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Volume XIII No 11

November 2009

Pastor's Thoughts

Christ's Love Is Greater than Anyone Can Fathom!

I want to begin this month with Paul's words from Ephesians 3:7 *"By God's special gift of grace given to me through His power, I became a servant to tell the Good News."* What a calling it is to be a pastor and to be able to preach and teach the word. I have been blessed with his grace to serve the church. Think about your life, how you have been blessed with family, job, and place to lay your head at night. Think about God's love for you and the times he answered your prayers; tell him you love him. Think about Psalm 136:1, 4 *"Give thanks to the Lord because He is good. His love continues forever. Only He can do great miracles. His love continues forever."*

The following is an insight from Charles Spurgeon: "Before we can have any right idea of the love of Jesus, we must understand His previous glory in its height of majesty and His incarnation upon the earth in all its depths of shame. But who can tell us the majesty of Christ? When He was enthroned in the highest heavens, He was God. By Him were the heavens made and all the host thereof. His own almighty arm upheld the spheres, the praises of cherubim and seraphim perpetually surrounded Him; the full chorus of the hallelujahs of the

universe unceasingly flowed to the foot of his throne. He reigned supreme above all His creatures. God over all blessed forever."

I wonder if we can describe how wide, long, high and deep Christ's love is for us? Here, it is November: a time of counting our blessing. Another year has almost gone, and can you believe only a few more days until Christmas? I sometimes wonder why is life passing so fast, but I know it is just the way things are today. We are all so busy. My prayer is that we can all slow down and enjoy the journey more. We need to understand our purpose in life and show God's love to everyone. So as we reach out to the world around us, may we continue to be a **Gathering Place** for people who need a loving family. Don't forget to invite someone to our services and to use the outreach cards.

Enjoy The Journey,
Pastor Clayton

A little girl, dressed in her Sunday best, was running as fast as she could, trying not to be late for Bible class. As she ran she prayed, "Dear Lord, please don't let me be late! Dear Lord, please don't let me be late!"

While she was running and praying, she tripped on a curb and fell, getting her clothes dirty and tearing her dress. She got up, brushed herself off, and started running again! As she ran she once again began to pray, "Dear Lord, please don't let me be late...But please don't shove me either!"

**Sermon and Service Outline
November 2009**

**Preaching Series: "Catching A World
Vision!"**

Nov. 1 World Wide Purpose

Blessed: Gen. 12:1-9

Fulfilled: Luke 4:16-21

Finished: Eph. 1:15-23

Pastor Clayton
(Youth Skit)

Nov. 8 World of Possibilities

Go and Tell: Isaiah 6:1-8

Grace and Truth: John 1:1-14

Unveiled: 2 Cor. 3:15-16

Pastor Clayton
(Children's Hand Bells)

Nov. 15 World of People

With in the Walls: Neh. 2:11-18

Broken Lives: John 4:13-26

Unreached: Ps. 139

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(Children's Songs)

Nov. 22 World of People

Spiritually Dead: Ezekiel 37:1-14

Without Christ: John 3:1-16

None Righteous: Romans 3:9-18

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(Communion)

Nov. 29 First Sunday of Advent!

(Means coming or arrival)

"Follow the Star....That Leads to the Bright
and Morning Star!" Matt. 2:1-8

**NO AMERICAN SHOULD GO
HUNGRY!
FOOD DRIVE FOR
FAIRVIEW HEIGHTS FOOD PANTRY**

Starting on Sunday November 8th

Our goal is to fill up the big Food Pantry box that will be placed in the front of the sanctuary. Each Sunday we will have a march during the morning service for everyone to put items in the box. Our goal will be to fill up the box to running over.

Luke 6:38 "Give and it will be given to you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

We are asking that on this first Sunday November 8th that everyone bring only can goods.

On Sunday November 15th our goal is to fill up the food box with cake mixes, sugar, flour, box dinners, and so on.

On Wednesday November 18th our goal is to fill up the food box with anything you like!

**THE FOOD DRIVE WILL BE FROM
NOVEMBER 8TH TO NOVEMBER
22ND**

**THIS WILL BE ONE OF MANY
OUTREACH EVENTS THAT ARE
PLANNED FOR THE CHURCH.**

I'm A Little Tea Cup....

(Love this story or not, you will not be able to have tea in a tea cup again without thinking of this.)

There was a couple who took a trip to England to shop in a beautiful antique store to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary.

They both liked antiques and pottery, and especially teacups. Spotting an exceptional cup, they asked "May we see that? We've never seen a cup quite so beautiful."

As the lady handed it to them, suddenly the teacup spoke, "You don't understand. I have not always been a teacup. There was a time when I was just a lump of red clay. My master took me and rolled me pounded and patted me over and over, and I yelled out, 'Don't do that.'

'I don't like it! Let me alone,' " but he only smiled, and gently said; 'Not yet!'

Then WHAM! I was placed on a spinning wheel and suddenly I was spun around and around and around. "Stop it! I'm getting so dizzy! I'm going to be sick!" I screamed. But the master only nodded and said, quietly; 'Not yet.'

He spun me and poked and prodded and bent me out of shape to suit himself and then he put me in the oven. I never felt such heat. I yelled and knocked and pounded at the door. "Help! Get me out of here!" I could see him through the opening and I could read his lips as he shook his head from side to side, 'Not yet'.

When I thought I couldn't bear it another minute, the door opened. He carefully took me out and put me on the shelf, and I began to cool. Oh, that felt so good! "Ah, this is much better," I thought.

But after I cooled he picked me up and he brushed and painted me all over. The fumes were horrible. I thought I would gag. "Oh, please, Stop it, Stop, I cried." He only shook his head and said. "Not yet!"

Then suddenly he put me back in to the oven. Only it was not like the first one. This was twice as hot and I just knew I would suffocate.

I begged. I pleaded. I screamed. I cried. I was convinced I would never make it. I was ready to give up. Just then the door opened and he took me out and again placed me on the shelf, where I cooled and waited and waited, wondering "What's he going to do to me next?"

An hour later he handed me a mirror and said 'Look at yourself.'

And I did. I said, "That's not me; that couldn't be me. It's beautiful. I'm beautiful!!!"

Quietly he spoke: 'I want you to remember.' Then he said, 'I know it hurt to be rolled and pounded and patted, but had I just left you alone, you'd have dried up. I know it made you dizzy to spin around on the wheel, but if I had stopped, you would have crumbled. I know it hurt and it was hot and disagreeable in the oven, but if I hadn't put you there, you would have cracked. I know the fumes were bad when I brushed and painted you all over, but if I hadn't done that, you never would have hardened. You would not have had any color in your life. If I hadn't put you back in that second oven, you wouldn't have survived for long because the hardness would not have held. Now you are a finished product. Now you are what I had in mind when I first began with you.'

The moral of this story is this: God knows what He's doing for each of us.

He is the potter, and we are His clay. He will mold us and make us and expose us to just enough pressures of just the right kinds that we may be made into a flawless piece of work to fulfill His good, pleasing and perfect will.

So when life seems hard, and you are being pounded and patted and pushed almost beyond endurance;

When your world seems to be spinning out of control; when you feel like you are in a fiery furnace of trials; when life seems to 'stink', try this.

Brew a cup of your favorite tea in your prettiest tea cup, sit down and think on this story and then, have a little talk with the Potter.

You are cordially invited to a Leadership and Teacher Training Conference at Marion 1st Church of God

Leadership Conference **“The Transformational Focus of Missional Leadership”**

Led by Illinois State Pastor Eric Livingston
Friday, November 13th, 6:45 P.M.

Dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m.

Italian Beef, Cheesy Potatoes, Green Beans, Salad and Dessert

RSVP by November 9th to 618-993-6369

Teacher Training

Sunday, November 14th, 9:00 a.m. to noon
Donuts, fruit and juice at 8:30 a.m.

RSVP by November 9th to 618-993-6369

Pastor Eric Livingston – “Keeping It Simple”
“Igniting the Great Commission and Commandment in your planning for small groups, classes and working with children.”

Pastor Mike Ebert – “Shepherding Your Class”

“Keeping your passion and avoiding burnout as a teacher and leader in the life of the church.”

Pastor Keith Heberer – “Keeping Your Passion”

“Keeping your passion and avoiding burnout as a teacher and leader in the life of the church.”

Pastor Tracey Harlan – “Creative Teaching”

“Using creative teaching to connect with your students and to make a lesson memorable for children and adults.”

Qualities of the Christian Steward (Part 3)

A Christian steward is responsible

Christian stewards realize that caring for God's creation and wisely managing resources never ends (Genesis 41:37-45; Numbers 18:25-32; 2 Samuel 24:18-25; Matthew 28:16-20).

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. (Matthew 28 : 19-20a).

A Christian steward sacrifices :

Christian stewards follow Jesus' teaching to sacrifice what they have out of gratitude for their many blessings (Mark 12:41-44).

Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything— all she had to live on." (Mark 12:43-44).

A Christian steward shares.

Christian stewards have learned to distribute fairly so that none will be in need (Luke 19:1-10; Acts 4:32-35; Acts 20:34-35).

*In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: It is more blessed to give than to **receive**.* ""(Acts 20:35).

A Christian steward is trustworthy.

Christian stewards can be trusted to make wise decisions concerning the resources placed within their care (Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 16:10-13; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2).

So then, men ought to regard us as Servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. (1 Corinthians 4: 1-2).

***Material taken from Guidelines for Leading Your Congregation: Stewardship by Phyllis M Bowers

Message from Paul Maxfield Children of Promise October 14, 2009

A number of sponsors of Filipino children have inquired as to their child's well-being. This comes on the heels of tow typhoons striking the main island within the last two weeks. Virtually every sponsored child has been affected by this disaster: however, Dr

Ofelia "Fely" Viray reports that while there is much damage, there has been no loss of life within The Philippine Children of Promise program.

Typhoon Ketsana landed directly over Manila. When it was over, 80% of Manila was under water. One week later another typhoon named Parma hit the northern part of the main island of Luzon: it hovered for two days, dumping an enormous amount of rain causing landslides, overrun rivers, and forcing dams to be opened.

Staff members have been distributing relief aid as they are able. Often they had to five relief products in the back of their van because so many people were pressing in wanting relief packets themselves. Our goal, of course, is that every sponsored child will have his/her home restored as soon as possible. This is where you and your local church can help.

Dr, Paul Maxfield
Executive Director
www.echildrenofpromise.org

Sin Assassins Youth Group

We are welcoming Jorge Mercado to our youth group and welcoming his family to our church. We got to know him and his mother Carrie and his brother and sister when they came to their first youth and parent outing at our house this past month. We had an evening of fishing, s'mores, chili, hotdogs and Wii games.

The youth is continuing to meet on Wednesday evenings for drama practice and prayer time. We are completing our third skit and will be presenting to the church on Nov. 1st. If you have missed seeing our drama presentations, you can check it out online at the church website: www.gatheringplacecog.org and click on ministries and then skits. We are hoping to take our skits on the road soon. More info to come. Thanks to Adam Peiffer who was our producer of "The Time is Right".

Shannon Peiffer and Candy Niemeyer attended a leaders training conference sponsored by Dare2Share ministries in St. Louis just this past week. We came away very excited and refreshed with the teaching we received. We are planning on taking the youth to the "Blaze" Dare2Share event in March and we will be getting info out to the youth and families in the next couple of weeks. Please be in prayer for this event and for our youth as we will be encouraging each youth to invite a friend to come with us

We are also looking forward to attending the Marion Church of God Lock-in later in November, and planning is in the works for some service projects in the community in November/December. We are also bringing back the Christmas Caroling Fundraiser. You will be able to give a donation to send our youth group to Christmas Carol a friend, a neighbor, co-worker or family member. Be looking for more info in your church mailbox for this upcoming fundraiser.

Jim and Candy will be attending a State Youth Leaders Conference at Camp Warren Oct 30-31. This is a chance for us to meet and network with other COG youth leaders. We are looking forward to this opportunity to work with other youth workers in our state.

In His Service
Jim and Candy Niemeyer

Youth Group Christmas Card Fundraiser

On behalf of the Youth Group, we want to thank everyone who bought Christmas Cards to help us raise funds so that we can attend youth events like Dare2Share and Illinois State Youth Convention. At last tally, we have raised about \$170.00.

We still have about \$50.00 worth of cards we would like to sell so if you are still in need of cards, please contact Candy Niemeyer. Thank-you Becky Ball for taking some cards to work and selling several boxes for us. Would you like to take some cards to work to sell for us as well?

Thank-you!
Candy Niemeyer