



News From Holland

Holland First United Methodist Church

June 2011

Dr. Phil Shuler, Pastor

Web Site: www.hollandum.org

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN

May is always a wonderful time of year. School is winding down, summer vacation plans are being made, High School/College/University students are graduating and making plans for their future(s); and the list goes on. In many ways, it is a time for joy and celebration.

While I make reference to May being filled with joys and anticipation, I am aware of the contradictions of life. Not all students will find jobs (even summer jobs), and we are a nation of many challenges yet to be addressed. In spite of the difficulties, however, life does hold its vibrant and growing moments, regardless of the circumstances. Let me give an example.

Monday morning, May 9th, Anita (my wife) and I boarded a flight to spend the week in Mexico. There was a little anxiety on my part due to the media coverage of late involving drug cartel violence that would seem to be rampant. Our destination was Puerto Vallarta, a very special place for the two of us. We did not stay in a tourist hotel in the "new" section of town. Rather, we stayed at the Los Arcos hotel that is located downtown and caters to a more indigenous clientele. We stayed the entire week, basking in the sun and swimming (?) in a powerful Pacific Ocean, and filling in the extra time shopping amid the numerous vendors and shops that surrounded us. We boarded the return flight on Saturday afternoon. We had a wonderful, restful week together and would have liked to have stayed longer. The interesting thing is that had we not been immersed in media coverage beforehand, we would not have been aware of all of the violence other portions of Mexico were experiencing.

I came away from the week convinced that *fear* is a major factor preventing us from experiencing the real joy life offers us. We are afraid of terrorists, the economy, unemployment, and bankruptcy. We could lose our homes, money, savings, and solvency during retirement. We are suspicious of those of a different race, color, and/or religion. We fear a government that is too large and powerful while, at the same time, we are afraid of a government so small and weak that it cannot truly care for its citizens. We're afraid of our neighbors, and of everything with which we are unfamiliar. The real consequence of such massive cultural phobias is our failure to enjoy and celebrate all that life has to offer.

What is the solution to *fear* of any kind? You will not be surprised that I do not look to political solutions offered by Democrat, Republican, Tea Party, or whatever party may offer earthly security. I believe that the only real confidence available to us is in the power and sovereignty of God who loves and cares for each one of us and is truly in charge of the universe!

I believe in the God who turns weakness and doubt into strength and faith, the one who makes giants out of weaklings, and turns our negative thoughts into positive ones that take us into whatever future we face. The God of the scriptures enables us to walk into the future with heads held high and hearts beating with confident anticipation that all will work out for good!

This is the faith that brings true joy to life, whatever the circumstances! Let's celebrate that faith together. See you in Church, Sunday.

Phil Shuler, Pastor

Community Breakfast

The free Pancake Breakfast for at the Kuhlmann Center 7:30-8:30 am on June 5th. Our church service will follow at 9:00 am. Come and enjoy the food and fellowship! Call Rob Fagner if you have questions.

Cowboy Church

Wow! If you weren't there, you missed a "special" night. We had a great turn out to hear Steve Nance and be witness to Jon Caleb Cearley rededicating his life to Christ by baptism. The song "When Jesus is in the House" was played to introduce Steve Nance who put the words to music. The song was written about our church. We have so much to be thankful for. The music provided by Ed Stockton and Dave Lynch was great! It was a night for all there to remember. I can still see Jon Caleb beaming!

Due to the many activities on our usual Cowboy Church weekend we are not having Cowboy Church in June. We will resume in October.

Judy's News

Granger Community Food Pantry

God's grace came through and we once again served 57 families. I can still remember when it was around 20! Food came in and filled our pantry. It now looks very bare. With a generous donation we are now the proud owners of a new refrigerator. It was delivered Thursday. Now we have more room to buy ahead of time. I have three faithful helpers, Mary and Chip Geil from Bartlett who attend SSCyril Methodius and Harriet Kubala from Granger who attends church in Taylor. God blesses this ministry with them and with your help supplying our pantry. Thank you.....

5th Sunday Community Service

Next ones will be on May 29th. We are having the morning service in the park and the evening service will be at our church. What an exciting time for all of us!

UMW

Pastor Phil Shuler concluded our study at our UMW meeting held on May 18th and it was great! We also enjoyed a salad and soup luncheon. We will meet again in September. Everyone is welcome.

UMM/UMME

The United Methodist Men will meet on **May 11th at 8:00 am** the fellowship hall and breakfast will be served.