

# **First United Methodist Church**

**310 North Rowley, Mitchell, SD 57301**

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I can remember it so very well. I can remember the props I used. I can remember the theme of it. I remember how excited I was. I can definitely remember how nervous I was. This is another one of those “first” moments in life (and in my ministry) that occurred at Underwood United Methodist Church – the little country church I grew up attending north of White Lake. This “first” moment that I am thinking of was the very first Children’s Message that I gave. I’m not sure how old I was, probably a junior or senior in high school, but as I said, I remember the theme, I remember the props, but what I really remember...was hyperventilating so bad by the end of it that I couldn’t breath and I had to squeak out “amen” to bring it to a close and get back to my seat.

Yes, that wasn’t my finest moment in ministry, and yet it was such a very important one. At that time in my life I wasn’t aware of or sensing God’s call to ministry on my life, and yet I look to that moment as being an important one that helped shape me for what I do today and how I interact with “kids” during the children’s time yet today. (On a side note, I also remember the very first sermon I preached. I believe I was in college on this occasion. I preached that message at White Lake and Underwood (Yep, my first two-point charge) Someday I need to go apologize to the White Lake church for what they had to endure with that “first.”)

No matter what your profession is/was or how you focused your time and energy during your adult years, I wonder if you can remember the “first” in your life that helped influence and shape you for what it was that would later be such a prominent part of your life. I’ve heard a number of those stories over the years of my working with people. It is always interesting to hear of those moments that helped guide a person in their life.

What got me thinking about this is the fact that this Sunday is Youth and Camp Promotion Sunday. Our Youth will be leading worship this Sunday. I’m guessing that there’s excitement within them...there might be some nervousness too. But what a great opportunity this is for our church to live out our value of youth truly being a priority for our church.

I also think about how much encouragement I received after my first children’s message and my first sermon. It was also that encouragement that helped me hear that still small voice of God whispering in my ear...calling me to serve God through the ordained ministry. I believe God is also whispering in the ear, of not just some of our youth...but all of them to serve God, not necessarily through the ordained ministry, but in some way in their life, to serve God with their gifts, talents, abilities, and energy.

Again, this is a great way to live out our vision of enhancing our ministry to children and youth in our community. I look forward to having the youth lead me in worship this Sunday and Wednesday evening. I look forward to how God will speak through them in a way that I need to hear. I look forward to seeing you all on Sunday morning at 8:30 or 11:00, or Wednesday evening at 6:00.

Serving Together,

*Pastor Keith*

Just a reminder, a part of Youth and Camp Sunday is the Taco Bar Dinner served immediately following the 11:00 am worship service. All money raised will go toward camp scholarships for those going to camp this year. Camp Booklets are also available.