



SOUTHEAST CIRCUIT RIDER edition

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VOLUME 22 NUMBER 7 024015

MARCH 11, 2005

Contagious

During the cold and flu season the word contagious has important meaning. Are you contagious? If so, would you please keep your distance, don't sneeze or breathe on me. If so, I will not be coming over this afternoon. Contagious.

I have visited people in the hospital who were "contagious." They may even be in isolation. To get in to see someone who is contagious you might be required to wear a sterile gown, a mask and latex gloves. If they are contagious you can't touch them, smell them, or have them breath on you. You get the point.

I certainly do not want to encourage anyone to take unnecessary health risks, but I would like to reclaim the word – contagious.

When Kurt Schuermann led a devotion the other day he reminded me of the demonized man in Mark 5. Go read the story. To get right to the end of the message, we see a person that Jesus has saved, healed, delivered and absolutely changed. When a group who had witnessed this amazing event brought others back from the town, they found this man. "He was sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind."

Would he be contagious? In what sense of the word? Read further. "They began to beg Jesus to depart from their neighborhood."

This might be contagious. What does one do with someone who is able to utterly change a life? I might be next! Would you please

stay away!

When we begin to encounter the power and presence of the risen and living Lord Jesus Christ there are a number of possible responses. Some look at Jesus as a contagious force. We may try to put Jesus in isolation. We may ask folks not to come over because this Jesus is so contagious someone might catch what he has. (Or what he is!) Some may ask us to cover ourselves up so we would never catch the full impact of Jesus.

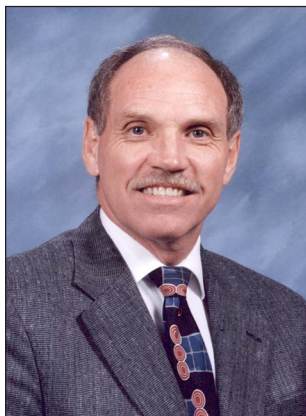
Reclaim the word! Contagious. Let Jesus breath those "redemption germs" all over you! Invite Jesus, this contagious Christ, to have free reign in your life. Allow the contagious Jesus to make you a contagious Christian.

We are not going to catch the flu from Jesus. We are going to catch life from Jesus. Jesus won't make you sick. Jesus will make you absolutely whole.

Contagious. Reclaim the word! During this season of Lent may the contagious Lord transform you into a contagious Christian.

Steve

Dr. Steve Breon is District Superintendent, Southeast District, Missouri Conference



Remaining Lenten Services Scheduled Cape Girardeau Cluster Services

Services begin each Sunday evening at 7:00 PM at the host church, with refreshments following the service.

DATE	HOST CHURCH	GUEST PREACHER
March 13	Maple UMC	Rev. Susan Hoyle
	Special Music: Puppets and Choir from Hobbs Chapel UMC	
March 20	Centenary UMC, Cape Girardeau	Dr. Steve Breon
	Special Music: New McKendree Youth Band with the Centenary Summit Band	

Kennett Cluster Services

Services begin each Sunday evening at 4:00 PM at the host church.

DATE	HOST CHURCH	GUEST PREACHER
March 13	Faith UMC, Kennett	Rev. Sue Cabbage
March 20	Eastwood Memorial, Caruthersville	Rev. Paul Lanning

Poplar Bluff Cluster Service

Service begins at 7:00 PM

DATE	HOST CHURCH	GUEST PREACHER
March 13	Grace UMC, Greenville	Dr. Steve Breon

Hispanic Ministry Celebration Supper!

April 10, 2005 ~ 5:30 PM

Centenary UMC in Cape Girardeau

YOU ARE INVITED!

Every church in the Southeast District is invited to an evening Hispanic Ministry Celebration hosted by the Mission Team of Centenary United Methodist Church in Cape Girardeau.

The evening will start at 5:30 PM with fellowship, worship and food. Help is needed for the planning and promotion of this event.

Local churches are invited to send a representative of their Mission Committee to the District-wide Planning Meeting to be held on **Sunday, March 13, at 3:30 PM** at Centenary's Family Life Center.

For more information, contact Dr. Clayton L. Smith at 573-334-2869 or revdrels@centenaryumc.net.

Southeast District Mission News

by Dr. Clayton Smith, SE District VIM Coordinator

Do you or your church have interest in a vital mission outreach to the rural people of Nicaragua? Rainbow Network has had 10 years of outstanding mission there. As a matter of fact, many consider it one of the best mission models in the world. Rainbow Network is having amazing God-blessed results! It is an approved Advance Special of the United Methodist Church.

I am inviting you to join me for a first hand visit! These four-day trips will be exciting, inspirational and challenging. Twice I have served in Nicaragua and twice I have been blessed. It is a beautiful country with people who care for one another. Approximate cost for the trip is \$900/\$1000.



Mark Struckhoff, USA Director for Rainbow Network and I will be leading two groups of ten people each, to Nicaragua.. To learn more about these trips, please attend one of these informational meetings:

March 17 at 2:30 PM

March 17 at 7:00 PM

March 18 at 9:30 AM

The two Nicaragua Study trips are scheduled:

Study Group 1 - June 22-25

Study Group 2 - June 26-29

Send a representative from your church to experience first hand the opportunities available for mission and ministry through Rainbow Network in Nicaragua. Join us!

For more information, contact:

Dr. Clayton Smith, 573/334-2869, revdrels@centenaryumc.net

District Calendar

March 12	VIM Team Leader Training Worship, 8:30 AM - 4 PM, Centenary UMC in Cape Girardeau
March 12	District Lay Speaking Team meeting, Grecian Steakhouse, Sikeston
March 15-16	Missouri Cabinet meeting
March 16	Retired Clergy and Spouses Luncheon, Delmonico's Restaurant, Jackson, MO
March 19	Confirmation Day with the Bishop, 10:00 AM, Festus UMC
March 19	"The World is in Our Parish" Hispanic Ministries Campaign Team meetings, 10:00 AM, Wesley UMC in Sikeston
March 25	GOOD FRIDAY - OFFICE CLOSED
March 29-30	Missouri Cabinet meeting
April 2	"The World is in Our Parish" Hispanic Ministries Campaign Speakers Training, 10-Noon, Cape Girardeau / 2-4 PM, Sikeston (Place TBA)
April 16	Blue Mountain United Methodist Center, Open House & dedication of new dining hall facility. Tour: 10 AM, Lunch, Dedication 1:30 PM

All in the family

“Behold, what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” – 1 John 3:1

by Rev. Anthony Stewart

A backwoods preacher found a small boy all alone, playing in the dirt.

“Where’s your father?” the preacher asked.

The boy said, “He was hanged last week.”

Preacher: “Where’s your mother?”

Boy: “She run off.”

Preacher: “Where’s your sister?”

Boy: “She’s in jail.”

Preacher: “Is there anybody else in your family?”

Boy: “Yup, I’ve got a brother.”

Preacher: “Where is he?”

Boy: “At Harvard University.”

Preacher: “Well, at least one member of your family is doing well. What is he studying?”

Boy: “Nothin’. They’re studying him.”



Have you ever felt like you didn’t have anybody? Like you were all alone, or maybe you didn’t completely fit in, even in the midst of family and friends? Like you weren’t getting the love and acceptance from the world as you would like? Do you ever feel like you don’t really have a family? Like an abandoned orphan left on the street to fend for himself. Many people go through their whole life feeling this way. Others may feel it only at particular stations in life. Sometimes life can seem like God created us and placed us on the big, bad world, and then abandoned us. Now we must face the world and its problems on our own.

Even though it’s important to be honest with ourselves regarding our feelings such as this, we should also put these kinds of issues into a proper perspective. An elderly couple was driving in their old, beat up pickup—the husband driving, and his wife in the far passenger seat. The wife said, “How come we don’t sit right next to each other like we did when we were younger?”

The husband replied, “Well I haven’t moved.”

If we are feeling a separateness from other people and from God it would be a good idea to examine ourselves as to why this is. We might just find that we are the ones who have separated ourselves from getting the love and the relationships that we want. (Read Isaiah 59:1 on what causes separation.) God’s grace and love pour forth on all of us equally. We just don’t accept it sometimes.

The good news is that we have been predestined to be adopted into God’s family through Christ (Eph. 1:3-6). God loves us so much that He wants us to be part of His family as sons and daughters.

A certain mother was asked, “If you had to do it all over again, would you have children?” She replied, “Yes, but not the same ones.” God doesn’t look at us that way. His love doesn’t pick and choose whom He loves. He loves each of us individually. He knows

who we are and loves us anyway. He created each of us especially in His image. He knew us and loved us before we were even born. To Jeremiah the prophet God said, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you.” (Jer. 1:5)

There is a story in the book of Mark where some people that were with Jesus told him that his mother and brothers were outside looking for him. He responded by saying, “Who is my mother, or my brethren?” Then, looking at the people around him, he said, “Behold my mother and brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.” Jesus directly invites us to come be part of his family by doing the will of God—answering His call for each of us.

If we look at the life of Jesus, and follow him as our example, we can see that he started His ministry shortly after his baptism. When he was baptized, God’s voice came from heaven saying, “You are my beloved son. In you I am well pleased.” Our baptism is a sign that we have entered into God’s family. At our baptism God says to us, “You are my child.” It is then that we should respond and say, “You are my Father,” by doing His will, and by seeking to know Him more and more.



God invites people of all races, all ages, all social standing, to be a part of His loving family, regardless of what we may have done in the past. He has loved us from the beginning—before we even knew that He loved us. 1 John 3:2 says that we are sons of God. We are not alone—we have a family. We can always be a part of God’s family—of Jesus’ brethren. If we could realize our place as God’s child we would never feel unloved, unaccepted, or abandoned again. God said in Jeremiah, “I have loved you with an everlasting love.”

In the midst of whatever heartache we may feel here on earth, whatever intense loneliness we may suffer, let’s remember our eternal place in God’s family. This indeed is a loving relationship that will never, ever fail us. Amen.

Rev. Anthony Stewart is pastor to Scopus UMC and Old Union UMC in the Southeast District

 **NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**
March 24, 2005

for the April 8, 2005 edition of the Southeast Circuit Rider.

Don’t forget, you can read the Southeast Circuit Rider online at:

www.sedistrictumc.org/SECircRider.htm

A Shower of Blessings on Zion

by Rev. Susan Hoyle, pastor of Zion UMC in Old Appleton

A simple phone call late in the winter of 2003 led to a shower of blessings for Zion United Methodist Church at Old Appleton. Some of the ceiling tiles in the church, which was built in 1891, began falling down about three years ago. The pastor jokingly said that was one way for the congregation to sit in the front pews! The members tried to find someone to replace the tiles since the ceiling is very high and scaffolding would be needed. But no one was found until a phone call was made from a person who attends Zion to a friend that attends La Croix United Methodist Church in Cape Girardeau. They mentioned La Croix’s Helping Hands ministry which helps with home repairs.

Within a few days, other phone calls were made, and in a very short time, members of La Croix and Zion were climbing up scaffolding, nailing, painting the trim, and caulking, caulking. La Croix’s Helping Hands ministry can now say they’ve expanded to churches in need, too!

The tiles were not replaced. The ceiling was put back to its original form from a picture one of the members had from early in the 20th century.

The Helping Hands crew was very organized and the work progressed in a quick and efficient manner. Some workers would leave for activities with their families and come back later in the day to continue the work. There were nearly 20 people from La Croix who helped on the project, along with the congregation of Zion. Helping Hands even paid for

much of the materials for the ceiling!

Last year’s Good Friday service at Zion was held in the Fellowship Hall because the final touches were being done to the church. Then, just in time for the Easter service the next day, the work was completed—and lots of company saw the new ceiling since there was a baptism that day!

One of our members who is homebound, and only attends occasionally, came with friends to the Easter service and noticed that the walls looked rather dingy compared to the paint on the new ceiling. So she offered to have the church interior painted! After the painting was completed, another parishioner said she wanted to provide new carpeting for the church. Meanwhile, in-between the painting and the carpet, a neighbor came to vote in the November election in our Fellowship Hall and noticed that we could use some new rock on our long driveway. The quarry at Old Appleton furnished the rock, the hauling, and the spreading of it. Now our driveway is in great shape!

The church building has been transformed at Zion of Old Appleton. But even more than that, the congregation has also been transformed as we saw the Body of Christ at work in our midst, from other churches, our own parishioners and even neighbors. We were so moved that others saw our need and so quickly and generously offered a “helping hand.” A small church, that once had many members, can feel all alone at times. Zion at Old Appleton has found that the Body of Christ is alive and well and lives among us in the Southeast District.



“The Cup of Our Life”

2005 Clergy Spouse Retreat
April 15-16, Osage Beach, MO

There is still time for all clergy spouses to sign up to attend this weekend of fellowship, spiritual growth and renewal, and fun! Whether the spouse of an ordained pastor or lay pastor, this weekend is for YOU!

This year the retreat leader is our own Michele Moon, clergy spouse to Rev. Scott Moon of Grace UMC in Cape Girardeau. Don Mowery and Cindy Breon, also clergy spouses in the Southeast District, are also taking leadership roles. Don’t miss this weekend! Sign up now! Call the district office, for more information.



Organists needed

Part-time organist position available for church worship services and choir accompaniment. If interested, please send resume to: Grace United Methodist Church, 521 Caruthers, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

The Wesley United Methodist Church in Fruitland is looking for a musician to play either piano or organ for one weekly Sunday morning worship services. This is a part-time, paid position. If interested, please contact Rev. Kevin Cawley at 573-243-5948

Cookbooks for sale

Malden UMC has created a beautiful cookbook in honor of the 135th birthday of United Methodist Women. There are 350 wonderful recipes and the cover is a beautiful oil painting by Dottie Phelps, president of the Malden UMW. Price of the book is \$20 + shipping.

To purchase one of these cookbooks, contact Malden UMC by calling 573-276-4642, or email:

maldenum@newwavecomm.net