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Benton United Methodist Church

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UMW Memorial Candle Lighting Service

The Benton United Methodist Women invite you to be part of their annual Memorial Candle Lighting Service. The service will take place on Sunday, May 28, 2006 at 9:30 a.m. Candles will be lit in honor of or memory of loved ones you wish to remember. Your participation in this important service will be both appreciated and meaningful.

Funds raised by this Memorial Candle Lighting Service will help support mission activities of the UMW around the world. These missions cost an estimated \$34.88 a minute, and your support of the candle lighting service will help make this important mission possible.

Please complete the form at the end of this newsletter and return it to the UMW president Alvina Mainord by May 20, 2006.

Worship and Fellowship
Sunday Service – 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School for All Ages –
10:30 a.m.
Family Fellowship –
Wednesday Evenings
6:00 p.m. Dinner
6:30 p.m. Bible Study or
Discussion of Today's Issues

Join us at the
County Seat of Christ
at the corner of
East Missouri and Chester St.

Have You Heard the Clanging Door?

Nine-year-old Al trudges through the London streets, his hand squeezing a note, his heart pounding with fear. He has not read the letter; his father forbade him to do so. He doesn't know the message, but he knows its destination. The police station.

Young boys might covet a trip to the police station. Not Al. At least not today. Punishment, not pleasure, spawned this visit. Al failed to meet the family curfew. The fun of the day made him forget the time of day, so he came home late and in trouble.

His father, a stern disciplinarian, met Al at the front door and, with no greeting, gave him the note and the instruction, "Take it to the jailhouse." Al has no idea what to expect, but he fears the worst.

The fears prove justifiable. The officer, a friend of his father, opens the note, reads it, and nods. "Follow me." He leads the wide-eyed youngster to a jail cell, opens the door, and tells him to enter. The officer clangs the door shut. "This is what we do to naughty boys," he explains and walks away.

Al's face pales as he draws the only possible conclusion. He has crossed his father's line. Exhausted his supply of grace. Outspent the cache of mercy. So his dad has locked him away. Young Al has no reason to think he'll ever see his family again.

He is wrong. The jail sentence lasts only five minutes. But those five minutes felt like five months. Al never forgot that day. The sound of the clanging door, he often told people, stayed with him the rest of his life.

Easy to understand why. Can you imagine a more ominous noise? Its echo wordlessly announced, "Your father rejects you. Search all you want; he isn't near.

Plead all you want; he won't hear. You are separated from your father's love."

The slamming of the cell door. Many fear they have heard it. Al forgot the curfew. You forgot your virtue. Little Al came home late. Maybe you came home drunk. Or didn't come home at all. Al lost track of time. You lost your sense of direction and ended up in the wrong place doing the wrong thing, and heaven knows, heaven has no place for the likes of . . . Cheaters. Aborters. Adulterers. Secret sinners. Public scoundrels. Impostors. Church hypocrites. Locked away, not by an earthly father, but by your heavenly one. Incarcerated, not in a British jail, but in personal guilt, shame. No need to request mercy; the account is empty. Make no appeal for grace; the check will bounce. You've gone too far.

The fear of losing a father's love exacts a high toll. Al spent the rest of his life hearing the clanging door. That early taste of terror contributed to his lifelong devotion to creating the same in others. For Al - Alfred Hitchcock - made a career out of scaring people.

You may be scaring some folks yourself. You don't mean to. But you cannot produce what you do not possess. If you aren't convinced of God's love, how can you love others?

Do you fear you have heard the clanging door? If so, be assured. You have not. Your imagination says you did; logic says you did; some parent or pulpiter says you did. But according to the Bible, according to Paul, you did not.

And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from his love. Death can't, and life can't. The angels can't, and the demons can't. Our fears for today, our

worries about tomorrow, and even the powers of hell can't keep God's love away. Whether we are high above the sky or in the deepest ocean, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:38-39).

...Paul was convinced. Are you? Are you convinced that you have never lived a loveless day? Not one. Never unloved. Those times you deserted Christ? He loved you. You hid from him; he came looking for you.

And those occasions you denied Christ? Though you belonged to him, you hung with them, and when his name surfaced, you cursed like a drunken sailor. God let you hear the crowing of conscience and feel the heat of tears. But he never let you go. Your denials cannot diminish his love.

Nor can your doubts. You've had them. You may have them even now. While there is much we cannot know, may never know, can't we be sure of this? Doubts don't separate doubters from God's love.

The greatest discovery in the universe is the greatest love in the universe – God's love. *"Nothing can ever separate us from his love"* (Rom. 8:38). Think what those words mean. You may be separated from your spouse, from your folks, from your kids, from your hair, but you are not separated from the love of God. And you never will be. Ever.

Step to the well of his love and drink up. It may take some time to feel the difference. Occasional drinks won't bedew the evaporated heart. Ceaseless swallows will. Once filled up by his love, you'll never be the same.

The fear of love lost haunted young Al. But the joy of a love found changed the disciples. May you be changed. The next time you fear you hear a clanging door, remember, *"Nothing can ever separate us from his love"* (Rom. 8:38).

Excerpt adapted from *Come Thirsty: No Heart Too Dry for His Touch* by Max Lucado (W Publishing Group, October 2004). For more information on Max Lucado, visit www.maxlucado.com.

Birthday Calendar

Recent and upcoming birthdays are:

Warren Cork – May 15
Callie Bollinger – May 26
Brent Heuring – May 29

Angel & Faith Edwards – June 6
Kathryn Mainord – June 11

Church Calendar

The **United Methodist Women** are not meeting during the summer, they will resume meeting in September at 7:00 p.m. on the second Monday of each month. Their next activities are:

- May 28, 9:30 a.m. Candle Lighting Service
- June 3, A Day Apart at Piedmont UMC

The **Church Council** met on April 20th and will meet next on May 18th at 6:30 p.m. – Please join us in the fellowship hall as we discuss the business of our church. The Church Council meets on the third Thursday of each month.

Our **Wednesday Evening Fellowship** should be a part of your week. Join us as we gather at **6:00 p.m.** for a light meal and a time of fellowship followed by lively discussion. We are alternating between Bible studies presented by our members and discussions of various contemporary subjects. Karen Callaway has been doing

a great job of coordinating this activity and has presented several of the studies. This is a great opportunity for fellowship and learning. Invite your friends – you don't have to be a United Methodist to enjoy this time together.

Vacation Bible School

Round up the kids, it is time for Vacation Bible School (VBS) at Benton UMC. This year VBS will be May 23 – 26 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. VBS will have crafts, stories, videos, music, and snacks. What's not to like? So round 'em up and head 'em into VBS @ BUMC!

Prayer Requests

Pray for: President Bush, all elected leaders, those serving in the military, Christians suffering around the world, and God's mission for Benton UMC.

Continued prayers for: Fletcher Chasteen, Gloria Frobase, Robert Gandt, Suzi Glaus, Georgia Graham, Damien Heuring, Tim Ingram, Leona Kasler, Chastidy Lynch, Kevin & Mary Ann Mainord, Martha Sue Mainord, Lester and Mary Miller, Mikala Morrow, Abdul Rahman, Arline Stuckey, and Walter Ziegler.

Jim McDonough Debuts Song



Jim added to the 9:30 a.m. service on April 30th by sharing his new song, *I See Everything*, with the church. It is exciting to have a song premiered at any time, but it was a meaningful addition to the service to have this song and his talents shared with the congregation.

Our Mission at Benton UMC

- **Invite** and **nurture** our community as a family through love and acceptance and to **make disciples** for Jesus Christ.
- **Teach** spiritual growth to Christ-like maturity, through the Word, the Sacraments, worship (prayer, praise, and peace), and fellowship.
- **Build** and **expand** our mission into the community by and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

There are many individuals and families in our community who are looking for the type of fellowship available right here in our church and with our church family. We have been called to make disciples for Jesus Christ, and one way to follow that calling is to invite them to join you in one of our activities – who knows they may like it here. The next thing you know you might have to sit in a different pew.

UMW Memorial Candle Lighting Service

Please light a candle ...

In Honor of: _____

In Memory of: _____

By: _____

My Gift Is: \$ _____