

**THE MEMPHIS
UNITARIAN**

**THE
CHURCH
OF THE
RIVER**

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SERMON: “The True Faith of America”

As we near July 4th it is a good time to ponder that ever present temptation for our nation to cross the boundary between church and state, and to act from a place of privileged destiny as a theocracy. What is the proper relationship between our congregation and the city of Memphis? And what is the true faith of America, the relationship between religion and democracy?

The Rev. Burton Carley will deliver the sermon at the eleven o'clock service.

Church of the River Calendar Quotation of the Week

“I know that the twelve notes in each octave and the varieties of rhythm offer me opportunities that all of human genius will never exhaust.” —Igor Stravinski

Tuesday, June 8

10:30 a.m. The Alliance will have their June picnic at the home of Holly McCormick 208 W Viking Dr. Cordova. It's a pot-luck picnic and all are invited.

Wednesday, June 9

2:00 p.m. The Shakespeare Readers will meet at the main library to read The Taming of the Shrew. For additional information call Gale Mason at 725-7924.

7:30 p.m. Choir Practice in the Sanctuary.

Thursday, June 10

6:00 p.m. Potluck Supper and Meeting of the Board of Trustees at the home of Lisa & David Jennings, 5039 Cole Rd. 38117. Also invited are staff, past, current and new trustees, 2010 Nominating Committee and 2011 Nominating Committee and spouses or significant others.

Sunday, June 13

9:30 a.m. The Quest Group will meet in the Beacon Room to consider “The Bible—Down & Dirty”

10:00 a.m. Questions of Faith will be discussing Questions for the Soul, subtitled “If You're Searching for the Answers, Here Are the Questions.” For further information, contact Josie Crane @ 572-7337.

Childcare for infants and preschoolers.

11:00 a.m. Worship Service in the Sanctuary

Childcare for Infants and Preschoolers.

Kindergarten will meet in their classroom.

Grades 1-5 will meet in the Chalice Room.

noon Coffee Hour in the Mississippi River Room.

12:30 p.m. The Lunch Bunch will meet at the home of Sylvia Rose for home made lamb curry. Just bring yourself and BYOB if wanted. Everything else will be provided. Sylvia lives at 5111 Blueridge Drive. 38134. Her phone number is 386-2003 if you have any questions.

Announcements from the Children's Ministry

School may be out, but Children's Ministry continues year round. Every Sunday, childcare will be available beginning at 10 o'clock in the nursery and pre-school with Mary Park and Elizabeth Turner.

At 11 o'clock June 13, the kindergarten will meet with Caron Lumsden in their classroom. Children in grades 1-5 will meet in the Chalice Room with Ken Bauer and Catharine McDonald for the first session of our monthly focus on Outreach.

On June 13 we will explore the outreach programs of the Church of the River.

On June 20 we'll learn about the Heifer Project and on June 27 we'll hear about UNICEF. Katy Spurlock will facilitate on June 20 and 27.

Middle and High School students are invited to these outreach sessions or to worship in the sanctuary.

Our Summer of Faith programming for children is entitled “Poetic Creations: Reflections on Our World through Art and Poetry”. These workshops led by Katie Jones and Amanda Cook Myers begin July 11 and run through August 22 on Sunday mornings at 11 o'clock.

To All Newsletter Contributors:

The last weekly newsletter before the summer months will be published June 21. It will cover events from June 23 through July 27.

The Midsummer Newsletter will be published July 26 and will cover events between July 28 and August 31.

The first weekly newsletter of the fall will be published August 30.

**Katy Spurlock will be the Care Coordinator in June.
You can reach Katy at 276-9502**



It is an interesting thing how religious freedom, so essential to our democracy, means different things to different people. For some it means freedom *from* the ways religion is forced upon the public sector or used as a wedge in political debate or demands your conversion whether you want it or not. For others it means the freedom *to* practice prayer in public schools, to knock on your door for your salvation, or to elect those who share your faith to school boards in the effort to promote creationism. To navigate these thorny issues takes something more than a blog or talk show where at best dialogue and debate are thin banners for promoting opinion as fact.

I think most essential to the liberty we enjoy both politically and religiously is critical thinking where evidence and clear principles for the common good guides thought. As the unexamined faith lends itself to the arbitrary and tyrannical, so does the unexamined political belief. It can lead to anti-government conspiracy theories that justify killing police officers for a traffic stop. It can lead to a government attempting to provide security for citizens that abrogates freedom and justifies means for the end.

For example, after Washington was elected the first president of the United States, he received letters from religious groups seeking clarification about the place of religion in the Constitution. The Baptists were concerned that it did not secure freedom of conscience sufficiently. This reminds us that Baptists and Unitarians were originally allies on issues of separation of church and state in the effort to protect liberty of conscience. Washington responded with an enlightened understanding of the right relationship between religion and nation.

He stated that the dictates of one's conscience secured for the individual the freedom to worship as one pleases without interference from the government. However, the duties of citizenship limited that freedom. If a religion demanded human sacrifice the liberty of conscience is not superior to the proper authority of the government to prevent such acts. But what about requirements for citizenship that violate other religious beliefs?

Washington was clear that to have a civil society, and thus the ability to protect the rights of conscience, individuals must conduct themselves as citizens for the common good of that society. Thus the right to religious freedom does not give liberty to perform actions contrary to the reasonable obligations of citizenship. Of course, those obligations of good citizenship in conflict with religiously motivated actions are not always easy to discern and that line of demarcation is the subject of civil discourse and law.

The preconditions for one's rights as a citizen and as a religious person with liberty of conscience rest upon critical thought and interpretation. The real threat to our liberty is the demise of reasoned thought and debate. bc

Thanks

for a gift to the Emergency Maintenance Fund from Margaret Park in honor of **Lisa Nezwazky's birthday**.

Writer's Workshop

Turning Memories into Memoirs:
Publishing and Distributing
Saturday, June 18th, 2010
1-3:30 p.m.

It's Free. It's fun

Tunica Museum

Tunica, MS 38676

COME WRITE WITH US!

Contact Dr. Rachell Anderson

Rander5022@wildblue.net

Keys, Keys, Keys

If you are holding a set of church keys and you are no longer using them would you please return them to the office.

I have need of more sets of keys to a) give on a temporary basis or b) someone new to a job, now needs a set of keys.

Margaret Park

*Summer Art Camp—Jeanne Reynolds' Studio
Monday—Friday through July 31.*

Ages 12-14...June 14-18.....10:00—12:15

Ages 9-11....June 21-25.....10:00-12:15

Ages 6-8.....July 12-16.....10:00-12:15

Ages 15-17..July 19-23.....10:00-12:15

Prices: \$150.00 weekly, \$35.00 daily. Price includes materials, snacks and tax.

For information on other classes for children, teens and adults call Jeanne Reynolds at 336-3122.

A Summer of Faith

Summer of Faith will begin on Sunday, July 11, 2010. Our theme this year is Faith and Justice. We ask the question: If God is just, why is there so much injustice in the world? Our speakers will try to answer that question. They are:

Jamey Lee: Pastor of Jacobs Well a new church in Memphis catering to those in 12 step recovery programs.

John Gilmore: A member of the adjunct faculty in the Anthropology Department at the University of Memphis and Senior Minister and Director of Spiritual Development at Open Heart Spiritual Center.

The Rev. Dr. Cossette Garrett: A member of the faculty of Memphis Theological Seminary.

Maxie Dunham: Former pastor of Christ United Methodist Church.

Ellen Klyce: A member of this church since birth, a graduate of Harvard and Memphis Theological Seminary where she is a member of the faculty.

Micah Greenstein: Rabbi of Temple Israel

John McQuiston: Local lawyer and author of books on religion and spirituality.

Jarad Bingham: Pastor of Shady Grove Presbyterian

As we travel this spring and summer, please remember to save hotel toiletries for the Manna House guests. Also needed are jeans and pants, t-shirts, tennis shoes, tube socks, towels and blankets. Manna House serves both men and women. Thank you so much for your continued support.

Nancy Walton