

WITNESS

JULY 2009



THE BEST MEAL YOU EVER HAD



Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. 1 Corinthians 10:17 NRSV

Imagine for a moment coming upon someone who is starving to death, someone who hasn't eaten in weeks, someone so weak it is hard for them to move. Indeed, they are close to death. Now see yourself preparing a meal for them, a table filled with the food they so desperately need. They sit quietly, watching you work. When all is prepared, you turn to them and invite them to come forward to get the food they need to save their lives. Instead, they sit, looking at the food, and tell you they would rather not eat today. That is how many Christians treat Holy Communion.

A prominent United Methodist pastor asked a group of his parishioners, "What was the best meal you ever ate?" He received many answers you would expect—birthday and anniversary celebrations, a meal at a fine restaurant while on vacation. Two responses, however, stuck in his mind.

The first was from a veteran of World War II. The man said it was early in 1945, in Europe. His squad had fought in a terrible battle over two days. It was early morning, and they were stumbling to a rear area to rest. A Red Cross worker was serving coffee and stale doughnuts to blank-eyed men who had lived for several days with the brutal terrors of war and the likelihood of imminent death. The man said those stale doughnuts and coffee, served by someone who smiled and spoke softly to him, were the best meal he ever had.

Another man told the pastor his story. He was not quite 20 and had just flunked out of school. He had packed his things into his car and driven home, feeling ashamed and beaten, wondering how his parents would receive him and dreading facing his family and friends. He pulled in to the driveway and shuffled toward the door, but before he got there, it swung open. His mother took him in her arms, hugged him

and said she was glad to see him. She said, "Come in, son. I've made your favorite meal." That, the man said, was the best meal he ever ate.

What is the best meal you have ever eaten? Fix it in your mind. Remember how special it was. Who was there? What was shared? How did you feel? Bring all the good memories, the good feelings, of that meal to your mind. Those are the feelings we are to bring to the Lord's Supper. Like the soldier eating the doughnut and coffee, or the young man being received by his family, the Lord's Supper can bring us comfort.

Understanding the Lord's Supper is to be the best meal our spirits can receive helps us to understand Paul's dilemma in speaking to the church at Corinth. Paul wants the Corinthians to understand Holy Communion is the best meal they ever can eat. But Paul is beside himself because the people treat the Lord's Supper as if it were a typical meal in the Roman Empire. Paul wants the Corinthians to understand the best meal in the history of humankind took place on the night Jesus died. Paul wants them to realize every time the church gathers for the Lord's Supper, participants relive that meal, remember that meal, sit at the very table with Christ.

So Paul says, "Don't take the meal unworthily." By that, he urges them to remember they eat this meal with the risen Lord Jesus Christ. They are to accept it with heartfelt joy because Jesus died for us. This meal is how Christ's Body, the church, is fed. Like those who encountered Christ on the road to Emmaus, we encounter the living, risen Christ in this meal and receive Christ's grace. Celebrate this meal, remembering what Jesus did for you. That is what it means to take the meal worthily.

We are a people who are starving spiritually, who are offered a great meal. We are like people who have been through a great battle, who receive comfort from the kindness of a stranger; we are like people who have suffered humiliation and defeat but are welcomed by our family. Christ knows of our hunger and offers us a meal, filled with grace, love, and hope. It is a meal born out of his love and hope for us, a meal that makes us one with Christ and each other. Every week as we worship, come and feast at His table.

—The Rev. Dennis Meaker

July Birthdays

9 Louise Gafford	9 Susanna Meaker
10 Rebecca Rutledge	11 Julio Feliciano
11 Katie Lee	12 Ryan Murphey
13 Judith Redmond	17 Jere Lee
23 Angellie Feliciano	31 Sam Stafford

Joys

Nat Roache has offered to provide transportation on Sunday mornings to anyone who might not otherwise be able to get to church. Contact the church office if you or someone you know needs help getting here for Sunday worship.

- The Tennessee Conference met June 14-16. Thanks to Sheri Tyler Kimble for serving as our lay representative to conference. Congratulations to Laura Feliciano for receiving certification as a part-time local pastor.
- We welcome back those appointed to ministry at West Nashville: Dennis Meaker, senior pastor; Sherry Cothran Woolsey, community outreach; Laura Feliciano, Hispanic Ministries; MaryJane Pierce Norton, secondary appointment—deacon.

June Attendance

May 31: Sunday School, 30	Worship, 65 (Fifth Sunday)
June 7: Sunday School, 35	Worship, 85 (Children's Sabbath)
June 14: Sunday School, 30	Worship, 69
June 21: Sunday School, 23	Worship, 72

New Wednesday Night Opportunities Coming in August!

We will add some special programs to our Wednesday night fellowship beginning Aug. 5. We will meet to share a meal at 5:30. At 6:30, the following options will be available: Adult Bible studies in Spanish and English, Adult choir, children and youth programs. Children's choir will be a part of our special children's programs. At 7:30, we will gather for a short time of sharing and prayer. Wednesday night programming will conclude at 7:45. We hope everyone will come and join us.

Sherry Cothran Woolsey Receives Seminary Scholarship

Sherry Cothran Woolsey was one of 11 women chosen to receive a 2009–10 Georgia Harkness Scholarship. The seminary scholarships go to second-career women over age 35 preparing for ordination as elders in The United Methodist Church. Harkness, the first woman theologian to teach in a Protestant seminary in the United States, dedicated her life to dismantling discrimination because of race and gender in The United Methodist Church and the world.

Harkness, who taught at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois, died in 1974. She was instrumental in the 1956 decision granting women full clergy membership in The Methodist Church.

The Rev. HiRho Park, director of continuing formation for ministry, General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, said the scholarship program is a valuable investment in the future of the church. Findings from this year's Lead Women Pastors Survey found one-fourth of senior women pastors serving churches with more than 1,000 members began ministry as a second career.

"It is evident these women bring life experiences and professional skills that enhance their ministry," Park said.

Sherry has a B.A. in recording industry management and worked in the music industry for much of her adult life, both in management and as a performer. She is married to the Rev. Patrick J. Woolsey, also a United Methodist minister.

Sherry's passion is working with communities and churches through synergistic partnerships and genuine relationships that exercise Wesley's "practical divinity." She continues to bless us with her leadership in community outreach and in faith formation within the congregation.

Vacation Bible School

The first week of June at West Nashville UMC was full of laughter, learning and beach fun! Thanks to everyone who made the 2009 Vacation Bible School possible. We had a great turnout, and it was exciting to see our sanctuary filled with so many young, smiling faces. **We had 64 children total**, with our highest attendance Thursday with 52 children. We continue in contact with all participating families and hope some will join our faith community.

The children had a great time learning five beach be-attitudes, one for each day: be obedient, be kind, be forgiving, be bold, and believe. Thanks to our wonderful acting volunteers, the children saw a new Bible lesson performed in drama each night of the week, demonstrating the beach be-attitudes. They heard the story of Gideon (Judges 6:36-7:21), David and

Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9:1-11), the Unforgiving Servant (Matthew 18:21-33), a Woman Healed (Luke 8:40-48), and Jesus and Thomas (John 20:24-29). In addition to these Bible lessons, the children enjoyed dinner, crafts, games, music and sand play.

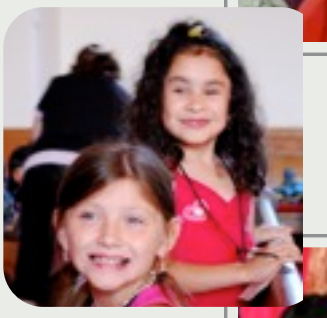
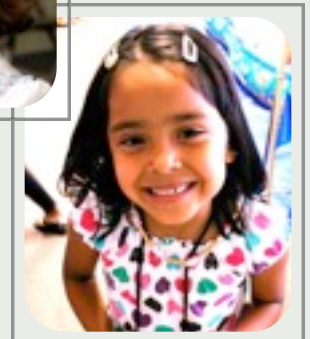
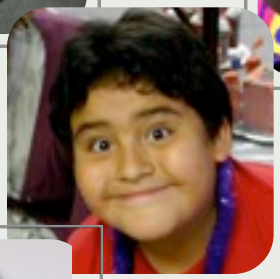
On Sunday June 7, we celebrated **Children's Sabbath** featuring our VBS children in worship. All of the children led the call to worship and performed two songs from VBS: "Beach Be-Attitudes" and "I Will Believe." Older children contributed to the worship service by reading Scripture verses and telling the Bible stories they learned during the week. The Rev. Sherry Woolsey focused on the important art and ministry of storytelling in her sermon. Other children helped to collect the offering and serve Communion.

Children's Sabbath was a great opportunity to welcome new VBS

families to our Sunday worship service and celebrate the important place of children in our lives and faith.

We could not have had such a successful VBS without your help. Thank you to the more than 30 volunteers. Thank you to the countless others who supported VBS by sharing materials and—most importantly—your prayers.

This busy week with its sometimes-chaotic moments provided an opportunity for both expansion and unity. Volunteers made things work even when space and supplies pushed us to the max. VBS was a great demonstration of our identity as a community of radical hospitality. I hope we will summon the energy and excitement of this week as we continue forward in our ministries together with purpose and a profound vision of vitality, community and love.



Sunday School

Every Sunday, we offer Sunday school from 9:30 to 10:15 a.m.:

- Spanish-language class for adults, Gothard Room, led by Laura Feliciano and Amanda Bachus.
- Media class for youth and adults, Memorial Hall, led by Crys Zinkiewicz. We are studying the New Testament with "Good God Theater."
- Child care for ages 3 and younger in the nursery.
- Younger children meet in the classroom next to the nursery.
- Older children meet in the room behind the choir room.

Prayer Concerns

- Joan Berg, Barbara Dunlap-Berg's mother
- Tom Brucker's mother
- Mary Ellen Carney, Helen Dozier's daughter
- Megan Cobb, recovering from foot surgery
- Albert E. Curtis, Mabel Jackson's friend
- Louise Gafford, in hospice care
- David Garlick, Doreen Rodger's brother
- Robert Hendrickson, Dot Hendrickson's son
- Mabel Allene Jackson
- Jeff Larue
- Dorothy Lish
- Sean Michael Mevis
- Jeanne Moses
- Gregory Mundy, Glenna Osborn's friend
- Susan Rodgers for the loss of her mother, Doreen
- Helen Sellers
- Phil Schmutz
- Mitzi Stafford and family for the loss of her grandmother

- The Velazco-White Family—sympathy
- Annie Laura Wells, Angela Flanagan's grandmother
- Our community
- As a church family, we mourn the loss of Doreen Rodgers. Many might not know that, in addition to being regular in her attendance for worship, she was at the church twice every week to help in the office and to straighten the sanctuary. She blessed our lives, and we will continue to miss her.

Church Ladies Meetin'

Church Ladies will meet Wednesday, July 15. Many members have had conflicts recently. We hope to get back on a good schedule. We will gather for a meal together and then have time for study and prayer with those who are not going to choir or to Spanish lessons. We invite all women to the meeting. We gather at 6 p.m. in Memorial Hall.

Food-Assistance Program

We continue to serve hot meals to 50+ people every Thursday at 5:30 p.m. Volunteer teams helping regularly include Hands On Nashville, East Serves (Vanderbilt dorm group), Sigma Chi—Vanderbilt, Randy Horick and Grace Renshaw, and many church members, friends, and associates.

The food pantry provides supplemental food assistance to many families and individuals in the Nashville area as needed during the week. Many of Nashville's homeless citizens get sack lunches from us.

Thankfully, we recently received a very large donation of goods for the pantry, through an anonymous grant given to Second Harvest Food Bank. Our pantry received more than 1,600 pounds of food.

We always need heat-and-eat meals, soups, nonperishable meat and

protein products, crackers and chips, drinks, canned fruits and vegetables, pasta and rice, and other quality food and hygiene goods.

July Calendar Notes

Every Sunday

- Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.
- Worship, 10:30 a.m.
- Youth, 5:30 p.m., Blakemore UMC
- Every Wednesday:
 - Choir Rehearsal, 6:30 p.m.
 - Youth at Blakemore, 6:15 p.m.
- Every Thursday: Church Supper, 5:30 p.m.
- Every Tuesday and Friday: AA, Memorial Hall, 8 p.m.

Meetings and Events

- Sunday, **July 5** – Love Feast following worship
- Tuesday, **July 7** – Computer Class – 5:30–6:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, **July 10** – Computer Class, 5:30–6:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, **July 17** – Church Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Gothard Room
- Wednesday, **July 18** – Church Ladies, 6–8:30 p.m., Memorial Hall
- Tuesday, **July 21** – Computer Class, 5:30–6:30 p.m.
- Sunday, **July 26** – Youth Swim Party – Ryan McCauley's House – 3 p.m.
- Tuesday, **July 28** – Computer Class, 5:30–6:30 p.m.
- **July 31–Aug. 2** – Youth Summer Sizzler – Beersheba Springs, Tenn.

Hispanic Ministry Update

June was an exciting month for everyone at West Nashville, including the Hispanic ministry. We had great participation in VBS with 60 percent of the children from Hispanic families. Attendance at bilingual worship has increased, and we conclude the first

half of 2009 with an average of 21 Hispanic persons in attendance each Sunday. Our Spanish-language adult Sunday School class has grown, and we started a new study led by Laura Feliciano. During June, we discussed the doctrine of the Trinity, singing Trinitarian hymns, reciting the creed, and studying relevant Bible passages.

Wednesday nights continue to be busy at West Nashville UMC. The beginning-Spanish class concluded in June. Congratulations to Erik Broeren, Thomas Caldwell, Beth Chatham, Joan Dayton, , Loretta Green, Randy Horick, Sheri Kimble, Amy Lipschutz, Kristen Luetkemeier, Harry McMackin, Glenna Osborn, Grace Renshaw, and Ed Zinkiewicz, who completed the class and devoted their time and energy to this ministry of hospitality in learning to communicate in Spanish. While Spanish class is over, the Spanish-language devotional session continues every Wednesday, 7–9 p.m. We look forward to expanding our Wednesday night programming in August. More information to come!

On June 23, we kicked off a six-week basic computer-training course on Tuesday evenings from 5:30–6:30. The Rev. Dennis Meaker is teaching, and child care and help in Spanish are provided. The class will continue through July.

Please continue to keep this and all church ministries in your prayers as we continue to serve God and neighbor in our community.

Childcare and Children— A Blessing at West Nashville

We are blessed to have Alicia Hickman as our child-care provider on Sunday mornings. Alicia just finished her first year in the masters of theological studies program at Vanderbilt Divinity School. Alicia is from DeLand, Florida, and went to Stetson University (also in

DeLand), where she double majored in English and religious studies.

“While I am an only child,” she says, “I love being with young children. I did my fair share of babysitting while in high school and college.

“I love that toddler to early elementary age. The kids are inquisitive and creative. They can communicate well and have really warmed to me in the short time I've been working here. There is something very carefree and innocent about children (not surprising, I know), but I feel, when I'm working on Sunday mornings, I'm not really working. I'm playing right along with them. In the grown-up world, not much is carefree and fun (especially in grad school). This opportunity has given me a chance to watch children grow and learn as well as get back a little bit of the fun that I thought I outgrew.” If you haven't yet had a chance to meet Alicia, please do. Her ministry blesses us all.

On Sunday mornings during worship, child care is available for children from birth through age 6. Because on some Sundays, we are blessed with a large number of children, we now have a volunteer-helper schedule as well to aid Alicia. Here are those who have volunteered for the month of July:

July 6: Angela Flanagan

July 12: Andrea Bachus

July 19: Evon Lee

July 26: *Still Open*

August 2: Arthur Bachus

Anyone who has worked in children's ministries knows the blessings we receive from the children far outweigh the work involved. Thanks Alicia. And thanks to our volunteers as well.

Youth News

Saying goodbye to a place where you've built great relationships with incredible people is always tough! I really don't take it lightly. It was an agonizing decision to leave these two amazing churches and the people who are part of them to go to North Carolina. Although it's only been about two years, it seems like 10 because I feel many of you are now part of my family! I've learned so much from our youth and from others in the congregations. Even more amazing is that you were supportive of everything we did.

Because of your support, I was able to work in my passions for youth and community outreach and connect the two. God has used us to do some incredible things such as reaching youth on the other side of the city who don't even go to our churches, helping our youth to grow spiritually, and reaching out to the community around us. WOW! Sometimes you don't get to see the impact made, but trust me, these churches have definitely made a huge impact on my life and the lives of youth around Nashville. Thank you for your support, prayers and love for these youth and for Kristin and me as we move to North Carolina. I pray God will continue to use you!

Love in Christ, *Nate*

July 26: Pool party at the McCulley's, 3 p.m.; bring snack/drink to share

July 31–Aug 2: Summer Sizzler

Now Showing!

Good God Theater continues the miniseries of “Fish Eyes,” the Gospels according to Peter and Andrew. Join us to look at familiar stories from the fresh perspective of two clueless disciples. Show times are 9:30 a.m. in Memorial Hall. Youth and adults welcome!