

# CUMC

CARNESVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Pastor: Terry Deland Spring 2010

## Mark your calendar

### MARCH

28th - Palm Sunday

31st - Holy Wednesday

*We will have Service at the Veranda, Bible Study, and choir practice*

### APRIL

1st - Maudy Thursday

*celebration with special music from the choir and celebration of Holy Communion at 6:30 P.M.*

2nd - Good Friday

*Good Friday celebration at Vanna with the Passover Meal (Seder) and service. Reservations required, \$5.00 per person, also at 6:30 P.M. Call pastor's cell phone for reservations. (404-274-1902). Must contact the pastor by March 31.*

4th - Easter

*Easter Sunrise worship at 7:00 A.M., followed by breakfast at 8:00 A.M. Main Easter service at 11:00 A.M. Although this is first Sunday, Holy Communion will not be celebrated. The only communion service for this month will be on Maundy Thursday evening.*

11th - Quarterly Luncheon after Church

### MAY

9th - Mother's Day

*Special recognitions of our mothers*

16th - Vanna Homecoming

*The pastor will be involved, and we will have a guest speaker at Carnesville.*

23rd - Picnic in the Park

*A shelter has been reserved.*

### JUNE

14th-18th - Annual Conference in Athens

*The pastor and conference delegate will be away at Athens.*

20th - Fathers Day

## "An Easter Message"

Paul writes to the Philippians, "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call to God in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 3:10-14).

Paul is being quite humble here. If anyone deserves to share in the resurrection of Christ, it is Paul, who was a valiant warrior for the gospel, suffering prison, lashings, shipwreck, cold and deprivation, hunger, and much more. Paul, whose very shadow could cure the sick, whose messages stirred the soul, who founded churches all over Asia and Eastern Europe, the mighty servant of Christ, seems closer to God than anyone. Yet, here he is, humbly hoping that somehow he will attain the goal of the heavenly prize, that of life eternal.

I wonder if the phrase, "by becoming like him in his death," may somehow be a premonition of Paul's death and martyrdom? Perhaps, or it may be more a statement of his great faith. He then talks about "forgetting what lies behind and pressing on toward the goal". Surely this is an affirmation of one who has learned much, suffered much, but has much more to learn! Only as we die in Christ to the past can we hope to strain on toward other goals of spiritual enlightenment. Letting go of the past, either the positive or the negative, can be difficult. I talked in church on March 14 about my past experiences in Vietnam, how I had suffered the loss of many good friends, and through the years had held on to a survivor's guilt. Others returning home from war will no doubt find themselves in similar circumstances, along with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and a host of other war-time related psychological damages. It is near impossible to go through war and not be affected by what you experience and see. Letting go of the past has, therefore, been something I found I could not do, in spite of many years of prayer. It was at a Walk to Emmaus that I was finally able to release the guilt and put this particular portion of my past behind me. "Forgetting what lies behind" is never easy, but it is in giving every corner of our hearts to God that we find release and healing. I mistakenly thought that God wanted only the good stuff. I was wrong; He wants the bad stuff as well. I gave Him everything, and found release and peace.

"I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own." There is great strength and hope in these words. Paul recognized that he was no longer his own, but belonged to Christ, who bought Paul on the cross by his suffering and death upon the cross. I, too, belong to Christ, because I recognize that I am bought with a price, and I am not my own. If you, dear reader, would give yourself wholly to Christ, you, too, would belong to him, for you are bought with a price. More than this, we are all redeemed by the power of Christ's blood, and we are given eternal life through the power of his resurrection.

By his death on the cross, Jesus gives us forgiveness of sins. By his resurrection, he frees us from the penalty of sin, and we have as a gift eternal life, eternal in the heavens. We are forgiven by the cross, but we come alive to newness of life through the resurrection. The one takes care of the past; the other seals us for the future. We are free from the power of sin, so that we can have abundant life in the here and now, and eternal life with Christ in the future.

There is much that I still do not know or understand. What happens to the souls of those who have never heard of Christ when they die? Do they go to Sheol, the abode of the dead? Do they go into some kind of limbo? Do they go to heaven because they are innocent, assuming they have not committed some horrible sin such as murder while in the body? I just don't know the answer to these questions. I do know that heaven is a place for the holy, and only those who have been accounted holy through faith in Christ and his resurrection shall be accounted worthy to go there. Still, God's mercy is much wider and more vast than my theology.

Ultimately, I must join with Paul and declare that, "forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus." The only answer I have is Jesus Christ, and I suppose that he is the only answer I need.

Happy Easter!

Terry

**A month ago the Staff-Parish Relations committee met with Dr. Gary Whetstone,** our district superintendent, in order to express some concerns about our lack of growth and the aging of the congregation. Several things came out of the meeting:

- 1) We need to keep a good positive attitude about our church. Our job is to be faithful to God and do what we can to help grow the church. It is up to God to bring the growth. Keeping a positive attitude helps take the pressure of trying to survive off of us. We want to not be concerned about survival, but about being faithful to our calling and doing what we can to minister to the world. God will send the people if we are faithful to our calling.
- 2) We should be much in prayer about our church, and developing a good prayer ministry is certainly needed in our church. We will be doing some things to follow-up on this proposal.
- 3) We could try Natural Church Development, a program that examines our weak points and helps us to select one, our weakest point among eight ministry areas, and concentrate on that one area for a year until hopefully it improves. We keep up the process, concentrating the following year on the next weakest point and improve in that area, and so forth. The pastor will be in touch with the Conference Ministry staff to begin to schedule a presentation to see if Natural Church Development is something that we want to try.

The district superintendent was very pleased with our level of ministries offered, and thought that it might be something very simple that could be holding back the growth from coming. NCD will help us examine our weak areas, and perhaps we will learn and grow in knowledge as well as numbers. Do not worry about the future of the church. Pray much, be faithful, and leave the rest to God.

God bless You,  
Terry



**Our annual Valentine's Dinner and St. Patrick's Day Dinner**