



News From Holland

Holland First United Methodist Church

April 2013

Dr. Phil Shuler, Pastor

Web Site: www.hollandum.org

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN

“IT WAS the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way- in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.”

With these famous words the novelist, Charles Dickens, began his book, *A Tale of Two Cities*, published in 1859. Though I've never read the complete work, reading it remains one of my goals in life. I am struck by the relevant words of this strikingly powerful paragraph. One can't help but notice the dualism: “epoch of belief...epoch of incredulity,” “season of Light...season of Darkness,” the spring of hope...the winter of despair,” and “everything before us...nothing before us.” The dualism of contrasts does indeed paint a picture much “like the present period.”

For example, the past several years have presented us with pictures of economic woes that have touched each one of us in some way. Yet, on March 31, we celebrate Easter Sunday with joyful proclamations of life over death! As a child of 10, I participated in the funeral of my father on a Good Friday and remember attending church that Easter with joyful sounds of resurrection. No doubt, this kind of dualism has permeated our own lives this year. My daughter celebrated Easter this year without the physical presence of her husband, but she continues to find purpose and meaning to life caring for her young son and daughter. Jacob Cearley recently had to undergo surgery in Dallas, yet he was soon on his way home (two days later) and once again thinking of participation in sports. Our lives are punctuated with all manner of uncertainty (“the best...worst of times), yet faith grounds us in hope and love.

The human body conveys this dualism. We are capable of smiles and frowns: the former during good times and the latter amid troubled times. I've heard it said that we only have one of two choices. We can either laugh (smile) or cry (frown) in response to the dualities of life. I personally prefer the smiles, don't you? Besides, I'm told it takes fewer facial muscles to smile than it does to frown. And if one stops and thinks about it, what we think to be our worst times can turn out to be the best of times. Have you ever played the “what if” game. You know, what if I had done this rather than that, made this decision rather than that one, taken this job or another one, chosen to live in this town instead of that one, or taken this path and not another. When I play that game, I find that I experience innumerable qualities and small joys even during the worst of times, qualities that I now view as indispensable. Think about it.

So, I'm sure that during the Easter season just past and in the days ahead, we will look back and refer to them as “the best of times” and “the worst of times.” What I do know to be true is that smiling clusters of people and communities are really happier and more fulfilled. And they make the “worst of times” better.

Hope to see your smiling faces in church this Sunday.

Phil Shuler, Pastor

Community Breakfast

Our monthly Pancake Breakfast will be held on April 7th at the Kuhlmann Center 7:30-9:00 am. Regular church service will follow at 9:00 am.

Judy's News

Granger Community Food Pantry

We had 64 families come through in March. Easter gifts were presented to all the children who came and to the families with children. Everyone with children are excited about the new Back Pack Ministry we are starting. Actually a couple moms cried as they said it would be such a help to them. Both had two or more in school. Next month we will be open on Thursday, April 18th.

Granger Easter Services

Can't believe it is just around the corner. We will be having Maunday Thursday on Thursday, the 28th and Good Friday services on the 29th. Both will be at 6:30 pm. Regular services will be held on Easter with an Easter Egg Hunt for the children. Everyone is welcome.

UMM

The United Methodist Men will meet on April 13th at 8:00 am in the Fellowship Hall. Come join the fellowship and worship.

UMW

Hilda Eubank and Doris Severson will continue the study for our April meeting on the 24^h at 1:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is invited to join us.

Cowboy Church

Randy Evans, Brian Smith and Brian, plus Big Mike all did a great job at Cowboy church. Plenty of hot soup was available so no one went away hungry spiritually or physically!

This ended our 9th year of this mission. In April we start our 10th year. Steve and Tana Nance will be there to celebrate and of course Steve will bring the message. You all enjoyed the James Gang so much I have asked them to come back for our special evening. Should be a great night of fellowship and celebration. Mark your calendars and invite others!

Prayers Just want to thank you all for all the prayers we request. We were so glad to see Jacob Cearley at church, even briefly, just to tell you all thanks as well.....and to keep on praying as his healing continues. Prayers are so important and a vital part of our ministry.