

Vision...

"Without a vision, the people will perish..."

Proverbs



Safford First United Methodist Church Newsletter ◇ **April 2010**

View from the Pulpit...



One of my favorite authors is Max Lucado, and I know many of you also appreciate and have read a number of his books. Well I wanted to share with you an excerpt from one of his books that I think is so fitting for Easter... Easter is a time, it seems, when people

tend to reconsider God and their relationship with God... In fact I think we have the same questions people did 2,000 years ago... don't we all want to know if there's anything that separates us from the love Jesus has for us?

There it is. That's the question. Basically don't we all want to know how long God's love will endure? Does God really love us forever? Not just on Easter Sunday when our shoes are shined and our hair is fixed. I want to know (deep within, don't we all really want to know?), how does God feel about me when I'm a jerk? Not when I'm peppy and positive and ready to tackle world hunger. Not then. I know how he feels about me then. Even I like me then.

I want to know how he feels about me when I snap at anything that moves, when my thoughts are gutter-level, when my tongue is sharp enough to slice a rock. How does he feel about me then?

And when bad things happen—does God care then? Does he love me in the midst of fear? Is he with me when danger lurks?

Will God stop loving me? That's the question. That's the concern. Oh, you don't say it; you may not even know it. But I can see it on your faces. I

can hear it in your words. Did I cross the line this week? Last Tuesday when I drank vodka until I couldn't walk ... last Thursday when my business took me where I had no business being ... last summer when I cursed the God who made me as I stood near the grave of the child he gave me?

Did I drift too far? Wait too long? Slip too much? Was I too uncertain? Too fearful? Too angry at the pain in this world?

That's what we want to know.

Can anything separate us from the love Christ has for us?

God answered our question before we asked it. So we'd see his answer, he lit the sky with a star. So we'd hear it, he filled the night with a choir; and so we'd believe it, he did what no man had ever dreamed. He became flesh and dwelt among us.

He placed his hand on the shoulder of humanity and said, "You're something special."

Unfettered by time, he sees us all. From the backwoods of Virginia to the business

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district of London; from the Vikings to the astronauts, from the cave dwellers to the kings, from the hut builders to the finger pointers to the rock stackers, he sees us. Vagabonds and ragamuffins all, he saw us before we were born.

And he loves what he sees. Flooded by emotion, overcome by pride, the Starmaker turns to us, one by one, and says, "You are my child. I love you dearly. I'm aware that someday you'll turn from me and walk away. But I want you to know, I've already provided you a way back."

And to prove it, he did something extraordinary. Stepping from the throne, he removed his robe of light and wrapped himself in skin: pigmented, human skin. The light of the universe entered a dark, wet womb. He whom angels worship nestled himself in the placenta of a peasant, was birthed into the cold night, and then slept on cow's hay. Mary didn't know whether to give him milk or give him praise, but she gave him both since he was, as near as she could figure, hungry and holy.

Joseph didn't know whether to call him Junior or Father. But in the end he called him Jesus, since that's what the angel said and since he didn't have the faintest idea what to name a God he could cradle in his arms.

Neither Mary nor Joseph said it as bluntly as my Sara, but don't you think their heads tilted and their minds wondered, *What in the world are you doing, God?* Or, better phrased, *God, what are you doing in the world?*

"Can anything make me stop loving you?" God asks. "Watch me speak your language, sleep on your earth, and feel your hurts. Behold the Maker of sight and sound as he sneezes, coughs, and blows his nose. You wonder if I understand how you feel? Look into the dancing eyes of the kid in Nazareth; that's God walking to school. Ponder the toddler at Mary's table; that's God spilling his milk.

"You wonder how long my love will last? Find your answer on a splintered cross, on a craggy hill. That's me you see up there, your Maker, your God. Nail-stabbed and bleeding. Covered in spit and sin-soaked. That's your sin I'm feeling. That's your

death I'm dying. That's your resurrection I'm living. That's how much I love you. "Can anything come between you and me?" asks the firstborn Son.

Hear the answer and stake your future on the triumphant words of Paul: "I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor ruling spirits, nothing now, nothing in the future, no powers, nothing above us, nothing below us, nor anything else in the whole world will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:38-39).

See ya in church....

Pastor Bob

Help Please...

Over the years assorted policies have been developed to address numerous issues such as facility usage, use of equipment, building security, etc. Unfortunately none of them can be located.

Administrative Council is in the process of collecting or having all policies and procedures developed and placing them into a master notebook from which interested parties can copy but not take the notebook from the premises!

If you have a copy of any policy or procedure please place it in the Administrative Council mailbox in the church office. Don't worry about how old the document may be, anything will assist us in accomplishing this task!

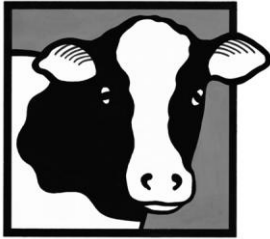


Blood pressure and blood glucose testing on April 11 9-10:30 a.m. in Family Room of Sanctuary.

CHICKENS AND COWS AND GOATS,

OH MY!

Heifer International's goal is to guide people in developing nations toward self-reliance through livestock and education—by providing them with revenue-producing livestock, like cows, a goat or a flock of chickens. The training provided allows the participants to raise the animals, producing protein-rich, life-sustaining milk and eggs. They also learn holistic agricultural methods, ensuring productive land use for future generations. In addition to receiving the gift of an animal and training in sustainable farming practices, **recipients agree to share one or more of their animals' offspring with others in need in what is called "Passing on the Gift"....paying it forward!**



Heifer International is a nonprofit, humanitarian organization dedicated to ending hunger and poverty and caring for the Earth. FUMC Mission Committee would like to highlight

Heifer International this spring as a way to make a difference in the lives of so many struggling families in countries around the globe.

How can we do this? Making a monetary donation in any amount is a great way to start, and a challenge to all of us. What a great way to remember our mothers, our grandmothers and godmothers on the upcoming Mothers' Day celebration, either as an honor for a living mother or a memorial in honor of a deceased mother!

And how do you do that? Please write a check (separate from your monthly church tithe or offering) and earmark it specifically for Heifer International; or give the check or cash to a Mission Committee Member (Dorita Vail, Barbara Haralson, Sue Bonefas); or leave it at the church office with Paul! Easy, huh?

When notified of a monetary gift in honor of a living loved one, the Mission Committee will send a gift card acknowledging your wonderful support of this special project to your loved one.

Holy Week 2010...

April 1st – Maundy Thursday

- Ecumenical Service
7:15 pm at Shepherd of the Valley Presbyterian Church
- Foot Washing Service followed by Meatless Agape Feast
7:15 pm at All Saints Episcopal Church

April 2nd – Good Friday

- Good Friday Service
6 pm in the Sanctuary

April 4th – Easter Sunday

- Sunrise Service
6 am in the Pecan Grove
- Pancake Breakfast
Following Sunrise Service
- Easter Egg Hunt
During Sunday School
- Worship Services
8:15 am & 10:30 am
- "It Is Finished..." Cantata
Presented by the Chancel Choir
During 10:30 am service



Don't forget to check the Fellowship Hall area for coupons!! Bread, meats, frozen vegetables, lots and lots of personal hygiene supplies and over-the-counter medications, laundry detergents, etc., etc. You're missing out on lots of savings at the grocery stores. Remember, Safeway and Basha's double coupons!



CONFERENCE TIME

A Note from Your Lay Leader, Dick Spining....

The United Methodist Church Desert Southwest Annual Conference will be held this year from June 24– 27 in Glendale. Some reasons you should consider attending the Annual Conference this year were listed in last month's Vision.

More specifically, **learning** is a reason you may want to attend the Desert Southwest Annual Conference this year. Every Conference Session is different, but 2010 will bring a change that may be significant enough to make people rethink what Annual Conference is all about. The coming Annual Conference Session, Saturday, June 26, will be dedicated to a time of learning with Cliff Christopher, author of "Not Your Parents' Offering Plate."

"We will deal with roles for both pastor and laity that neither has been taught were important and those attending will come to understand the importance of marketing for all three pockets of giving that each of their members have," Christopher explained. "Done right, I am convinced that these principles will help the local church do away with the need for a campaign every year for the operating budget."

This (training) time will be open to United Methodist Churches and Lutheran Churches who are interested in attending, at no cost. Local churches are encouraged to take advantage of this exciting training opportunity. Registration materials will be available the week of April 5.

If you are interested in attending, talk to your Annual Conference delegates for 2010, Steve Haralson or Donna Wright. You may also contact Dick Spining (428---1414).

DID YOU KNOW...

--Did you know that the chime choir started with 4 people and now has 13?

--Did you know that the minutes for the worship committee are posted in the Narthex?

--A Prayer Request box is available at the back of the sanctuary. The Witness Committee is committed to responding to each request.

--Our shut-ins are being visited on a regular basis. Communion and recordings of the worship service are provided.

--Our church has been providing the leadership and cooperation with other churches to provide emergency food for 650 families each month. Your efforts are making a difference.

-- There have been as many as thirty students in attendance at the Wednesday Sidewalk Sunday School program!

--The Eastern Arizona College Wesley Foundation Christian Student Organization had a fun trip to Disney

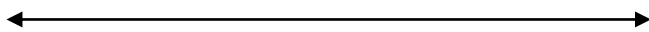


Land over the college spring break. (March 15 ---19) Students earned tickets to Disney Land by providing a day of service at the Mt. Graham Safe House and earned money for gas by doing work projects. We were overnight guests of the Garden Grove United Methodist Church just a few blocks from Disney Land. The group continues to meet regularly on Sunday evenings in the Fellowship Hall and wishes to express its appreciation for the many church members who have provided a meal.



Desert Southwest Conference –
There has been an overwhelming response from The Desert Southwest Conference in answering the call to replenish health kits at the UMCOR Depot

in Salt Lake City that were needed to respond to the disaster in Haiti. On Monday Feb. 22, nearly 5,000 health kits shipped from The United Methodist Center in Phoenix, AZ to the UMCOR Depot in Salt Lake City, UT.



Women of Faith Conference



The Women of Faith Conference begins on Friday night and lasts through Saturday about 4:00 P.M. It's a time of singing, laughing, Christian speakers, and an

opportunity to spend time with your sisters in Christ. It's a great time to renew and grow in faith. You can go on-line and find more information at [Women of Faith.com](http://WomenofFaith.com). This year's conference is October 1-2 in Phoenix. Tickets are \$89.00. They will sell fast, so please don't wait. Contact Carrie Glaspie at 428-3706 for tickets.

From These Roots...

(100 year history and memory book 1894-1994)



Many of you heard or read the story of four Russians coming to Safford for six months in 1992 and the big part that First United Methodist Church and Desert Southwest Conference played helping finance this mission.

A mission group was formed "Visions for A Better Tomorrow" with community members, college students and many churches participating. By the efforts of this group, four Russian citizens were sponsored arriving on United States soil in December and April. (They were only allowed to stay 3 months)

Rita Arsenjeva and her nephew, Zhenya Matusov, (12 yrs. old) arrived in time to spend the Christmas holidays. While they were here they visited schools, churches, and service clubs and were hosted by many families. Paul and Lena Rosanov came in April and experienced many of the same activities that Rita & Zhenya did. All four Russians were able to travel to Disneyland, Palm Springs, Salt Lake City, Lake Arrowhead, Palos Verde, San Diego, Phoenix, Scottsdale, Tucson, the Grand Canyon and more. These opportunities were financed by the Mission group mentioned above and the four individuals were given the opportunity to experience Americana first hand.

Zhenya Matusov's family moved to Germany where he completed his schooling, married, became a father, and received his PhD in Electrical Engineering.

And the rest of the story.....Zhenya will be arriving in Safford on Friday, April 2 and will be staying with Peggy & Ed Hunter over the Easter holidays. Please drop by Hunter's to visit Zhenya on Saturday, April 3 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

History continues.....Peggy J. Hunter, Church Historian

April JJR News

There is a new feeling at JJR rehearsals, a feeling that we are becoming a more experienced and professional choir. There are several reasons for this.



Shortly after the new year the oldest set of chimes was returned to the factory for refurbishing and received back early in March. Now we don't spend a lot of time determining which chime is in the

better condition to use, utilizing our rehearsal time to the fullest.

Permanent chime assignments to ringers have been made. Each ringer starts and finishes rehearsal with the same chimes, with occasional exceptions, resulting in less crowding and confusion around the chime cases and less time lost during rehearsal. This also gives the ringers an opportunity to become aware of any issues with a chime and to report it. Ringers were able to indicate a section of chimes they would like to play. This gave ringers the opportunity to stay with chimes they were comfortable with or to learn to ring different chimes they had never played before.

We are fortunate to have three members of JJR who have had previous music training and experience. Each of these ringers will act as a mentor to an octave of our three octave choir. Lisa Angle is the mentor for Octave 4, Candace Brady for Octave 5 and Erin Fly for Octave 6. They will work closely with new ringers, help out with difficult passages by playing a chime or two, and fill in when absent. They will play for all performances, making the determination where their expertise is needed most.

JJR will play the introit for the Easter Service on April 4, and play on April 11 for their regularly scheduled performance.

A reminder-- new ringers are always welcome.

TRUSTEE NEWS

Trustees have been working on several projects around the church.

- Gutters have been placed above the sidewalks and the dead mimosa tree has been removed with plans to install a bench and possible flag pole and flower box.
- A temporary crossing protection for the day care children has been set up with a more permanent solution on the way.
- Barbara Haralson has agreed to take care of the rose garden.
- Faucets for several sinks have been replaced
- a light has been placed in the storage closet in the back hallway of the sanctuary
- a water line to the refrigerator ice maker was installed
- A major project of replacing the windows in the day care area is currently in progress
- To make our sanctuary more worshipper friendly, the short pew in the back has been removed to allow for worshippers in wheel chairs, along with chairs for accompanying companions. The short pew in the front of the sanctuary, as well as the one across the aisle, has been removed to allow more room for funerals, weddings, communion and musical groups.

There are many more projects we would like to undertake, but funds do not allow them at the present time. One way to come up with the needed funds is to protect our resources. Every time you go out of a room and leave the light on, you are wasting precious resources. Every time a door is left open when heating or air conditioning is on is wasting precious resources. Not reporting leaking faucets, running bathroom stools and such, wastes precious resources. If we would all practice the Golden Rules below, we could maximize our resources.

Golden Rules for Living - Source Unknown

If you open it, close it.

If you turn it on, turn it off.

If you unlock it, lock it up.

If you break it, admit it.
If it ain't broke, don't fix it.
If you can't fix it, call in someone who can.
If you borrow it, return it.
If you make a mess clean it up.
If you move it, put it back.
If you value it, take care of it.
If you don't know how to operate it, leave it alone.
If it belongs to someone else and you want to use it,
get permission.

If you see something that needs attention, please let one of the trustees know – Mark Adamson, Bob Borland, Kelly Capps, Clay Farrell, Terry Fisher, Steve Haralson, Darwin Jackson, Barbie Spining, and Tom Vail.

Scouting News



Administrative Council has approved members of our congregation to pursue the sponsorship and the raising of funds to assist the scouting programs at Safford FUMC. Anyone desiring to donate a full or partial scholarship to send

several of our Boy Scouts to a special leadership camp should make their check payable to Safford FUMC and note it as Scout Scholarships. The cost per boy is \$215 and there are potentially six boys eligible. Ad Council requests that donors only give if they can provide extra funding without decreasing their normal giving to the operation of Safford FUMC and its multitude of programs and fixed expenses.

In addition a steak fry is being planned for June 4th to raise funds that will be dedicated to the Boy Scout and Girl Scout programs at Safford FUMC. Save the date, more information on this at a later date!



THREE TREES

Author Unknown

Once there were three trees on a hill in the woods. They were discussing their hopes and dreams when the first tree said, "Someday I hope to be a treasure chest. I could be filled with gold, silver and precious gems. I could be decorated with intricate carving and everyone would see the beauty." Then the second tree said, "Someday I will be a mighty ship. I will take kings and queens across the waters and sail to the corners of the world. Everyone will feel safe in me because of the strength of my hull." Finally the third tree said, "I want to grow to be the tallest and straightest tree in the forest. People will see me on top of the hill and look up to my branches, and think of the heavens and God and how close to them I am reaching. I will be the greatest tree of all time and people will always remember me."

After a few years of praying that their dreams would come true, a group of woodsmen came upon the trees. When one came to the first tree he said, "This looks like a strong tree, I think I should be able to sell the wood to a carpenter" ... and he began cutting it down. The tree was happy, because he knew that the carpenter would make him into a treasure chest. At the second tree a woodsman said, "This looks like a strong tree, I should be able to sell it to the shipyard." The second tree was happy because he knew he was on his way to becoming a mighty ship. When the woodsmen came upon the third tree, the tree was frightened because he knew that if they cut him down his dreams would not come true. One of the woodsmen said, "I don't need anything special

from my tree so I'll take this one", and he cut it down."

When the first tree arrived at the carpenters, he was made into a feed box for animals. He was then placed in a barn and filled with hay. This was not at all what he had prayed for. The second tree was cut and made into a small fishing boat. His dreams of being a mighty ship and carrying kings had come to an end. The third tree was cut into large pieces and left alone in the dark.

The years went by, and the trees forgot about their dreams. Then one day, a man and woman came to the barn. She gave birth and they placed the baby in the hay in the feed box that was made from the first tree. The man wished that he could have made a crib for the baby, but this manger would have to do. The tree could feel the importance of this event and knew that it had held the greatest treasure of all time.

Years later, a group of men got in the fishing boat made from the second tree. One of them was tired and went to sleep. While they were out on the water, a great storm arose and the tree didn't think it was strong enough to keep the men safe. The men woke the sleeping man, and he stood and said "Peace" and the storm stopped. At this time, the tree knew that it had carried the King of Kings in its boat.

Finally, someone came and got the third tree. It was carried through the streets as the people mocked the man who was carrying it. When they came to a stop, the man was nailed to the tree and raised in the air to die at the top of a hill. When Sunday came, the tree came to realize that it was strong enough to stand at the top of the hill and be as close to God as was possible, because Jesus had been crucified on it.

Always know that God has a plan for you. When you place your trust in Him, He will

give you great gifts. Each of the trees got what they wanted, just not in the way they had imagined. We don't always know what God's plans are for us. We just know that His ways are not our ways, but His ways are always best.

Address Change:

Virginia Kay
2080 S Ironwood Dr #311
Apache Junction, AZ 85220
(480) 671-0646



Angels live in cloud houses made by God and his son, who's a very good carpenter.

--Jared, age 8

All angels are girls because they gotta wear dresses and boys didn't go for it.

--Antonio, age 9

My angel is my grandma who died last year. She got a big head start on helping me while

she was still down here on earth.

--Ashley, age 9



April 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Maundy Thursday •6:00 pm - Alpha Classes (FH)	2 Good Friday •6:00 pm - Good Friday Service (S)	3
4 Easter Sunday •6:00 am - Sunrise Service (Pecan Grove) •Pancake Breakfast following Sunrise Service (FH) •9 am - Children's Easter Egg Hunt •10:30 am - "It Is Finished..." Choral Cantata	5	6	7	8 •11 am - UMW Luncheon (FH) •6:00 pm - Alpha Classes (FH)	9	10
11 •9 am - BP & Glucose Screening (W)	12	13 •5:30 pm - Pastor's Roundtable (FC) •6:15 pm - Church Meal (FH) •6:45 pm - Church Meetings (Various)	14	15 •6:00 pm - Alpha Classes (FH)	16	17
18 •7 am - Men's Discipleship Breakfast •10:30 am - Praise Team Sunday (FH)	19 •7 pm - Ad Council (FC)	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Weekly Church Events

Sundays	8:15 am - Essentials Worship Service (S) 9:15 am - Sunday School (Various) 10:30 am - Liturgical Worship Service (S) 6 pm - Youth Group (YR)
Mondays	5:30 pm - Life After Loss (FR)
Wednesdays	5 pm - John's Joyful Ringers (S) 5 pm - Prayer Meeting (VR) 5:30 pm - Praise Team Practice (FH) 6:30 pm - Chancel Choir Rehearsal (S)

Weekly Community Events

Mondays	6 pm - Cub Scouts (FH) 6 pm - NA (L) 7 pm - Boy Scouts (FH) 7 pm - Webelos (FC)
Tuesdays	6 pm - CMA (L) 6 pm - NA (L)
Wednesdays	6 pm - CMA (L) 6 pm - NA (L) 6:30 pm - Cadets (FC) - 1st & 3rd Wed's 7:30 pm - AA (L)
Thursdays	9 am - Quilting Group (FH) 5 pm - Brownies (FC) 6 pm - CMA (L)
Fridays	6 pm - CMA (L)
Saturdays	12 pm - CMA (L)

April Birthdays

- 1- Elizabeth Constantian
Jared Nichols
- 2- Jeff James
- 3- Betty Hall
- 4- Marge Gentry
Mickie Hunter
- 5- Taylor Nichols
- 6- Debi Huckey
- 7- Dorine Chancellor
- 8- Eddie Moya
- 9- Sarah Bailey
Keith Canale
James Michaud
- 12- Lacie Hinton
Virginia Kay
- 14- Brittany Sears
- 15- Presley Romero
- 18- Phil Gyger
- 19- Sue Bonefas
Travis James
- 20- Dolan Campbell
Jacob Neff
- 22- Ed Smith
- 23- Karen Coppola
Luke Romero
- 24- Bryan Sears
- 25- Kara Calloway
Liz Garver
- 27- Colin Gyger
- 28- Rayna Fite
- 29- Lauren Wilson

April Anniversaries

- 14- Hector & Denise Benton
- 15- Darwin & Paula Jackson
- 17- Gordon & Barbara Gilpin
- 19- Terry & Christine Fisher
- 29- Will & Melanie Foote
Patrick & Arlene Provencio

(S) Sanctuary, (FH) Fellowship Hall, (L) Library, (FC) Friendship Classroom,
(V) Vision Room, (W) Wesley Room

* Please let the church office know if a birthday or anniversary was missed

We support the church through our:

PRAYERS: Activate the prayer chain by phoning Judy Fisher at 428-6485, or the church office at 428-4211. You can also write special prayer requests on cards in the pew racks, and turn them in Sunday during worship. We also invite you to take time each Wednesday to pray for the ministry of the First United Methodist Church.

ATTENDANCE & OFFERINGS:

Feb. 21	151	\$2,456.75
Feb. 28	153	\$5,653.51
Mar. 7	132	\$4,077.11
Mar. 14	153	\$4,825.48
Mar. 21	125	\$2,789.50

SERVICE: Thanks to all of you who filled out the survey about a spirit filled worship service. The following were the areas that received the most comments: pastor's message, banners, stained glass, music, children's time, and the friendly and caring people of our church family. We were pleased with your comments and will continue to prepare a service that meets your worship needs. From the Worship Committee

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Address correction requested

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