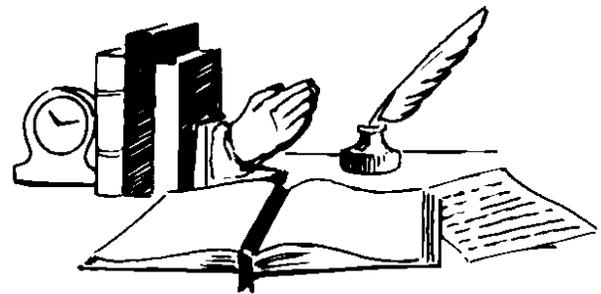




Valley Voice

Buffalo Run, Fillmore and Valley View
The United Methodist Churches of the Buffalo Run Charge
“One Congregation Serving the Community and Worshiping in Three Locations”
Pastor Duane Bardo *Office Phone: 814-355-2208*
March 2009

Pruning



the Pastor's Notes

A few weeks ago my son Greg and I headed off to camp for the day. We were quite certain with hunting season long over that the camp had been missing us. Our excuse for getting away was to prune the apple trees. As I supervised, well actually watched, Greg, who works in landscaping, would study the tree and then begin his work.

At first it all seemed logical. He cut away a large vine that had grown up the middle of the tree and out to the outside branches, cutting them off from sun light. Then he cut out the dead wood that provided a place for disease to enter the live tree.

As I watched I began to question: Why that one? Greg would patiently explain: “This inside one is a sucker. It will rob valuable sap from the fruit bearing branches. This one, rubbing against another one, is weakened. This one is growing straight up too fast using energy in growing tall and not bearing fruit. See these trees next to the apple tree--they’re too close robbing the apple tree of water and sunlight.” It was a fun, and I learned something too.

Jesus says in John 15: 1-5:

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of mine that does

not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

This week, while preparing for our Lenten services, I began to think how Lent might be seen as a time for us, as disciples, to submit ourselves to the Lord for pruning through repentance and self-discipline.

Where has the vine of sin grown up in our lives smothering us from receiving the life renewing light of Jesus? *“...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance*

the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus..." Hebrews 12: 1b-2a

What is the dead wood in our lives where spiritual disease can enter? Are there things I am doing that I know are contrary to God's law or God's will giving Satan a foothold in my life?

"...and do not give the devil a foothold. He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice." Ephesians 4:27-31

What sucks the spiritual vitality out of us? Do we allow those around us with negative attitudes or our circumstances to drag us down or we able to abide in Christ and the promises of God's word, remaining in the peaceful assurance God's is with us.

What is rubbing against us making us weak? The media constantly bombards us exploiting sex, devaluing true love, promoting hate, disunity and violence.

Paul advises, *"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."* Philippians 4:8

Has the business of life's growing, achieving and acquiring kept us from bearing fruit for God's Kingdom?

In Matthew chapter six, verses 19-21 we read:

"Do not lay up for ourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither

moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Like those trees around the apple, what have we allowed to surround us that keeps us from participating in worship, bible study, and Christian fellowship thus robbing us of Jesus' life giving water and light?

"Secrets of the Vine" by Bruce Wilkinson offers insight into life's trials, suffering, and God's discipline through Jesus' words" *"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser."* If you're in a hard painful place in life, this book (I have a few) may be helpful. It takes an hour to read and a life time to appreciate.

Wilkinson points out that God desires abundance for us and through us. But abundance requires pruning. God wants us to be spiritually healthy. Sometimes that means God will prune what is in our lives that separates us from him, or at least discipline us so that we recognize what needs to be pruned from our lives so that we may act.

As we seek God's abundance in our lives, in our churches, and for our community through our lives and churches, maybe this Lenten season is a good place to begin to surrender ourselves to the Vinedresser for pruning. It may be painful for a minute, but it will be fruitful for eternity.

Together under His care,

Pastor Duane





The Buffalo Run Charge of the United Methodist Church

*"One congregation
worshiping in three locations"*

Welcomes you to worship with us at:
Buffalo Run UMC
Fillmore UMC
Valley View UMC

Sunday Worship Schedule:
8:15 a.m. Fillmore
9:30 a.m. Valley View
10:45 a.m. Buffalo Run
Sunday School:
9:30 a.m. at Buffalo Run

OUR VISION: To work together to grow the kingdom of heaven by providing a spiritually nurturing environment through worship, mission outreach, Bible study, prayer and Christian education in the greater Buffalo Run Valley.

OUR MISSION: The Buffalo Run, Fillmore and Valley View United Methodist congregations trust that God Almighty will lead us in His calling to unite in ministry to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

*If you are in need of prayer or would like to have a pastoral visit, please call
Pastor Duane Bardo at 814-355-2208.*



No Short Cuts

"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit."

John 15:5

Mary planted some new rose bushes and gave them a hefty dose of fertilizer. Not heeding the instructions on the package, Mary gave her plants another ample dose a few days later.

During the next few weeks, the plants sprouted long, thorny branches over five feet high. Unfortunately, none of the plants bore any flowers at the end of the growing season. The high levels of nitrogen in the fertilizer triggered growth in size but not in blossoms.

Trying to find the secret to quick spiritual growth?

There is no miracle fertilizer for the Christian life. God is looking for fruit and not spiritual highs.

Fruit can only result from abiding in Christ. Cultivate an intimate relationship with Jesus.

Meet with him in prayer each day. Soon you'll start to bloom in the Lord!

***The measure of your fruitfulness
is determined by the measure
of your consecration.***

M. R. Dehaan

***Each word of the Bible is like a gem from
the celestial mines, a sunbeam from that
holy heaven where holy sunlight shines.***

H. Bonar



Share Your 'God Moment'



Maybe you've heard someone refer to a "God moment." This usually is a special time when it is clear that God has intervened and shown Himself in an exceptional way. It is

important to notice and appreciate these unique moments and interventions of our Heavenly Father. We must enjoy them and thank Him for a clear answer to prayer, a sudden revelation of His will, a perfect circumstance that is no chance happening, a provision for a need, or a deep feeling of love and worship. These moments are important to recognize. They can become special teaching moments when we use them to minister to others. They can increase faith and intensify worship. Too bad there aren't more of these God moments in our lives. A God Moment story can come from those of any age, at any stage on their faith journey.

Stories may be short or long and given verbally, in writing, or both. Assistance, if desired, is available from your newsletter team: M.J. Kitt, Terry Bardo, Christa Williams, Gloria Lohr, Mary Anna Miles or Pastor Duane. Our approach is flexible. So, if you, or someone you know, have a God Moment story others should hear, please contact a newsletter team member.

God has richly blessed us in the churches of the Buffalo Run Charge. It's now time for us to share how His blessings have accrued through our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. ***"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings!"*** says Romans 10:15. Are you ready to help us, and help yourself, by taking the simple but vital step of giving your testimony about the power of faith and God's unfathomable love?

A God Moment

He's Always with Us

Impatient Driver Learns Valuable Lesson

Regarding patience, I realized how very little I have when we were talking about this in Bible study.

I know I am most guilty of rushing from place to place and getting irritated if people in front of me are moving slower than I want. (Notice how selfish this is already—it's all about "me.")

Anyhow, I was rushing to work one morning a few weeks ago and there was a very slowpoke driver in front of me and I was thinking to myself "Why can't this person drive a little faster?"

At that point I noticed the beautiful sky and clouds and gorgeous color of blue with the sun shining through—at that moment I realized that God was showing me how very blessed I am and His only way of "slowing me down" was following a slowpoke driver.

What a wonderful "God Moment"!

I am so very blessed!

(Thank you, Karen Rider, for sharing your "God Moment" with us.)





Thank You!

A great big thank you to everyone who supported Fillmore's hand-crafted Christmas card and all occasion card ministry again this past year by either buying or selling cards.

This year we raised \$1,281.25 in all occasion cards, Christmas cards and donations.

We will once again be offering all occasion cards (birthday, get well, sympathy, thinking of you) and Christmas cards. This ministry continues to bless many people and we are very fortunate to have such talented people involved with this ministry.

Thanks again to all our supporters.

"The Card Ministry Crew"



Are you discouraged? Are you doing something God has directed but are frustrated with a lack of progress? Don't give up. Humble beginnings often precede important accomplishments. Keep going forward.



Keep the Big Picture in Mind

"We who believe are carefully joined together with Christ as parts of a beautiful, constantly growing temple for God."
Ephesians 2:21

Christopher Wren, the famous English architect, was supervising the construction of the world renown St. Mark's Cathedral. Wren approached one worker and asked him what he was doing. "Mixing the mortar for a wall," was the curt reply.

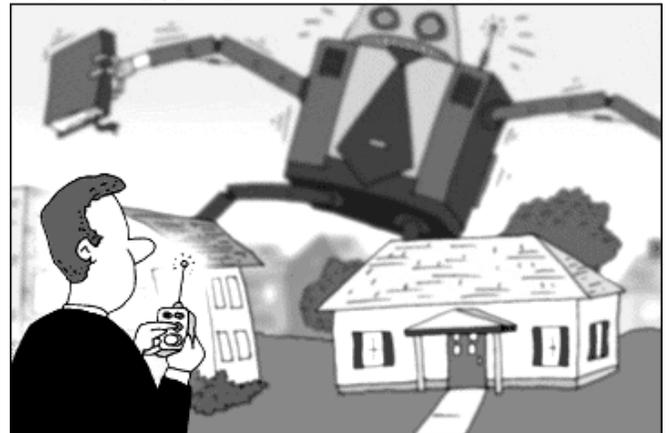
Wren asked another man the same question. "I'm just hauling some lumber," grunted the sweating laborer.

The master architect noticed another man with a broad smile, digging a trench for the foundations. When asked what he was doing, the man simply said, "I'm building a cathedral to the Glory of God!"

Are you doing something to serve the Lord in your church? Don't forget to see the big picture.

You are doing more than singing in the choir, teaching Sunday School, or tending the nursery. Your service is an important contribution to the growth of your church. The next time you do your work for the church, tell yourself, "I'm building a temple for the Glory of God!"

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10-17-2008

THE EVANGELATOR WAS PASTOR BILL'S RESPONSE TO WHAT HE BELIEVED TO BE THE TERRIBLY INEFFICIENT METHOD OF ONE-ON-ONE WITNESSING

Join Us for Lenten Worship

This year's Wednesday mid-week Lenten worship is based on an "Igniting Worship" series, "40 Days with Jesus."



Each service begins at 7 p.m. and will be filled with music, prayer and teaching.

The series begins with "Greatness in Humility" on Wednesday, March 4, at Fillmore UMC.

The eternal, invisible Son of God stepped down from all the power and glory of heaven to become human. He was conceived in a mortal body, lived a fully human life, endured ridicule, and suffered torture and death. In all this, he was not lowered, but elevated. In his astonishing humility, he demonstrated true greatness. Now Jesus calls us to walk in humility following his example.

On March 11 at Buffalo Run UMC the study will emphasize "Overcoming Temptations."

Jesus received personal attention when Satan tried to tempt him into sin. The temptations were real and enticing, but Jesus chose to resist the devil and avoid sin. From Jesus' example we learn about our own vulnerability and how to resist temptation. With Jesus' help we have strength from a Lord who personally understands how hard temptations can be.

At Valley View UMC on March 18 we'll consider "Making Friends."

We call them apostles or disciples, and we name books of the Bible, church buildings, and cities after them. But they were also simply Jesus' friends. He calls us to be his friends, his disciples, and his disciple makers.

March 25 we return to Fillmore where we'll consider "Prayer that Does what Prayer Is Supposed to Do."

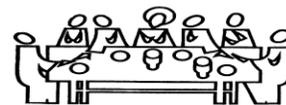
Prayer permeated the life of Jesus. He prayed before choosing his disciples. He left crowds and friends to pray alone. He told his followers to pray, and he showed them how to pray. He prayed before he was crucified, and after his resurrection. As Christians, we follow the principles and patterns of prayer set for us by Jesus.

April 1 we'll worship at Buffalo Run and look at "Experiencing Miracles."

Miracles marked the ministry of Jesus. From changing water into wine at Cana to raising Lazarus from the dead at Bethany, Jesus repeatedly performed miracles to meet human need and persuade people to believe. During the week before Palm Sunday, the word spread through the pilgrims in Jerusalem about all Jesus did, and they thronged to him, shouting praises in loud voices because of the miracles they had seen. Jesus is still the miracle worker in our world and lives today.



Ash Wednesday, Feb. 25, 7 p.m. at Valley View.



Maundy Thursday, April 9, 7 p.m. at Valley View.



Good Friday, April 10, 7 p.m. at Fillmore.



Easter Sunrise, April 12, 6:30 a.m. at Buffalo Run.
