

First United Methodist Church

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This past Sunday was a great day of worship at Downtown Mitchell First UMC. There are a number of special moments that stand out to me; the baptisms, the singing, the children singing, etc. But for just a moment I want to share with you something that happened that was a powerful and exciting moment for me as a follower of Jesus and as a pastor.

At our 11:00 am worship service, the chapel was packed. The reason for that was that Carolyn was presenting Bibles to our second graders on behalf of our church family. Let me tell you, the energy level in this place was extremely high. One by one the names of the second graders were spoken and they stepped forward to receive their Bibles. Parents stood behind them and we all celebrated what God is doing in their lives!

The second grade teachers had obviously done a great job in preparing the students for this service and helping them understand this was a special moment. In each case as the students stepped forward and received their Bibles, there was a look of joy and excitement...and I think if you looked close enough, there was also a sense of holy wonder...or maybe a better word would be, "awe." There was a look of "awe" in receiving this special book, God's word for us yet today. In fact, either by comments made as they were leaving worship or on Facebook later in the day, a number of those students had already started reading their Bible. GOOD FOR THEM!!!

My wish...my prayer for each of these second graders would be that this same sense of excitement about God's word, and desire to read it and make it a part of their life, would continue within them throughout all their life. In fact one person pledged to me that they wouldn't let their Bible get dusty. That made me laugh, because somewhere along the way someone commented to this second grader about a Bible and being dusty, and probably how this isn't a good thing...who knows. But I do love the honesty of children!!

Yet this is also where Bible Sunday hits me, as a pastor, so hard. You see, I think too often those of us who "teach" or "preach" from the Bible...well let's just say, we at times have been known to make the stories...dusty. Or not very interesting! That has always been a challenge that I set for myself in ministry, to help people see how the Bible is relevant, interesting, and useful for life and faith today.

In fact, in the book of Nehemiah, it specifically talks about when the Word of God was reintroduced to the people in the Re-Built Jerusalem, Nehemiah made sure there were people present to help interpret or help the people understand the words that were being read and what it meant for their lives.

So, when was the last time you picked up your Bible and read from its pages? I'm sure for many of you it's been just within the last day or two. If it's been awhile since you picked it up and read from the pages...no need to feel guilty, that's not my intent. This is simply a gentle reminder to us all that making God's Word a regular part of our lives is an important way to open up our hearts and minds to listen to and for God's voice in our lives.

Serving Together,

Pastor Keith

Remember, this Sunday in the third Sunday of the month. So, our Noisy Bucket offering will go to a special project involving children. This month's project is the "Blanket Project" we started last month. I hope to see you in worship. Come join us...our service times are Sunday at 8:30, 9:50, and 11:00 am, and Wednesday evening at 6:00 pm. We're at Third Avenue and Rowley – the Downtown Church.