

# Unity Presbyterian Church

## Yoke Newsletter ~ August 2016

### Church Calendar:

<http://unitypresbyterian.net/page/calendar>

### Prayer Concerns:

<http://unitypresbyterian.net/prayer.php>

## From Pastor Andrew :

### I Am Not A ...

(Adapted from Pastor Blacks sermon on July 10th)

And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' (Matthew 25:40 NRSV)

I am not hungry, thirsty, or naked. I live my life knowing I can put food on the table, drink clean water, and keep my family clothed for any occasion. I am not a stranger. Even if I am unknown to a group of people, I know the language and understand the customs of our culture which allows me to fit right in. I am not sick or in prison. I do not live confined by physical or mental pain and I am not living at the mercy of another's authority over me. I do not fit in to one of the groups of people Jesus calls upon us to care for.

In recent weeks I have been reflecting on other groups of people that I am not. I am not a police officer who has to make life and death split second decisions. I am not a young black man who gets pulled over, and over, and over while driving. My parents didn't need to teach me the "right way to get pulled over" because they didn't fear I would make it home due to the color of my skin. I am not living in poverty and I don't have to chose between a barely sustaining minimum wage job or doing something more creative, possibly illegal, to provide food, clothes, and shelter for my family.

I am not a Muslim adhering to a faith of Peace who must defend my traditions every time a radical hate filled terrorist names my faith as their cause. I also do not fear for my safety when others don't believe me when I tell them the radicals do not speak for me. I am not a refugee fleeing the civil war and famine in the land of my birth. I have not left everything behind with the hope I'll find someplace safer for my family even though I know it is a long shot.

Though I mourn with the nation during these difficult times, I am not attending the funeral of a loved one lost to senseless and terrible violence. I pray for those affected by police shootings; I pray for those affected by terrorism in Florida, France, Iraq, and Turkey; I pray for the law enforcement community who answer the call to protect and serve, even at the cost of their own lives.

I am not any of the least of these, and acknowledging that is the first step in answering Jesus' call to care for one another. When we acknowledge the people who are frightened, hungry, angry, disheartened we begin to see their stories are just as real as our own even

when the stories seem so foreign to our sense of the world. Caring for the least of these is saying, “I hear you, I believe you, and I want to help you.” It is admitting that we need to change the way we are so that the world might be renewed in the love and grace of Jesus Christ.

I may not be a (fill in the blank), but I am a Christian. As Christians we live to follow Jesus command to love our neighbor, the one who is culturally, religiously, socially, economically, and political different than ourselves. It is easy to care for those who look, think, act, believe, and live similarly to us because we can see ourselves reflected in their eyes. It is much harder to care for those who are radically different than ourselves, but that is exactly what Jesus needs us to do.

God transforms us, heals us, and reconciles us through Jesus providing hope for the future and for now. We are the answer. We are called to care for the least of these in our words and deeds and through the mission of our church. We are called to speak out for justice with our political vote. We are called to listen to the stories of the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, the prisoner, the oppressed, the angry, and the frightened, and respond to them by using our voice to help the world see God in the midst of all the madness. With God’s help we can make room for everyone in the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth.

May the Peace of Christ be with you, Rev. Andrew Black

### Worship Schedule

August 7th — Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost  
Service of Word and Table  
Sermon: “Do Not Be Afraid Little Flock” Rev. Andrew Black  
Inspired by Luke 12:32-40

August 14th — Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost  
Sermon: “Role Models” Rev. Andrew Black  
Inspired by Hebrews 11:29-12:2

August 21st — Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost  
Sermon: “A Better Day Than Today?” Rev. Andrew Black  
Inspired by Luke 12:10-17

August 28th — Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost  
Sermon: “Pleasing to God” Rev. Andrew Black  
Inspired by Hebrews 13:1-8,15-16

Thanks for all you do for the Potts Food Pantry

Our community is in need and many of us dream that our food pantry could do more. If we want to reach more people we will need more volunteers to help with the shopping, packing, and distribution. Our current dedicated group of volunteers is amazing, but they need YOUR help. There are many creative ways that you can offer your time to assist in this important work of the church. How is the Spirit calling you to aid in the efforts of this vital mission?

Please let Pastor Andrew, Dawn Chapman or Jan Buffington know if you are interested in doing something to help us continue to answer Christ's call to care for and love our neighbors.

I continue to be amazed at the extravagant generosity of our congregation that helps keep the shelves of our food pantry full. Keep watching the weekly bulletin insert for suggestions of the items the Food Pantry needs most. During the summer the demand for help often increases while donations often decrease. If we work together we can share the love of Christ without letting this happen in our community. ~Pastor Andrew

### **Downtown Block Party!**

Join us for the Downtown Terre Haute Block Party, Saturday, August 27, along Wabash Avenue. Unity will have a booth from 1 to 8 p.m., with some fun give-aways and activities for kids and families. We will need volunteers to help set up in the morning, to staff the booth during the afternoon, and to help close down. See Luann Modesitt, Karen Walker or Pastor Andrew if you would like to help out or have ideas to share. This is a new outreach for us, and it should be a great opportunity to tell folks about our warm and welcoming congregation, and to share information about our upcoming fall programs like Song & Slice, Trunk or Treat, and Chicken Noodle Dinner.

### **SAVE THE DATE!**

**Calling all Singers!!!** Choir rehearsal will begin again August 18th! Hope to see you there.

**Our annual Song and a Slice will be Friday, September 23 at 7:00 p.m.**

### **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL**

**VBS was held on July 9th and the theme was 'Revive'. There were approximately 12 children in attendance. There was music, crafts, games and Bible study. A yummy lunch was also served. The children learned about Daniel and the Lion and how to make new people feel welcome. A good time was had by all. Thank you Rev. Dawn Black for heading this fun day and to members of Unity, who donated, worked and taught this exciting group of children.**

### **Albert Higginbotham, Custodian**

**Unity is grateful for Albert Higginbotham's 11 years of faithful service. Albert retired at the end of June 2016 as our custodian and his ministry of maintaining the grounds and facilities has been appreciated by all who attend and visit our church. Thank you Albert and God Bless!**

## **Dealing with Loss**

**Please pray for Kadaree in the loss of his father, Maurice Kisner. Also, Tina, even though Maurice was her ex this is still a difficult time for her a well.**

## **Morning Glories**

**Join us for our new Bible Study, "Who is Jesus? What a Difference a Lens Makes". We will meet Tuesday, August 9, at 10:30 am at the Church and will begin with lesson one, "According to Mark". Bring a brown bag lunch. Join us for food and fellowship!**



**Save the front of your greeting cards as a mission/recycling project. There is a box in the back of the church where you can leave your cards.**



### **View from the Inside - by Camille Church Mouse**

*Notice that I said from "the Inside"!! I'm not going outside! It's too hot out there! I fried an egg on the sidewalk!*

*Vacation Bible School was great once again! The kids got to learn, make crafts and play outside. There was a lot of great help from the members of the congregation.*

*Our July 4th celebration got rained out but everyone had fun celebrating inside. There was fun and food for all to enjoy.*

*Work has started on the Bell Tower and it should be up soon. This will be exciting and a wonderful addition to our property.*

*Activities coming up include Rally Day and the choir will be back. Sunday School will begin and there will be all of our usual activities.*

*Watch your bulletin and newsletter to keep up to date. Come grown with us and be a part of our future.*

*God's blessings and joy to all of you! Peace and love!!*

## **OUTDOOR BENCHES**

**Unity will soon have two additional outdoor benches for our garden spaces! This month, we are scheduled to pick up two 4-foot green benches made from re-cycled plastic, matching the 6-foot bench we acquired last year. The benches were made possible by our collection of hard plastic bottle caps and other items, along with some cash contributions. Thanks to all who contributed and thanks to Amie Ellison for supervising the collection and sorting!**

**At this point, we are still collecting the caps, for future projects. Please check with a member of the Green Committee if you are unsure what kinds of caps and lids to collect, and please make sure the items are clean – thanks!**

## Green Corner

We recently returned from a trip to the Smoky Mountains which is one of my favorite places. The beauty of the mountains, trees, streams, waterfalls and flowers remind me of how blessed we are by God. He has given us this beautiful planet as our home and we should be grateful every day for His gifts.

While we were there we enjoyed a hike back to Laurel Falls. This has become a tradition for our family and we make the trip back to the falls every time we go. Over the years the Great Smoky Mountain National Park has become much more crowded. When we first started hiking on the trail we wouldn't see many people. Now you rarely have any time when other people aren't in sight. I am very glad that the increase in the number of people hasn't changed the beauty of the location. People are very aware of the impact they can have on the environment and thankfully there is very little trash left or people bothering the plants and trees. It is a beautiful place and one in which you can see the handiwork of God.

The impact of air pollution on the Smokies is easily seen on some days. There is a lookout, behind Gatlinburg, where you can see some of the highest peaks in the distance. Located at the lookout is a display which contains pictures that compare the view on a clear day and on one with more pollution. It is amazing how pollution can change the view.

According to information provided by the National Park Service:

“Views from scenic overlooks at Great Smoky Mountains National Park have been seriously degraded over the last 50 years by human-made pollution. Since 1948, based on regional airport records, average visibility in the southern Appalachians has decreased 40% in winter and 80% in summer. These degradations in visibility not only affect how far one can see from a scenic overlook, they also reduce how well one can see. Pollution causes colors to appear washed out and obscures landscape features. Pollution typically appears as a uniform whitish haze, different from the natural mist-like clouds for which the Smokies were named.”

This is caused by the burning of fossil fuels and inadequate pollution controls in power plants, factories, and automobiles. In other words, by man.

What can we do? The National Park Service suggests the following:

- Conserve energy in the home and work place
- Use energy-efficient appliances and forms of transportation
- Keep your motor vehicles in good operating condition
- Let government officials know that air quality is important to you.

Working together we can protect this planet which is a gift from God.