forth to help those less fortunate.

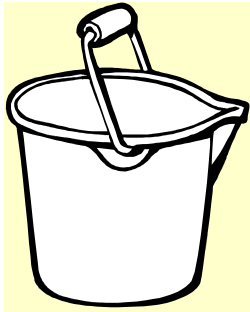
Our food pantry provided food to 25 families within a 3 day period last week. That amount of food going out the door could have been a hardship for our office had it not been for the generosity of folks like you.

Please accept my sincere appreciation for your donations. It does make a huge difference in our ability to meet the needs of the low income, elderly and disabled in our county.

Sincerely, Barbara Waymire, Moultrie County Outreach Coordinator

---

The Moultrie County Retired Teacher's Association wishes to thank the Sullivan Methodist Church for allowing our organization to use Friendship Hall for annual book sale.  
MCRTA Bucks for Books Committee



The Yellow Bucket offering for August will go to Habitat for Humanity.

The Yellow Bucket offering for July was \$110.10 and went to the Sullivan Fire Department's Fire Safety Program.

---

### **Church Finances**

Needed each month to meet budget: \$23,304

June receipts: \$17,433.17

June Disbursements: \$17,599.89

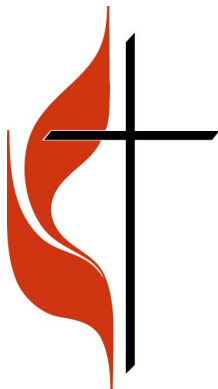
Campus Balance: \$538.13

Mortgage Balance: \$107,460.22

---



*The deadline for the September Newsletter  
is Monday, August 15.*



#### **First United Methodist Church**

216 W. Jefferson St.  
Sullivan, IL 61951  
Phone: (217) 728-4436  
E-mail: [jesusfirst33@hotmail.com](mailto:jesusfirst33@hotmail.com)

Office Hours  
Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 1:00 pm

**Visit us on the web:  
[www.sullivanfirstumc.com](http://www.sullivanfirstumc.com)**