



News From Holland

Holland First United Methodist Church

May 2011

Dr. Phil Shuler, Pastor

Web Site: www.hollandum.org

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN

As I was preparing to write my article for the newsletter, I happened to read a “Beliefnet” article by Ben Witherington. I was struck by the subtitle: **“Jesus' resurrection was a true miracle that changed the world then, and continues to transform lives now.”** I know most of you will be reading this *after Easter*, but I think the subtitle remains relevant.

The miracle of Easter does not stop with Jesus' resurrection. It continued with the emergence of the Christian community, a community which *did not* exist until after Jesus had appeared to his disciples. Remember, the followers were in complete disarray following Jesus' death on the cross. Even Peter – disciple number ONE - denied him three times when confronted. But after Jesus rose from the grave and appeared to the women and his disciples, the emerging community of Christians was unstoppable.

I know this seems a bit academic and distant for us to comprehend. But, I write to tell you that I have seen it happen. Perhaps it doesn't happen every day, but it does happen...even in Holland! This year, I've already seen it both during the preparations for Easter AND on Easter Sunday itself. Let me explain.

One of the things that has impressed me about Holland is the “community” spirit that exists. I was visiting a person about to go into surgery at Scott and White when my presence there prompted the question, “how did you know?” “It must have been the ‘Holland grapevine.’” Now, I know smaller communities are usually close, but a “Holland grapevine?” Actually, this is an occasion for rejoicing. In larger cities, one does not even know the name of the person living next door! If one gets sick or finds him/herself in need of help, who would know or care? So, thank God for communities filled with people who know each other and really *care* enough to let others know! We share religious services in common (very unusual in many places). Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve come immediately to mind. The Easter Sunrise service at the Hispanic Church is another example! I conclude that people who never thought of it before have “bonded” to build a community of concern in Holland.

I cite another example. I have seen two articles in the media – published a week apart – about the building of a “Hornet's Nest” project that will include playgrounds for younger and older children. It will also include a volleyball court; soccer field, and encompass the current baseball field. Believe me, this is no small undertaking! To accomplish this in a community the size of Holland comes close to qualifying it as a “miracle!” Who would have ever thought that this could happen! Furthermore, it is going to happen through the efforts of PEOPLE WORKING TOGETHER (*literally!*).

This kind of undertaking could only happen within a community in which the inhabitants have bonded together and are functioning with a common purpose in mind. I could cite other examples, but I hope the point is made.

That first Easter long ago produced a “people” that was bonded together in their commitment to Jesus Christ, the one God glorified through resurrection. I use the word, “people,” in the same sense that the Hebrews became a “people” through the Exodus. Just so, the followers of the resurrected Lord became a “people” (church) after the resurrection. I personally think that such events constitute the meaning of Easter!

So, this Easter Sunday we gather to sing and praise God for the resurrection of Jesus Christ who gave himself that we might live. We will celebrate not only the emergence of our church, but also the emergence through bonding of our community, a community that transcends petty differences thereby fostering caring and co-operative endeavors. And, yes, we will even give thanks for the “Holland grapevine.” God has indeed given us life! Let's celebrate!

See you in church....I believe in miracles!

Phil Shuler, Pastor

Community Breakfast

May 1st is the Pancake Breakfast for at the Kuhlmann Center 7-8:30 am. 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

The attendance was down a little but the Holy Spirit was there in full force. It was a great night for everyone. Pastor Don Johnson's message was inspiring and brought forth the Easter message. Ed Stockton sang his heart out with 6 beautiful songs. What a witness he is. Food was great and it was wonderful to have so many newcomers.

Remember next month Steve Nance will be back. We have a special treat as well. Mark your calendars – May 15th. Invite everyone!

Judy's News

Granger Community Food Pantry

Wow – we made up for last month. We had 57 families come through to get food items. Our pantry is starting to look bare. We are especially low on breakfast items and rice and pinto beans (dry). We started to support the new Hispanic Mission in Granger who now have a Thrift Shop. We gave each child a coin (fake) which represents a dollar. They are asked to go spend it at the Thrift Shop. That way the Shop will get to be seen by many who may need the items there. Pass it on.....

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

The April meeting brought us the first half of our study being presented by our Pastor Phil Shuler and it was great. This study will continue at the May 18th meeting which will start at 11:30am. This will be a salad and soup luncheon. Hope to see you there!

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The United Methodist Men will meet on **May 14th at 8:00 am** the fellowship hall and breakfast will be served.