

## John Boy's Corner

As a boy growing up, I was in the Boy Scouts. We had a motto: Be Prepared.

The thought of preparing came to me the other day when I watched people cleaning their yards for Mule Days. They did not want people coming to town to see a mess at their home.

I remember helping cleaning house because relatives or friends were coming to visit. We didn't want them to think we were messy housekeepers.

I watch people prepare for the next work day. Farmers get equipment ready for plowing or spraying. Teachers prepare for the students study the next day. Salesmen prepare for the next days area they will be traveling in. They check notes on the clients to see if they should ask about their parents, siblings, or pets. Everywhere, there are people working today and preparing for tomorrows demands. Everyday we prepare for ourselves, our families, our friends and sometimes we prepare for complete strangers.

Matthew Chapter 3, verse 3 and Luke Chapter 3, verse 4 both state: Prepare you the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. This verse is important because it is found in all four gospels. Straight is the way and narrow is the gate. Straight is God's Word and His Word is a road map unto our feet. Even if we accidentally take a wrong turn, we will miss our destination. When the Spirit is leading, there are no accidents.

How does one prepare the way of the Lord? God's way is that none should perish, but all come to the saving knowledge of Him. Our knowledge of Him is only found in His Word.

Most Christians are going to some day get in the Word. The grasshopper fiddled and played while the ant prepared for winter. The sad thing was that winter came and the grasshopper wasn't prepared.

Won't it take time to get to know Him, read His Word, and pray to Him, and learn what He wants for me in this world? Maybe; but, it might be worth it to prepare for Him. After all, He has been preparing a mansion for you for over two thousand years.

In Love and In Christ, John Boy

## UMM

United Methodist Men will meet Monday, November 14 at 7:00 p.m. due to the Staff Parish Relations Committee and Fall Festival.

The men are studying "Strong In Heart", Biblical Men of Compassion. Please join us for a night of food, fellowship and study.

Ron

**Most church people are kind,  
polite, and sweet-spirited until  
you try to sit in their pew.**

## Opportunities for November

Please note the Sunday's you have been assigned to serve. If you cannot serve on your Sunday, please change with someone else.

### November Ushers:

Will Chandler and Bill Woodall

### November Greeters:

Will and Susie Chandler, Bill and Noela Woodall

### November Nursery:

11/6 Karen Hicks and LuAnn Gregory

11/13 Jill Tart and Cherry Littleton

11/20 Sue Wood and Allie Tracy

11/27 Janet Wilson and Marsha Turner

### Children's Church

11/6 Cindy Barefoot

11/13 Evelyn Aranda

11/20 Mary Helen Sills

11/27 Jamie Butler

### Lay Readers:

11/6 David Gray

11/13 Ricky Harrison

11/20 Greg Kornegay

11/27 Wendy Collins

**If you would like to volunteer to be an usher, greeter this year,  
or give flowers, please see Noela Woodall or Steve Smith.**

### Birthdays:

11/2 Carolina Dunn 11/4 Harley Drew

11/5 LuAnn Gregory

11/11 Mai Stephenson 11/12 J. T. Turner

11/14 John Parker 11/16 Jonathan Butler

11/18 Blake Barefoot 11/18 Tyler Davis

11/19 Judy Hines 11/20 Brooke Graham

11/21 Glenn Lee 11/23 Beth Harrison

11/27 Renna Johnson 11/27 Jean Hale

### Anniversaries

11/2 Jack and Cherry Littleton

11/19 Greg and Susan Nelson



# BEACON

Our Mission: Serving as a beacon for Jesus Christ  
by believing and sharing His Love

November 2011

## Worship With Us

### November 6, 2011

21th Sunday after Pentecost

Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25

Psalm 78:1-7

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Matthew 25:1-13

Daylight Saving Time ends

### November 13, 2011

22nd Sunday after Pentecost

Judges 4:1-7

Psalm 123 or Psalm 76

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Matthew 25:14-30

Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday

### November 20, 2011

Last Sunday after Pentecost

Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

Psalm 1009

Ephesians 1:15-23

Matthew 25:31-46

Bible Sunday

### November 27, 2011

1st Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 64:1-9

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Mark 13:24-37

United Methodist Student Day (offering)

## BEACON

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## Fall Festival

Our Fall Festival is Saturday, November 5. We will not have First Sunday Fellowship Breakfast in November due to the Fall Festival.

We have decided not to charge for the tickets for plates at the Fall Festival. We realize that we need the money for our financial responsibilities. We want to encourage those who have bought tickets in the past and have given them away to continue to help the church by continuing that tradition. We also need to pray that God will move people's hearts who are able to pay to donate to the church. Also, pray that anybody who is hungry and needs a meal will be blessed by a free meal.

We have tickets at the church office. Please come by and get some.

Cakes need to be made for the meal and for the table inside the fellowship hall. Auction begins at 7:00 p.m. Auction items need to be brought to the fellowship hall on Friday night.

## Staff Parish Committee

Staff Parish Committee will meet Monday, November 7 at 6:30 p.m. in the church office.

## Charge Conference

Charge Conference is Wednesday, November 9 at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Please allow choir members and bible study members to attend. This is a worship service. Thanks!

## Community Thanksgiving Dinner

The Harnett Street Community Thanksgiving Dinner will be on Thanksgiving Day. Volunteers are needed. Our church needs to donate 30 gallons of green beans and 20 pounds of dressing. See Evelyn Aranda.

## Youth News

The youth had a wonderful mission trip in October to Rocky Mount where they helped build a porch and cleaned yards damaged in the hurricane. We also had a wonderful worship service where some of our youth gave testimony.

Many of the youth and adults traveled to Smithfield to see the movie "Courageous" on October 16th. It was a beautiful example of how important it is to have a spiritual home.

October 23 was a fun night for the kids. The youth treated the children to games, dinner, and a movie. It was a great evening.


Trips are planned to Williamsburg, Pilgrimage and to Pigeon Forge. Please be in prayer for your youth!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Pilgrimage - November 11-13 in Fayetteville

Karen

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## Shining The Light On ...

"Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath" EPHESIANS 5:26

## Scriptures to Memorize

Please read:  
"From The Pastor"

## FROM THE PASTOR

### Does God Change God's Mind?

A little boy was asked what we learn from the story of Jonah and the whale.

His answer was people make whales sick. Well, that's one thing we can learn from the ancient story of Jonah. There are other lessons in this Book too, however. Many sermons have been preached from Jonah on the futility of running away from God. As someone has said, you can't ever run that far! Of course they are right.

Most of you already know that the primary purpose of this most famous of all fish stories is to reveal the greatness of God's love for all people Jew and Gentile alike. The last words of the Book are some of the most beautiful in Scriptures. Jonah wants God to destroy the people of Nineveh but God says to Jonah, You have pity on a gourd which you did not plant, which grew up in a night and perished in a night; and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who cannot discern their right hand from their left and also much cattle. God's universal love. That is the primary lesson of the Book of Jonah but there is another. It is about a God who is not afraid to change His mind.

That is an interesting thing about the God of the Old Testament. He is not a rigid God. You will remember on one occasion, the great man of faith Abraham argued with God about the people of Sodom. God was going to destroy that city because of its great wickedness. Abraham succeeded in getting a pledge from God that He would not destroy the city if as many as ten righteous people could be located there.

Unfortunately, there weren't ten righteous people in Sodom, but at least God was swayed by Abraham's arguments. That is not an isolated event. God chose a man named Saul to be the first King of Israel but soon God realized that Saul was not worthy of such responsibility. God changed His mind and had Samuel the prophet anoint David to be the new King of Israel.

The God of the Old Testament was not afraid to mark out a new direction. Consider the predicament of Jonah. God gives Jonah the assignment



of preaching to the people of Nineveh. Jonah is to tell the people of Nineveh that God is going to destroy the city because of their wickedness. Then an amazing thing happens. All the people of Nineveh repent. From the King in his palace to the lowly man sweeping the streets, they all turn from their sin.

When that happens, God changes His mind. He decides not to destroy Nineveh. This embarrasses Jonah beyond belief. He has told the people of Nineveh that God is going to destroy them. Now God is not going to do it. Jonah feels utterly humiliated. Jonah didn't like the people of the town all that much anyway. Angrily he says to God, I knew it! I knew that you were that kind of God. Jonah is so upset that he goes out and sits on a hillside overlooking Nineveh to mope. He is angry enough to sit there until he dies.

What do you do with a God who changes His mind who says He is going to destroy people and then lets them off the hook? Is God like a permissive parent who cannot follow through on a punishment because his heart is too tender? What are some circumstances that might prompt such a change in the mind of the Almighty?

FOR ONE THING PRAYER SEEMS TO CHANGE GOD'S MIND. Doesn't it? Isn't that why we pray, most of the time, in order to change God's mind? To be sure some prayers are not like that. Sometimes our prayers are prayers of thanksgiving. Sometimes they are supplications for forgiveness. More often than not, however, we pray for God somehow to change His plan.

We are like the five-year-old, who told his dad he'd like to have a baby brother. His dad thought for a moment and then replied, I'll tell you what if every night for two months you pray for a baby brother, I guarantee that God will give you one! My guess is that his dad knew something that little Bobby didn't.

That night this young boy went to his bedroom early to start praying for a baby brother. He prayed every night for a whole month, but then he began to get a little weary. He quit praying for a baby brother. After another month, however, his mother went to the hospital. When she came back home, his parents called him into the bedroom. When he came in he saw a little bundle lying right next to his mother. His

dad pulled back the blanket and there were, not just one baby brother, but two baby brothers - twins! Bobby's dad looked down at him and said, Now, aren't you glad you prayed? Young Bobby hesitated a little and then looked up at his dad and answered, Yes, but aren't you glad I quit when I did?

So often when we pray aren't we trying to change something whether it be the natural processes of nature or the results of some deed or misdeed that we have performed? Or perhaps we may pray for somebody that we wish God would change.

I read recently of a woman whose husband had a serious drinking problem. Even worse, he refused to get any help. This became a serious matter of contention between the two of them. Indeed, their marriage was a nightmare. Every night this woman prayed that God would change her husband. But no change took place. Then her pastor suggested that she change her prayer. Instead of badgering God every night to change her husband, her pastor encouraged her to give God thanks for her husband. After all, he did have some good points.

He suggested that she start giving God thanks for her husband and to restrict her prayer to the things for which she was grateful was interesting. When she did that, a change started to occur in that marriage, first with the wife and then the husband. There was a different climate in that home. Resentment was changed to acceptance. Acceptance and love helped that husband get his drinking problem under control. The woman's husband changed when her prayer changed from a prayer of petition to a prayer of thanksgiving. So often, though, when we pray it is to change God's mind.

FROM READING THE STORY OF JONAH WE MIGHT ALSO CONCLUDE THAT REPENTANCE CHANGES GOD'S MIND. Nineveh repented and God decided not to destroy the city. We repent and God changes His attitude toward us. Right? Obviously we all stand in constant need of repentance. One four year old fashioned his prayer after what he thought he heard in church in the Lord's Prayer: And forgive us our trash baskets, he prayed, as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets. We all admit that we have trash in our baskets. We all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. None of us denies that.

We know that sin is a barrier to our relationship with God. Indeed, sin is brokenness, alienation. The longer we stay in our sin, the more difficult it is for us to turn to God. Sin is like that. After a while it becomes such a part of us that we grow numb to the good things God wants to give us. That is why the repentance of one lost soul brings such rejoicing in Heaven.

MATURE FAITH UNDERSTANDS THAT IT IS NOT GOD'S MIND THAT NEEDS CHANGING, BUT OURS. It is never God's purpose that Nineveh be destroyed. It was God's will that Nineveh recognize its need for repentance. Read John 3:17 about Jesus' purpose for coming into the world. For the Son came into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. That is always God's will. So it is with prayer. Archbishop Trench once said that prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of His willingness. He is the God who knows our needs and whose will is ever directed to His children's good. We cannot help but pray when things need changing. This is the most human response to danger or to heartache in the world. But we need to understand that even while we are praying a loving God is already working all things to the good for those who love Him.

This is to say that what we need to pray for is not that He will change His plan, but that he will change us to that we will trust Him more. It is understandable to pray that God will change circumstances but it is far better to pray that regardless of our circumstances we will be victors through Him who loves us and gave His life on our behalf. This then is the conclusion of the matter. God's love for us is unchanging. It is we who need to change.

It was not God who needed a change of mind, but Jonah. That is our greatest need, too, to bring our lives into such harmony with the love and purpose of God that His plan is our plan. What do we learn from the Book of Jonah? That people make whales sick. Yes. Also that the mature believer is one who seeks to bring his or her life into line with the purposes of God.

Ron