

The Messenger

Central United Methodist Church

Joseph Easley, Senior Pastor
300 Mary Street
Evansville, Indiana 47710-1292
March 2009

WHO IS YOUR SPIRITUAL COMPANION?

Of all the sermons I have heard, I best remember one preached by my Uncle George, my dad's younger brother, thus closer in age to me but still 19 years older. He started as an Evangelical United Brethren pastor, but changed denominations at age 30 and was a Presbyterian pastor until he retired. I think he was guest preaching in our home church, and I was about 15, but I remember the sermon topic clearly: We all need some human being to confess to—not instead of God, but in addition to God.

This was an entirely new idea to me—and frankly a radical thought in that setting. We knew, vaguely, that Catholics confessed their sins to priests and were forgiven by them, but as Protestants we knew that we could confess directly to God and needed no human intermediary. But my uncle pointed to scripture where James (5:16) said, “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed,” so it was hard to argue against that. He also made the point that our recognition of wrong, acceptance of God forgiveness, true repentance (turning our live in a new direction) and reconciliation with God and others were more complete and effective if we discussed these aloud with another trusted person. I believe he also quoted from one of the twelve steps of AA, which says to “tell one other person the exact nature of your wrong”. (I have come to see the sound theological and psychological bases of AA's 12 steps, even for those of us who are not be addicted to alcohol, drugs, sex or gambling, etc. but still struggle to change engrained self-defeating patterns.)

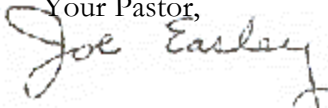
The idea of confessing to another person went against much of individualism (“me and Jesus” syndrome) I had learned as an American Protestant, but somehow it sounded right. So in my mid teens, I became a convert to a more communal practice of faith. I have proved the wisdom of my uncle more and more through the years since, although the actual ability to be more open with other people about my faults, feelings (especially, negative ones) and struggles took a long time to develop. I had a lot of internal resistance. Breaking down emotionally with God might be OK, but to be vulnerable in another person's presence and to risk possibly breaking down in front of another at some point was frightening.

But gradually I learned: that greater strength could come into my life, if I could admit my weakness; that my fears were not as overwhelming when I spoke them aloud; that my great failures were not as final when I could talk them over with someone. I have learned the value of being part of a small covenant group with other Christians, where we study, pray and

honestly share struggles and failures with one another. I have learned the value of processing my thoughts and feelings with a wise counselor—whether a blessed friend or paid professional—so the internal dialogue meets fresh air and becomes less corrosive. I have come to greatly value the listening, affirmation and correction of a spiritual guide who helps me reflect on my journey with God. I have learned that God's grace can be mediated by another person. With Christian companions my relationship with God has grown deeper.

If I could suggest one new thing you might do during Lent to make the most difference in your life, it would be to try sharing your faith journey with one other person. I have long since learned that it is not just confession in the narrow sense of “admitting sins” that we need to do with others. It is all the ups and downs, joys and sorrows of living and seeking to follow Jesus that we need to share with at least one trusted spiritual companion. I would encourage you to find either a small spiritual support and accountability group to meet with regularly, or a spiritual guide to visit monthly, or a spiritual friend to be with regularly where you covenant to mutually “be real” with each other in looking at and talking about your life and relationship with God: Where you are encountering God? What call of Jesus are you hearing in the silence of your heart? Is there some nudge of the Holy Spirit that you are resisting? What new step of faith, spiritual discipline or act of service do you feel led to make.

This year rather than giving something up for Lent, try taking on spiritual companionship in some new way to experience greater love, joy and peace with God. Try a baby step for just these few weeks. Maybe you and a friend agree to meet each week for 30 minutes of prayer together. Because we have not listened to James 5:16 and the biblical example of praying and sharing with others, we have missed out on so much God can do in the midst of honest, faithful, open Christian relationships.

Your Pastor,


FOLLOW-UP ON SCIENCE ISSUES

The book Rev. Easley mentioned in his sermon February 8 is available to borrow. Creation or Evolution: Do We Have to Choose by British biologist and evangelical Christian Denis Alexander show in a compelling and thorough way how Christians can believe in both “the Bible as the inspired Word of God” and accept scientific discoveries and theories, specifically evolution. He also notes that the biological research of Dr. Francis Collins, the Head of the Human Genome Project USA led him to also accept Christ and become a believer.

IN WORSHIP THIS MONTH

March 1 First Sunday in Lent **Communion**
Scriptures: Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10
Sermon: "God's Truth and Reconciliation
Commission"
Focus: God's Covenant with Noah and creation
Sign: The Rainbow

March 8 Second Sunday in Lent
Scriptures: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-17; Psalm 22:23-31
Sermon: "Chosen and Blessed for a Purpose"
Focus: God's covenant with Abraham and Sarah
Sign: Fruit

March. 15 Third Sunday in Lent
Scriptures: Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19
Sermon: "There Is No God But God"
Focus: God's covenant of exclusive relationship
with Israel
Sign: Ten Commandments

March 22 Fourth Sunday in Lent
Scriptures: selections from 2 Samuel 7
Sermon: "Who Needs a House?"
Focus: God's covenant with David and his
house
Sign: House

March 29 Fifth Sunday in Lent
Scriptures: Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12
Sermon: "A Relationship of the Heart"
Focus: A new covenant on people's hearts
Sign: Heart

DISCUSSION OF THE SHACK – 1 PM MARCH 1

The Shack, a best-selling novel has stirred much interest among readers with its imaginative and compelling portrayal of a man who suffers deep loss and then experiences the Trinity in a healing way. Its moving story, solid and accessible, theologically and psychologically, has won praise from Christian writers and musicians. Several Central members wanted an opportunity to discuss it, which we will offer at 1:00 p.m. March 1 in the Nolte Room in the FLC. After worship, get lunch (out, at home or here via food from home, delivery or carry-in) and come to this. The discussion will last an hour, after which additional time can be scheduled by those who would like to talk longer. Anyone who has read it and wants to discuss it is welcome. The book is an easy-read, readily available, and paperback (\$15 list).

LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

All are invited to complete and return a transportation questionnaire being used by the Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization (EMPO) to guide them in developing a long-range transportation plan (thru 2035). Congregations Acting for Justice and Empowerment chose transportation as its new community action issue, and in its research CAJE found EMPO was already seeking community input. The survey asks about all different types of transportation. Copies are on the table in the Sanctuary and in the church office.

WELCOME WEDNESDAYS CONTINUE

You are invited to the remaining three nights of the current "Welcome Wednesdays" series, March 4, 11 and 18. A light meal is served 5:15-6:00 PM for a free-will offering. Each night at 6:00 P.M.

Welcome Wednesdays there is a recipe demo in the kitchen, children's activities begin and youth group starts. At 6:30 P.M. there are three adult classes: The Old Testament for Beginners and Deadly Viper Character three Assassins continue and beginning quilting class runs for three weeks. Open gym is at 7:30. To join a class or make a meal reservation call the church by Monday, March 2.

"INVISIBLE CHILDREN" SCREENING ON MARCH 16

Central United Methodist Church will host a public screening of "Invisible Children" for youth and adults on Monday, March 16 at 7:00 PM. All are invited to this uncut film about the events and tragedies taking place in northern Uganda, where children flee to avoid becoming child soldiers in a rebel army. Learn what is being done and how we can help these children grow to adulthood and become adults who can help themselves, their nation and the world. A mission leader once said, "May our hearts be broken by the things that break the heart of God." If you have a passion for children, mission work or the continent of Africa, this is a must see film. High school youth and young adults are especially encouraged to attend this free event. (Some content not suitable for younger audiences) To learn more call **Mike** at (424-3574) or check out www.invisiblechildren.com.

FEEDBACK SOUGHT ON RACK SHACK MOVE

Last month's Messenger had an article about a proposed move of the Rack Shack so it would be nearer the Food Pantry, where the two might have common hours, support each another and better serve people. It could also provide easier and more controlled access to the Rack Shack, so people do not have to come through a Child Care area. The Trustees invite the thoughts of all on this proposal. They have already received some and even received an alternate proposal that has a lot of merit. Please express your opinion or ideas by e-mail (cromain@unitedevv.com) or phone (867-6000) to **Connie Romain**.

30 HOUR FAMINE

Please keep the youth of Central in your prayers as they will be participating in a 30 Hour Famine Event during the weekend of March 6 and 7. The youth will be fasting for 30 hours as well as partaking in various events and films throughout the weekend as we grow in our knowledge and compassion for the world's poor. Please be sure to be in services on March 8 to hear about the experiences of our youth during their famine weekend.

ALEXANDER AME CHURCH BUFFET-MARCH 6

Alexander AME Church, 840 E. Walnut St., invites us to their Smorgasbord Friday, March 6. Tickets are \$10 each for adults (\$5 for children 10 and under). There will be good food and fellowship with a sister Wesleyan congregation. Carry out is from 3-5:00 P.M. or during the service at from 5-7:00 P.M.

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Linda Kaye Preuss
- 2 Jerrine Robertson
Abby Warneke
- 4 Dorothy Gerding
Joelle Lynch
- 6 Alan Eggleston
- 7 Kenley Bonenberger
Lisa Miner
- 8 Joy Juliano
Ruth Randall
- 10 Liz Guard
- 12 Jennifer Brandt
- 14 Heather Harris
- 17 Virginia Hurt
- 19 Emily Herring
- 21 Isaiah Huey
Richard H. Schnakenburg
- 22 Tracey Mosley
Rhaechel Renner
- 23 Nicki Mahone
- 25 Josh Barron
- 26 Alicia Ann Georges
- 27 Cidney Huey
- 28 Emma Brandt
- 29 Marsha Goldsmith
- 30 Kara Millay
Karen Schnakenburg



A JUSTICE MOMENT

The Central CAJE Team is looking forward to Spring and the April 30th ACTION. We will be writing to many of you with an offer to get involved with the CAJE Team in a very easy project.

We need help getting Central members and their families and friends to the ACTION. So we'll be asking some of you to come with your family and also call a member or two to invite them to the ACTION. A brief meeting will be held on March 16 at 6:15 PM in the Trinity Room to explain our request. This meeting will precede the special screening of the film *Invisible Children*, held in the Garden Room at 7:00 PM.

Please mark your calendars for the evening of March 16 when you'll have the opportunity to reach outside the walls of our church, to learn more about CAJE's new initiative for 2009 - Transportation, have your hearts opened to what is happening in Uganda, and to fulfill Central's mission of spreading the Good News to our community and the world.

Also, the Central CAJE Team would like to express their appreciation for the generous gift from the Endowment Fund Team designated for the Vanderburgh County Dental Clinic. CAJE worked diligently along with the County Council and other benefactors to ensure that the dental clinic became a reality, and the clinic has proven to be a much needed resource for thousands of individuals in our community.

Thank you in advance for your support of Congregations Acting for Justice & Empowerment and for following Central's mission statement by "Spreading the Good News" to our community with this gift that will help keep the dental clinic in operation.

Your Central CAJE Team

PRAYER SEMINAR - APRIL 25

Plan now to attend an outstanding seminar on prayer Saturday, April 25 at Methodist Temple. People from churches all over the area and from different denominations are expected to attend that day to hear Terry Tekyl, a leading trainer and writer about prayer and a United Methodist pastor. The focus will be on how prayer can transform our church, as well as each of our lives. Cost will be \$30 with an advance reservations discount. Watch for details.

ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNT

It's that time again! Time to start collecting candy for our super-duper egg hunt. We don't need as many eggs this year, but we will need lots of wrapped candy that is suitable for toddlers. Please bring your donations, candy (or money, if that's easier for you), to the church office. Also, please consider helping us stuff eggs this year. We will meet in the parlor and begin stuffing at 9:30 a.m. on April 8.

LOCK IN

We are so excited—it's time for another Lock-In. The lock in is for kids in grades K-5 and their friends. We'll meet in the Garden Room at 8:00 p.m. on Friday, April 3, for pizza, snacks, movies and lots of fun. Pick up is 8:00 a.m. on Saturday, April 4. Watch your mail for more details or call **Nancy** at 424-3574.

PRAYERS DURING LENT

The Prayer Team plans to have prayer in the Narthex during Lent, from 2–7:00 P.M. on Wednesdays. Wednesday was chosen because so many people are already involved at church that day and can stop by and offer a prayer. Day and time can be changed later if something works better.

Also, as good stewards we chose it because the church will already be heated.

Carol Crabtree



CENTRAL CHILDCARE NEEDS GOOD USED COMPUTERS

Please call the Child Care office, 424-9461, if you would be able to help them.

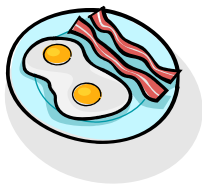
CHILD CARE THANKS

Central Child Care would like to thank Imogene Lutz for volunteering at the Child Care. She helps out each week and had done so on a daily basis during the Parent Teacher Conferences. You are great Imogene!

WELCOME to Ian Mark Radke, born to Sean and Lisa Radke on February 8 in Durham N. C. Grandparents are **Kurt and Sandy Koenig**. Sean is serving as the College Age Minister at The Church of the Good Shepherd (Presbyterian) in Chapel Hill, N.C.

MEN'S LENTEN BREAKFASTS STARTED FEBRUARY 28

The Vanderburgh United Methodist Men's Lenten Breakfasts start February 28 at Aldersgate Church. They continue at 7:15 A.M. each Saturday, a little earlier this year, so it ends by 8:45 A.M.. Central is host March 21. See calendar for the location of other breakfasts. The finale is a joint UCC-UMC breakfast for men and women, April 11, at the Scottish Rite, with tickets for it sold in advance. See the complete schedule on the bulletin board and in the calendar on page 5.



CONFERENCE OFFERS SCHOLARSHIPS

Merit Scholarship awards are for undergraduate students who are members of the United Methodist Church who are attending a United Methodist College or University.

1. Applicant must be a full, active member of a United Methodist Church within the Indiana Conference;
2. Applicant must be recommended by his/her pastor.
3. Applicant must be attending or planning to attend an institution of higher education recognized as a United Methodist related school by the United Methodist University Senate. It is NOT required that the school be within the bounds of the annual conference.
4. Only undergraduate students will be considered for the Merit Scholarship.
5. Awards will be determined on the basis of "merit," understood in terms of:

Academic Achievement

Expression of Christian faith through:

- a. church participation in home church and/or campus ministry and/or community service
- b. vocational preparation for service to humanity

United Methodist Merit Scholarships are awarded annually by the conference Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry from the portion of the Student Day offering returned to the Annual Conference for that purpose. The number of scholarships is determined by the amount of funds available.

To apply for the scholarship applicants must fill out the attached form and send it in by April 13, 2009.

You can also download the application at www.sicumc.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=218.

JOE AND RHAECHEL RENNER FIRE

Joe and Rhaechel Renner had a fire caused by electrical problems at their house February 12. No one was injured and the damage was mainly from smoke, but it will likely take three months to fix the house and make it habitable again, with electrical deficiencies also being corrected during the work. They are staying with his parents, **Chuck and Karen** until the insurance company provides temporary housing. They have a baby due in June. This makes a bad situation even more stressful. Please keep this family in your prayers.

CONGRATULATIONS....April Johnson just finished paramedic courses and is now a paramedic in Atlanta, GA. April's parents are **Millard and Barbara Johnson**.

SENIOR CITIZENS LUNCHEON

The Senior Citizens will be having their luncheon on Thursday, March 19, at 12:00 noon in the Garden Room. Everyone is to bring a covered dish and call **Velma Berry**, 477-5871, if you have any questions.

USE OF FLC KITCHEN AND STOVE

The commercial kitchen in the FLC is a wonderful resource to both child care and the church. As with any other resource, we need to be good stewards of it. The equipment in it is expensive, to some extent delicate, different from our home kitchens and clearly more complicated than we realize. Twice recently after it was used by experienced people from the church the oven was not fully shut off, and with the gas left on there was the potential of a spark setting off an explosion the next time someone came in the room. We don't need to blame anyone for past incidents, because they did not know all that needed to be done, but need to prevent future ones as they could be hazardous. The commercial dishwasher has also sometimes not been properly shut down, as there are several steps with it too.

We want the FLC kitchen to be available for the church, when it is needed, and our policy has been that before using it any person who will use it must first be trained and checked out by the kitchen staff of child care, since they work with it every day and are very familiar with it. We also want any group using the kitchen to leave it clean and ready for the next group, so we have developed policies for its use.

The pastor and child care leadership have been in conversation and developed some steps to help keep people fully informed. The policies for use of the kitchen will be posted in a prominent location there. The stove will have a laminated copy of step-by-step instructions for turning on and off the oven. This may also be done for the dishwasher. These do not take the place of being trained before using it—which is the first step in turning it on—but they will serve as reminders to a person who has been trained but does not use it frequently enough to always remember every step.

LENTEN LUNCHEON SERIES WITH ST. ANTHONY AND ST. LUCAS

Plans are underway for a Lenten luncheon series at noon on the last three Wednesdays of March. At the heart of it will be good food, fellowship and faith enrichment. Each week one church will host a simple soup lunch and a pastoral leader from another church will present something on the life and ministry of Christ as it is mediated by the visual arts. Watch for further details and sign-up information.

XYZ SENIOR DAY - APRIL 16

XYZ Senior Day (Xtra Years of Zest) will be held at Aldersgate UMC on April 16, 8:30 to after lunch. Cost will be \$10 per person. This includes coffee and snack at registration, lunch and two interest groups. Registration forms available in the near future. XYZ Senior Day is a day for seniors to fellowship, learn, eat and enjoy life together. All seniors, all denominations, welcome to attend. This is sponsored by United Methodist Churches.

EASTER LILY TO REMEMBER A LOVED ONE – 2009



This Easter, remember your loved one with an Easter Lily to be used in our sanctuary as decoration. The cost will be \$10.00 each. The last day to order is March 29. Acknowledgment of all gifts and lilies will be printed in a bulletin insert on Easter Sunday, April 12. Please attach payment with this form.

Given by _____

In Honor of _____

In Memory of _____

MAKE ALL CHECKS PAYABLE TO: CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
(We are asking that you make SEPARATE checks, one for Lilies and one for Loaves & Fishes. This makes it easier for our counters).

CENTRAL LOAVES & FISHES GIFTS – 2009



Remember a loved one this Easter by making a cash gift to the Central Loaves & Fishes Account. Monies in this account are used toward the financial needs of the families in our neighborhood. Acknowledgment of all gifts and lilies will be printed in a bulletin insert on Easter Sunday, April 12. Please attach gift with this form.

I prefer to give a gift of cash in the amount of: \$ _____

Given by _____


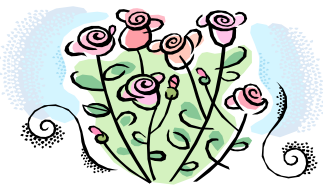

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(We are asking that you make separate checks, one for Lilies and one for Loaves & Fishes. This makes it easier for our counters).



Pre-Sale Geraniums for Week Day Christian Education
See back Bulletin Board for details or call Janet Duncan at 426-0002.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>March 2009</h1>						
1 Communion 1:00 Discussion of "Shack" – FLC Meeting Room	2 9:30-11:30 Food Pantry 10:00-1:00 Rack Shack 6:00 Trustee Mtg. - Ch. Office.	3 9:00 Church Staff Mtg. 10:00 Martha-Elizabeth – Lib. 1:30 JACC/EPA - Library 3:30 Tutoring 6:15 Staff-Parish Mtg. – Lib. 6:30 Emmaus Prayer Group	4 11:00 Wednesday Friends – Trinity Room 4:00 Power 5:15 Welcome Wed. Meal* 6:00 Youth – Youth Room 6:15 Choir 6:30 Classes 7:30 Bell Choir, Open Gym	5 9:00 Quilting 9:30-11:30 Food Pantry 10:00-1:00 Rack Shack 3:30 Tutoring 5:00 FLC rented for Basketball 6:00 Worship Mtg. - Library	6 Staff Dress Down Day 6:00 30 Hour Famine Begins	7 7:15 UMM Lenten Breakfast – Howell Methodist 9:00-12:00 Indoor Playground 12:00 N A Meeting - Library 6:00 30 Hour Famine ending
8 Daylight Savings Time	9 9:30-11:30 Food Pantry 10:00-1:00 Rack Shack 4:30 Outreach Mtg. - Trinity 6:00 Church Council - Trinity	10 9:00 Church Staff Mtg. 2:00 Small Accountability 3:30 Tutoring 5:15 Shalom Team – Trinity 6:30 Mission Team - Library 6:30 Emmaus Prayer Group	11 12:00 Lenten Luncheon – St. Anthony's 11:45 JNIA - Trinity 4:00 Power 5:15 Welcome Wed. Meal* 6:00 Youth – Youth Room 6:15 Chancel Choir 6:30 Classes 7:30 Bell Choir, Open Gym	12 7:30 JACC Mtg. – Library 9:00 Quilting 9:30-11:30 Food Pantry 10:00-1:00 Rack Shack 2:00 Mary-Barb Brooks Cir. 3:30 Tutoring	13 5:30 Sanders Wedding Rehearsal	14 7:15 UMM Lenten Breakfast – McCutchanville Methodist 9:00-12:00 Indoor Playground 12:00 N A Meeting - Library 4:30 Sanders Wedding
15	16 9:30-11:30 Food Pantry 10:00-1:00 Rack Shack 6:15 Justice Ministry Mtg. – Trinity Room 7:00 Bea Conder Circle – Hostess: Gloria Millay 7:00 Screening Invisible Children – Garden	17 9:00 Full Church Staff Mtg. 3:30 Tutoring 5:45 Nurture Team – Ch O 6:30 Emmaus Prayer Group	18 10:00 UMW Executive –Lib. 12:00 Lenten Luncheon – St. Anthony's 1:00 Wednesday Friends - Trinity 4:00 Power 5:15 Welcome Wed. Meal* 6:00 Youth – Youth Room 6:15 Choir 6:30 Classes 7:30 Bell Choir, Open Gym	19 9:00 Quilting 9:30-11:30 Food Pantry 10:00-1:00 Rack Shack 12:00 Senior Citizens - Garden 3:30 Tutoring 5:00 FLC rented for Basketball	20 12:00 MESSENGER DEADLINE Herbst/Hahn Wedding Rehearsal	21 7:15 UMM Lenten Breakfast – Central FLC 9:00-12:00 Indoor Playground 12:00 N A Meeting - Library 2:30 Herbst/Hahn Wedding 4:00 FLC Rented
22 One Great Hour of Sharing	23 9:30-11:30 Food Pantry 10:00-1:00 Rack Shack 6:30 CAJE Team Mtg. – Lib.	24 9:00 Staff Meeting 3:30 Tutoring 6:30 Emmaus Prayer Group	25 10:00 Martha Elizabeth Circle – Garden 12:00 Lenten Luncheon – Garden Room 4:00 Power 6:15 Choir 7:30 Bell Choir 6:30 Basketball FLC	26 9:00 Quilting 9:30-11:30 Food Pantry 10:00-1:00 Rack Shack 3:30 Tutoring	27	28 7:15 UMM Lenten Breakfast – Trinity Methodist 9:00-12:00 Indoor Playground 12:00 N A Meeting - Library 1:00 Halbig Wedding Shower – Garden Room
29 5:00 Shalom Dinner – FLC	30 9:30-11:30 Food Pantry 10:00-1:00 Rack Shack	31 3:30 Tutoring 6:30 Emmaus Prayer Group			*Welcome Wednesday 5:15 Meal 6:00 Cooking Demo in Kitchen 6:15 Children's Choir & Crafts 6:15 Stories, Songs & Crafts 6:30 Bible Study 6:30 "Deadly Viper" Study 6:30 Classes	