

First United Methodist Church

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Last Saturday I experienced something amazing. At first I was a bit confused by what I was seeing or experiencing. "This is so uncharacteristic of competition events. I must be misunderstanding something." I thought to myself. What I observed was taking place at the new Performing Arts Center here in Mitchell where Nancy and I were watching the Showchoir Classic.

What I was seeing that I was having a hard time believing, was that students and parents alike were actually cheering for and encouraging other Showchoirs...AS THEY WERE COMPETING!! OK, I'll admit it's been a few years since I was in the realm of school competition, but I clearly remember Pee Wee Baseball, Soft Ball, and Soccer from when my kids were little. The kids themselves were usually pretty calm, but the parents could be ruthless, talking trash at other teams and even the kids on the opposing team. Middle School and High School sports...much the same. And yet here were other Showchoir kids and parents cheering on the other teams. Wish, willing, and creating the type of environment in which the other teams could do their best.

At the end of the evening before the "winners" were announced there was loud music playing over the sound system. Music I wasn't familiar with (imagine that 😊), but music that obviously the youth knew, because they were all dancing and moving to the music...wherever they happened to be. From the main floor aisles, to the balconies, there were kids moving to the beat, swaying with the sound, and simply enjoying being a part of a great event and something that was bigger than they were.

As I looked around at all the joy-filled youth and positive energy around me, the thought crossed my mind..."This is what Kingdom Living should be like." People celebrating life, cheering one another on, focusing on what they have in common, and being a part of something bigger than themselves.

Now I know someone is probably thinking... "Yes, but we're the Church. And there are churches out there that believe weird stuff and do things different than we do." Yes, there are. But I always try to keep in mind what John Wesley said in the midst of a heated theological debate. He said to the other person involved, "If Christ be in your heart as he is in mine...give me your hand." In other words, he was emphasizing the positive and what we have in common...Christ in our hearts.

What a great thing it would be if all the churches in our community could cheer one another on, rather than looking at one another as competition. Wouldn't it be great if all the churches in the region, and world, could encourage one another and speak kindly of one another, even in the midst of difference of beliefs. Wouldn't it be incredible if we chose to look for the positive in other churches and faith groups, even if they do things in a different way than what we do, or like.

Thanks Showchoir for the great evening, the great visual, and the great lesson. I was also proud to see some of our church youth, and family, participating in this great event. Lead on, youth...lead on!

Serving Together,

Pastor Keith

Sunday is UMCOR Sunday. We'll be taking a special offering at all services to support the United Methodist Committee on Relief. The message theme for this week is Lent..ing: "Excuse..ing" Come join us at 8:30, 9:50, and 11:00 am on Sunday. Wednesday worship is 6:00 pm.