

**THE MEMPHIS  
UNITARIAN**

**THE  
CHURCH  
OF THE  
RIVER**

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September 15, 2009  
Administrative Assistant: Margaret Park

**Sermon: “What Babies Tell Us About Plato, Love and God”**

There was a time when babies were thought to be blank slates waiting for the imprint of parents, education and society. As it turns out babies are the wise ones teaching us about the meaning of life.

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

**Church of the River Calendar  
Quotation of the Week**

“It is through creating, not possessing, that life is revealed.”  
— Vida Scudder

**Wednesday, September 16**

6:00 –8:00 p.m. Pot Luck Supper for 1-6th graders and their families at the home of Juliet Wischmeyer. (See Announcements from the Children’s Ministry)  
7:30 p.m. Choir Practice in the Sanctuary

**Sunday, September 20**

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 center our discussion on Channing’s Sermon “Unitarian Christianity”. If you have questions or suggestions, call Natalie Parker-Lawrence at 461-8206 or Liz Conway at 486-4872. The High School Class will meet in the Chalice Room Theater.  
11:00 a.m. Worship Service in the Sanctuary  
Childcare for infants and preschoolers  
Kindergarten will meet in their room.  
River Explorers (grade 1-6) will meet in the Chalice room and then go to workshops.  
Noon Coffee Hour in the Mississippi River Room  
12:30 The Lunch Bunch will meet at Mayuri’s Indian Restaurant at 6524 Quince Rd.

**Wednesday, September 23**

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

**Thursday, September 24**

7:00 p.m. River Readers will meet at the home of Dee Billmeier to discuss *March* by Geraldine Brooks. Call Dee at 767-5311 if you need directions.

**Saturday, September 26**

6:00 p.m. Pot Luck Supper in the Mississippi River Room and a family friendly movie in the Chalice Room theater.

**Announcements from the Children’s Ministry**

Thank you Buss and Holly McCormick, Porter Feild and Sandy Kozik for getting our River Explorers off to a good start with an inspiring Chalice Service and Toolbox of Faith workshop rotation. 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> graders will enjoy deciding which is harder to follow, a covenant or a rule, in their workshop with Porter. 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders will explore the difference in heaven and hell through games and storytelling with Sandy next Sunday, Sept. 20.

*Our Whole Lives* will meet from 11 o'clock until 1:30 with facilitators Matt Holladay, Diana McClure, Amanda Myers, Bill and Emily Schultz. Parents, please send a lunch with your child or \$5 for pizza to be delivered.

The high school class will meet at 10 o'clock with Cindy McMullin for the opening session of Popcorn Theology in the Chalice Room theater.

Thanks to the YRUU and Ginger Wheat for arranging the sandwich bar last Sunday. And thanks to all who donated to Diversity Memphis by partaking of the lunch bar, walking, and gathering pledges.

Special Event Wednesday, September 16! The River Explorers, children in grades 1-6, are invited to bring their families and join their teachers and Rev. Carley for a pot-luck at the home of Juliet Wischmeyer. Bring a dish to share, meet other church school families, hear from the DRE about this year’s plans, and enjoy each other’s company from 6-8 p.m. The Wischmeyers live at 159 E. Parkway, N with an entrance from Poplar Avenue.

Save the date and make plans now for September 26. Bring your family to the Church of the River for dinner and a movie. We’ll gather in the Mississippi River Room at 6 and enjoy a family-friendly movie afterwards in our Chalice Room theatre.

**Neshoba** to host Harvest Jam on the church property on September 26 from noon to 8:00 p.m. The event will include classical, alternative country, jazz, blues and rock music. Bring blankets or chairs. No coolers or food.

**Want to Be In The Know? Check the website! It’s bigger and more beautiful and one you click on “What’s Happening” you’ll see the “Calendar” which lists events and meetings for the entire church year so you can plan ahead. What could be easier?**



Oh, that noonday demon that robs us of our spirit! In contemporary lists of the seven deadly sins it is most commonly known as sloth. The medieval term *acedia* is better, however, for it offers a broader and more complex understanding of how we become bored with our lives.

Some theologians believed that *acedia* was the most dangerous of the other six deadly sins: pride, anger, envy, greed, gluttony and lust. How can that be? The Greek root of the word means the absence of care. When afflicted with *acedia* one experiences apathy and indifference. There is no energy to “give a damn” as the saying goes. Beset with *acedia* the door opens to allow in the other sins.

In the modern world *acedia* is often associated with depression. There are similar symptoms and it is notoriously difficult to separate spiritual from psychological conditions, the mind from the body. There are biological causes to depression but where they end and emotional problems begin is a muddy area.

Biblical scholar John Dominic Crossan makes a useful distinction between illness and disease. Both terms signify sickness. Disease is what physicians treat when something goes wrong with our biological functions. Medicine seeks a cure for the troubled body. Illness is what the patient experiences when well-being is compromised. That experience is much larger than the symptoms of disease. It involves the psycho-social and spiritual dimensions of a person. The curing of disease is biological in nature. The healing of illness is spiritual in nature.

It is interesting to note that one researcher, Andrew Solomon, reports that depressed people actually have a more realistic view of the world than others. One study reveals that non-depressed people believe they have more control over events than depressed people who have a more accurate assessment. In another study involving a video game, depressed people...knew just how many little monsters they had killed, while non-depressed people consistently overestimated their kills by four to six times the actual amount. Solomon is quick to observe however that “major depression is far too stern a teacher: you don’t have to go to the Sahara to avoid frostbite.”

It is an interesting thing how losing perspective can include having a technically more precise perspective. Clarity involves more than being able to see or count accurately. One must also interpret in the right context. This is what *acedia* does. It clouds the capacity for discernment or wisdom. One thing is for sure. *Acedia* works best in the lonely heart, the isolated person, the alienated one. We need each other to fight this demon. It is one reason I come to church. **bc**

## Thanks

to Ken & Sue Strong for a gift to the Children’s ministry in memory of Susan Crenshaw’s mother, **Mildred Harvey**.

**Among Our Members** **Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to Mike & Nancy Cartwright and Jennifer Cartwright Alejo on the death of Mike’s mother and Jennifer’s grandmother on September 4.**

### SUPPER CLUB BEGINS ANEW

With the opening of a new church year, we are pleased to announce a new Supper Club season. Those of you participating in past years would likely agree that this social function is one of the best ways to enjoy old friends, meet new ones and savor some wonderful food, drink and conversation in the homes of our membership.

This year, in keeping with the newsletter going all electronic, Supper Club sign-up and monthly notifications will be done strictly by e-mail and occasional newsletter notices. (An added opportunity for sign-up will be at the Ministry Fair this year.) If you are interested in signing up to host one dinner, between October ‘09 and May ‘10, please notify us at [billmeier@comcast.net](mailto:billmeier@comcast.net) or 767-5311. We would like you to specify your 1st and 2nd choices for month of hosting as well as number of guests you can comfortably host in your home. If you are unable to host and still want to be included, just let us know. Precise instructions for hosting will be sent by this committee as soon as we finalize the monthly schedules. **Sign up deadline is September 30th.**

We look forward to your inclusion as a Supper Club participant.

Jerry & Dee Billmeier

### Spotlight on Manna House

Manna House is a place of hospitality for homeless people of Memphis. The facility is located on Jefferson in Midtown. Manna House provides food, phone calls, showers and a dose of dignity. There is a collection bin in the Mississippi River Room for clean t-shirts, socks, wash cloths and toiletries.

Sue Strong for the Outreach Ministry

### Questions of Faith:

On Sept. 27 we will have open discussion. On October 4, we will begin discussion based on The Evolution of God by Robert Wright. Please note we are meeting in a new room just inside the south entrance. For questions, contact Liz Conway at 486-4872.

### Adult Education Class Starting

A second edition of the popular THE BIBLE FOR UNITARIANS class will begin on Tuesday, Sept. 29, 7:30—9 p.m. and run for the next three Tues. evenings on Oct. 6, 13 & 20 at the home of the Jennings in east Memphis. The tuition is \$15 and scholarships are available. Register by calling the church office at 526-8631. The first session will be on the Gospel of Mark. Please read it before class. The next three books will be determined by the class

**Memorial Tribute for The Rev. James Madison Barr, Minister Emeritus of the congregation,** will be held at the Church of the River on October 10, at 3:30 p.m. in the Mississippi River Room. Jim, via electronic means will talk about his ministry. Other people who knew and loved him will tell their favorite “story of Jim Barr” This will be a warm, friendly send off for Jim and all are invited — especially if you knew him.

### Schnuck’s cards benefit the Children’s Ministry

Thanks to faithful Schnucks shoppers, the Children’s Ministry Team has received substantial financial support through the use of their gift cards. The gift card program is being replaced by the “customer Card” system Schnucks is currently using. If you shop at Schnucks there are two ways to make sure your rebate will continue to benefit the Church of the River.

1. Send Cindy Sakaan the number on your current customer card or key chain tag. She can then register your card to rebate 1% of your purchases for groceries or gasoline to the church.
2. Pick up a new card and keychain tag from the Church of the River.

Any reloads of the old gift cards will benefit the church through Sept. 27 and any balance on the old gift cards may be spent down until exhausted.

Thank you for your continued support of the Children’s Ministry with your grocery shopping.

**The Care Coordinator for September will be Suzanne Freeman. You can reach Suzanne at 662 487-2570**