



Countryside News

Open Hearts, Open Minds, and Open Doors

Volume 32, Issue 5 Pastor Ken Hutchens

Editor: Brenda Hensch

May 2009

Dates To Remember

May 2-3	Agape Christian Music Festival
May 3	First Sunday Fellowship Meal
	Youth Meeting
May 6	Choir Practice
May 9	Family Fun Night
May 10	Happy Mothers Day!
May 13	Regular Committee Meetings
	Choir Practice
	Administrative Council Meeting
May 14	Salt Fork Cluster Meeting @ Homer UMC
	CUPS Meeting
May 17	Last Sunday for Children's Church
	Youth Meeting
May 20	Choir Practice
May 22	Newsletter Deadline
May 26	Outreach Committee Meeting
May 27	Choir Practice
	UMW Meeting
May 31	Graduate Recognition Sunday



Pastor Ken's Column

The last three years have been a very intensive time in my life. I feel like I have learned a lot about myself, about other people, about the grace and healing of God, and about life. Not that I don't have much more to learn. The deadliest attitude to growing is to think you are already fully grown! Or, to put it another way, only those who are teachable can be taught. One thing I have learned or relearned is the importance of asking questions.

I have been accused of liking to talk too much. Perhaps that is due to being a preacher or maybe that is why I became a preacher? A hard lesson to learn is when to shut up and listen to others. Even though most of us like the sound of our own voice it can be much more fascinating to spend time listening. After all, we know our own story. It is the story of others that is new and interesting. When I transition to a new church I will try hard to keep my mouth shut and ask lots of questions. That way I will get to hear the stories of others even as I share my own.

One question I will ask of the members of the church where I am going is: "What is

the story of First United Methodist Church of Mattoon?" Even though it is the same church they are discussing, I suspect that each answer to that question will be unique. When we tell the story of a place that is special to us or a community to which we belong, a part of our own story gets told as (Continued on page 2)



May 3

John 10:11-18

"Why We Need a Shepherd"

May 10

1 Samuel 2:12-36

"When All Respect Is Gone"

May 17

1 Samuel 3

"Hearing the Word of God"

May 24

1 Samuel 4

"When Disaster Strikes"

May 31

1 Samuel 5

"God of the Universe"

well. It is not just a matter of perspective -- of differing points of view. It is also a matter of understanding who we are in relationship to others.

While I am asking that question in Mattoon I hope you are answering it in relation to Countryside. It is a fascinating question even to those who have been in the church for many years. When asked we discover that our community is made up of hundreds of individual stories all melded into one. Sometimes we may be surprised at the intensity of the emotions that story calls forth. There is joy and pain mixed in the history of a congregation. Sometimes we may learn why we each react to things in different ways. Hidden wounds may be uncovered and unique perspectives explained.

I believe there is something healing in telling our stories. When I am planning a funeral I always ask the family to gather and share with me stories about their loved one who is gone. Often tears and laughter characterize these times of telling about the one who has died. Each member of the family has a chance to reflect upon how this person

touched his or her life. In sharing their memories they express their grief, realize the depths of the loss, and begin to regain a sense of the joys and importance of life. Each story of a loved one becomes a story of what the person speaking values, it becomes their story. Story telling can be a pathway through transitions and losses of all types.

The Gospel of Luke tells of an anonymous person joining two disciples as they took the long road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. The disciples are distraught about the arrest, condemnation, and crucifixion of Jesus. They are puzzled about accounts of an empty tomb and risen Jesus. When the stranger asks them what is bothering him they pour out the grief and confusion in their hearts to him. The stranger then tells them the story of the Old Testament predictions of the Messiah. As they listen their hearts are warmed and they come to a better understanding of what is going on. When they sit down with the stranger to share a meal they realize it is Jesus who has been traveling with them -- hearing their story and sharing with them the meaning of his. They cannot wait to rush to the other disciples and share with them the new story they have

heard.

I have never ceased to share with you my hope that Countryside's best days are ahead. I depart just as strong in that hope as I arrived. For those days to come the stories of the people of this church must be told and listened to again and again. Telling our story helps us to heal the hurts of the past, claim the dreams of today, and move into the future that God has prepared for us. No wonder Israel paused at every important transition to tell the story of the people and their relationship with God -- good and bad. No wonder the Gospels are presented as four separate stories about who Jesus was and how he touched the lives of his people.

Through Jesus the story of God touches the stories of our lives. And we find we are caught up in something bigger than ourselves. We become the very people of God, journeying together in the path that Jesus has blazed towards the future he has promised. Our hearts become "strangely warmed (Luke 24:32) as we share again the stories of faith -- theirs and ours as companions on the Way of Jesus. It has been a privilege to be a part of your story and have you be a part of mine.



Recognition of Graduates

Countryside junior high, high school, and college graduates will be recognized on Sunday, May 31 during both worship services. If you have a student graduating please inform Pastor Ken so he or she will be included in the recognition.



CONGRATULATIONS, GRADUATES!

Bennett Woods Liberia Mission Report

Bennett Woods will bring a report on his mission trip to Liberia following the Mission Meal on Sunday, June 7. He has slides and will give his report beginning about 12:30 pm in the sanctuary. Countryside supported Bennett financially on his trip so don't miss this chance to see him and hear about the work that was done.



Stewardship

Traditional Service-10:15AM

Liturgist: Kay Kelley

Ushers/Greeters



June Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for the June newsletter is Friday, May 22. Please have all articles submitted to Brenda Hensch no later than noon. Articles may be submitted via email at cumc.office@tswireless.net or placed in Brenda's mailbox in the church office.

May Meeting Schedule

Regular Committees will meet at 6:30 pm on Wednesday, May 13. See your committee chair if you are uncertain whether your committee will meet or not.

Administrative Council will meet at 7:30 pm on May 13.

CUPS will meet at 11:30 am on Thursday, May 14 at the Philo Tavern.

The Salt Fork Cluster will meet at 10:00 am at the Homer UMC.

Outreach Committee will meet at 6:30 pm on Tuesday, May 26 at the church.



Countryside Youth Activities



Countryside youth will meet at 6:00 pm on Sunday, May 3 at the church for a regular meeting. On Sunday, May 17, the youth will meet at 6:00 pm at the church to go bowling at the Illini Union. The cost will be covered for youth group members. If a friend comes he or she will need to pay his or her own way. Please let Janet Cler or Pastor Ken know if you can come. Permission slips for the trip over will need to be filled out by parents.

Pastoral Care

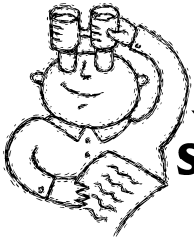
Pastor Ken will be off and not available for pastoral care from April 30 to May 7 or 8. If you need help please call Reverend Charlie Wheeler at 356-1907 or Reverend Steve Burwell from Homer UMC at 896-2038.



Countryside United Methodist Women

Countryside United Methodist Women will meet Wednesday, May 27 at the church at 7:30 pm. Program will be given by Naomi Roberts about "Child Prostitution in Cambodia". Hostesses are Pat Miller and Grace McCarrey. If you would like to visit the meeting call one of the hostesses.

Our trip on April 3 to the Festival of Quilts was very nice and the quilts were beautiful. Each quilt had a story. It was held at the Spiritual Life Center at Cunningham Children's Home.



Have You Seen?

Some of you may have become acquainted with Gertrude, the mysterious, wandering goose. She first appeared at the Countryside Flea Market, and became infamous as she disappeared from the church and reappeared in front of various homes over the next few days. It seems she has adopted the Countryside family as her own.

If she should appear in front of your house, let her stay for a day or two, then help her to move along to become acquainted with another Countryside family. To track her travels, put your name and date in the journal that hangs around Gertrude's neck. If you cannot move her, call Janet Cler at 840-9674. Some of the youth group will be happy to help out.

Gertrude has discovered for herself that Countryside does, indeed, care. Help her to spread the news!

Gertrude Finds that Countryside Cares!

Countryside UMC

March 2009 Financial Report:

Income

Blossom Collection	147.34
Fellowship	48.75
Flea Market	5,643.29
Flood Buckets	801.00
Interest	1.96
Lenten Offering	131.10
Member Contributions	12,589.00
Mission Dinner	311.41
Other: Designated	218.07
Sunday School	<u>47.71</u>
TOTAL	\$19,939.63

Budget Expenses for March 2009 \$13,907.87

Monthly Operating Budget \$14,190

Detailed Financial Reports are available in Church Office

Thank you for your financial support of Countryside UMC!

C.U.P.S. Vacation Bible School

See You at the Bayou

Sunday, July 26—Thursday, July 30

Opportunities to Volunteer and Registration Information Will Be Available Soon!



Countryside Raises Nearly \$6000!



Fundraising Results

Over a thousand people came through Countryside's doors on March 28th to take part in the 5th Annual Spring Fundraising Event. There was no live auction this year, but a huge flea market, silent auction, café, and many shops drew a crowd to the one-day event. The comment heard most frequently was, "This was great! We'll be back again next year!"

As a result, Countryside was able to donate \$500 to the Eastern Illinois Foodbank and to purchase six new tables for the fellowship hall. \$3000 was set aside to be used for church projects as determined by the Trustees. The rest of the profits were divided as follows: \$500 to Missions & Outreach, \$700 to the United Methodist Women, and \$700 to the United Methodist Youth to be used as needed or donated to the cause of their choice.

Following is a listing of the net profits of the various shops. Many thanks to all the coordinators and workers who made this, not only a successful day, but a fun day!

Silent Auction	\$2,461.50
Flea Market	1,221.47
Bakery & Sweets Shoppe	522.25
Country Store	337.25
Snoopy Items	325.00
Sonshine Café	226.83
Book Nook	212.65
Clothes Closet	156.25
Children's Store	121.00
Strawberry Shortcakes	87.93
Donations/Miscellaneous	124.41



This is a belated thank you addressed to an unknown angel:

Our financial situation has changed in the last several years. My husband says it's a miracle we are able to meet the monthly bills, but somehow there always seems to be enough. (God provides and we're proof of that.) We received our tax rebate checks from the last administration (a year ago...2 years ago??), and created a cushion to pull from that made up for the shortfall when paying bills or buying groceries. That cushion was nearly gone, and we really didn't know what to do. Then, in the mail, an envelope came with a postmark of February 19. It was addressed to us, but the return address was ours, also. I opened the envelope and in side were two cash envelopes from two different banks— one inside the other. When I opened the second one, there was a large amount of cash.

You know us, but we don't know you, and we've been trying to figure out a way to thank you. We want you to know how incredibly grateful we are for your loving, caring generosity. We bought groceries, created a new "cushion," and gave 10% to the church. We don't even know for sure if you are a part of our church family— we can only use this newsletter as an outlet for our thanks and appreciation and hope it somehow reaches you.

May God bless you and keep you always in his arms.