

November 2008
Edition
Eva Marie Wolfe,
Pastor

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Wes Baker,
Editor



CROTON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Lifting Up Jesus for the Glory of God

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The Church and Politics

What role does the church have in politics, especially the local church? In a presidential election year, this question is a very pertinent one. The first thing we as a local church are extremely aware of is that we have a choice between supporting particular political candidates or retaining our tax-exempt status. We can't do both. Most local churches choose to let their members decide for themselves which candidates to support rather than make a church-wide decision. Partly, this is to retain tax-exempt status, but another reason is to keep from dividing the church over the issues of the world. Who you vote for in an election is an expression of personal preference, not a barometer of how good a Christian you are, and most congregations realize that.

There are some who believe that religion should have nothing to do with politics – “render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s, and unto God what is God’s.” These people take Jesus’ words to mean that the world and the church are entirely separate.

There are others who believe that Jesus challenges us to fully engage in every aspect of the world, including politics. Some would even say that a particular politician’s election is at the hand of God acting directly in our political process, in response to our prayers.

Where ever on this spectrum each of us is, we would do well, as we pick up our ballots this year, to recall God’s words spoken through the prophet Micah: “What does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” What does it mean to act justly when deciding how to vote on various issues? How do we show mercy to people through the ways our laws are fashioned? How do we walk humbly with God amid the competing voices of the world? It is good for us as Christians to learn about the political issues we will be voting on, and to ask ourselves these questions:

What are the justice issues involved in this legislation? How could people be hurt by its passage or denial, especially marginalized people such as the poor, the frail, or children? How could they benefit? How would God’s mercy operate in this situation? Can I set aside my ego and my opinions and search out God’s will for our village, our township, our school district, our state, our country— and then vote accordingly, after I have studied and prayed and listened carefully to what God reveals to me?

Later in this issue of the Messenger, you will read some of the United Methodist Church's positions on several state issues in the upcoming election. Of course, we are always free to disagree with these positions and vote freely, as we wish. It is my hope that this information will spark theological thinking and discussion in your household in the weeks leading up to Election Day. God is a part of our politics because He is a part of every aspect of our lives, and He has a special concern for how we treat others. If we seek to impact the world for God, we shouldn't shy away from applying our religious beliefs to political decisions that affect real people.



Shalom,
Pastor Em

Worship in November

November brings us to the close of the church year, as we celebrate special occasions such as All Saints Day (Nov 2) and Christ the King Sunday (Nov 23). Then, just before we start the new year of the church on the first Sunday of Advent (Nov 30), we pause to give thanks to God for all his good gifts to us. What better way could there be to close out this year and begin the next one!

November 2: Communion/All Saint's Day

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13
Message: The Never-Ending Story
Description: The saints of the church serve as an example to us in our Christian walk. As we honor the memory of those loved ones who have gone to be with God this past year, we also seek to continue their legacy of service and love.

November 9

Scripture: Matthew 18:15-20
Message: It Takes Two
Description: Jesus promised that if two or three are gathered in his name, he would be there with them. We often take this promise at its face value that Jesus is with us anytime we gather together in his name (and rightfully so), but do we understand it in its original context?

November 16

Charles West will be preaching on this day

November 23

Scripture: Matthew 25:31-46
Message: What Kind of King is This?
Description: The world expects a king to demand that his subjects serve him, but Jesus had an entirely different definition of service. We can't truly serve him unless we serve other people. What kind of a king is this?



Record of Faithfulness

Weekly Budget: \$1,565.00

Date	Atten.	S.S.	Tithes
Sep. 28	53	22	\$1284.10
Oct 5	69	26	1206.14
Oct 12	79	36	7128.45
Oct 19	48	30	845.00



Set your clocks back before you go to bed on Saturday, November 1!

Church News

United Methodist

Women. Please start gathering items for our shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. We will be meeting on TUESDAY, November 11 (please note the change of date) at 7 pm to fill the boxes so that they can be on their way in time. Items needed include small toys, small storybooks, school supplies, and toiletries. Please no toys that have anything to do with war!



The women of our church have been invited to a retreat at Miller Memorial on the Beth Moore study, "Living Well." It will be held November 7 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and November 8 from 8:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Information is posted in the welcome center. Please let Dorotha or Elnora know if you'd like to attend.



Please note that November order and delivery dates are earlier than usual because of the Thanksgiving holiday! There is a special Thanksgiving box available this month. Orders for November may be placed at the church on Wednesday, November 5 from 10 am – 12 pm and Thursday, November 6 from 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm. Orders placed at the church must be paid for by cash, money order, cashier's check, or EBT card (food stamps). If you place orders online on our church's website or at www.angelfoodministries.com (choose our church as the host site) you may pay by credit/debit card. All orders must be placed by Sunday, November 9. Pick-up date for November is Saturday, November 22 from 9 am – 11 am.

Outreach Committee

is collecting food for Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for people in need in our community. Suggestions for donations include: canned fruit, canned vegetables, boxes of stuffing mix, canned pumpkin, canned evaporated milk, canned meat/fish, bags of potatoes, cake mix, soap, toilet paper, toothbrushes/toothpaste, powdered milk, dish soap, laundry detergent.



We're planning a special **Thanksgiving Service** on Sunday evening, November 23 at 7 p.m. to celebrate the blessings of God on us, our community, and our country.

This service will include special performances and readings. If you'd like to volunteer to have a part, please let Judy Baker or Pastor Eva Marie know.

Thanks to our **Harvest** everyone who worked so hard to make



everyone who worked so hard to make **Festival** such a day. It was old friends at church again.

A special thank you to Roy McKinley for sharing his wonderful musical talent and his love of God with us! And thanks to Lynn Van Fossen, Doris Willison, and Judy Baker for their hard work in decorating the sanctuary. It looks beautiful! Finally, thank you to all who blessed the work of the church with their gifts. An offering of just over \$7,000 was received. Again, thanks to one and all!





Matthew 5:13

Pass the Salt! Have you caught someone doing good, in our church or in our community? Then pass the salt! Jesus tells us that we are the salt of the earth. If you see someone following Jesus in service to others, thank them by taking a "Pass the Salt" postcard from the Welcome Center (stamps will be available) and mail it to them, or give to Pastor Em to mail to them. Make out a second card to leave in the Welcome Center for the Pass the Salt bulletin board. We certainly know that people don't do good deeds for public recognition! Still, it is encouraging to know that the good works people do are noticed and appreciated. We hope that Pass the Salt cards will give us another opportunity to say "Thanks!"

Did you know...

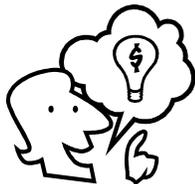
Your pastor is a notary public! If you need to have anything notarized, Pastor Eva Marie would be glad to do it for you.

Need a Notary?



Please give her a call so she can bring her stamp over to the church office for any notary needs you may have.

Creation Care. John Palmer brought us back lots of information from the Creation Care Workshop he attended. Some of it will be on display in the Welcome Center, including "101 Green Things to Do as a Church." He also has information on energy audits for the church, and for individual households, to help us conserve energy and save money. Look for that information to be available soon so that we all conserve resources while helping our wallets a bit!



Community News



Croton Church of Christ Cookie 4th Annual Cookie Walk and Craft Sale will be

held on Saturday, November 8 in their Family Life Center from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. You will be able to select from a huge variety of delicious homemade cookies, which will sell for \$3 per dozen. Loaves of bread and crafts will also be available, as will coffee, tea and hot chocolate.

Northridge Operating Levy

There was a school board meeting followed by an open forum on Monday, October 20. Some of the information presented included:



- Passage of the operating levy is expected to keep the school system solvent for the next two years. Due to flat property values, lower income tax receipts, and state cuts in funding, this is reduced from the original five-year projection.
- Informational flyers about the levy will be posted at various public places and stores in the community. These flyers are also available in our Welcome Center. A Viking Voice newsletter has been prepared, but there are no funds to have it printed and made available (about \$900 is needed). We have also learned that yard signs for supporters of the levy are available from Julie Liggett at: jliggett@laca.org.

School levy issues affect everyone in a community, whether or not they have children or grandchildren currently enrolled in their local school district. Please take the time to become informed on this issue before you vote on it. It is a separate issue from the future bond issue for new facilities, and it will affect the children in our community immediately.

District and Conference News



The United Methodist Church has taken a stand on several issues in the upcoming election. Below is information from Bishop Ough’s concerning the Payday Lending legislation, and information concerning the Casino gambling legislation. More information, including the Bishop’s letter in full, is posted at the church, and is available on our website in the Breaking News section.

From: Bishop Bruce R. Ough
RE: Payday Lending

...I recently participated in a press conference with other religious leaders to speak out against excessive payday lending interest rates and in favor of the new law passed by the Ohio General Assembly limiting the interest rates payday lending institutions can charge Ohio citizens.

...For years, payday lenders operating in Ohio have been permitted to charge 391 percent annual interest. This has added to the growing debt problem of many Ohio citizens. These lenders prey on some of our most vulnerable populations, including low-income families, the elderly, minorities, military personnel and others desperate for cash. This is morally wrong and inconsistent with our historic United Methodist prohibition against the “giving or taking of usury” (General Rules of The United Methodist Church).

...Payday loan customers are often faced with an impossible decision – pay for an over-priced product or not have an important need met. Members of the Ohio General Assembly and Governor Ted Strickland banded together to give customers a new choice – payday loans with an interest rate that cannot exceed 28 percent.

...Usury is not freedom. It is exploitation. It is financial bondage.

...Today’s payday lending practices are not just financially irresponsible; they are morally reprehensible.

...I respectfully encourage you to witness to your neighbors, families and friends regarding this issue and to vote “yes” on ballot Issue 5.

Proposed Casino Amendment (Issue 6) Information from the United Methodist Church.

The proposed amendment would write into the state’s constitution a monopoly for commercial casinos in Ohio. No other business or enterprise is granted a monopoly by the state constitution.

The amendment guarantees the owners 70% of gross revenues after prize payouts while only providing 28% to county governments after Clinton County receives \$30 million. The state would receive no money from the casino.

The proposed amendment specifies that the state can only charge \$15 million for a license fee. It also provides stipulations on how the license fee must be used. ...most states are paid \$200 million for each casino establishment. Furthermore, casino owners do not dictate to the state how the money should be used.

...The **MOST IMPORTANT** provision in the Constitutional Amendment [says] “In the event that another casino is permitted in Ohio by state or federal law to conduct gaming activities similar to that conducted by the casino authorized under division (A) of this section, the tax rate on gross casino receipts authorized by this subsection shall not exceed the **lesser** of twenty-five percent (25%) or the lowest percentage rate payable by any other casino

subsequently authorized." Why is this so important?

...When the Eastern Shawnee are recognized and tribal casinos opened in Ohio, the language contained in the constitutional amendment would require the tax rate for the Clinton County casino to be reduced from 28% to 2%. Funding to county governments would disappear and the owners would receive 98% of profits. No other business in Ohio receives constitutional protection from paying taxes.

Youth and Children

FTC Mystery Trips.

Our next Full Throttle for Change mystery trip will be on Sunday, November 2 from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. We can't tell you anything about it, but we can promise that you'll enjoy it! Invite your friends!

Our December Youth Mystery Trip will actually be in November. Meet at the church at 11 A.M. on Saturday, Nov. 29th, and be prepared for a great adventure. Dress is casual and event is indoor.

SonCatcher's Bible School.

SonCatchers will be meeting the third Thursday of each month for Bible School. Our theme is God's Nature. We will be looking at the natural world God created, and how God uses the natural world to tell us about His Nature (the way God is). The next meeting of God's Nature will be Saturday, November 15 from 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. You won't want to miss it! Be sure to bring your friends!



All-church event. Our all-church event for November will be held on Thursday,

November 13. The reason for this special day is that this is a new event for us. The **Vocalise Choir** from Northridge High School will be performing a variety of music for us, from Fall selections to ones celebrating the upcoming holidays. We are excited to be able to host them, and hope that you will invite your friends from the community to hear them. Light refreshments will be served.

Creation Cares Workshop:

By John Palmer

I was given the opportunity to attend the Creation Cares Workshop held at Worthington United Methodist Children's Home where I represented our church.

Most of the information dispensed was geared toward "going green." There are many challenges that we could address or try to solve. A starting point might be to use non-disposable tableware. I am not going to say "No" to washing dishes or to look into a dishwasher when we have dinners here. Another possibility is our use of cloth reusable grocery bags.

I attended this event to learn what we could do to arrange for an energy audit. We are constantly looking for ways to conserve and improve. There are a few things we are already trying. We have replaced two older furnaces with high efficiency models and have started a fund drive for our third—and last—furnace. We have replaced a lot of our windows with newer and more weather resistant items.

At the end of the workshop, Jacob and I took a tour of the Children's Home campus. A need for foster families was mentioned as well as a desire for assistance with mission projects for the children.

All Saints' Day

All Saints' Day will be observed during the morning worship service on November 2nd. As has become our tradition, the names of loved one who have died this year will be read, candles will be lit for each one, and the church bell will be rung accordingly. Join us for this meaningful time of remembrance.

Hanging of the Greens

Kick off the holiday season with us as we gather to decorate the church for Christmas. On Saturday, November 29th at 5 P.M., we will meet for a light dinner and share in the joy of decorating to the tune of familiar carols. Don't miss this event!

From One Pumpkin to Another!!!!

A woman was asked by a coworker, "What is it like to be a Christian?"

The woman replied,

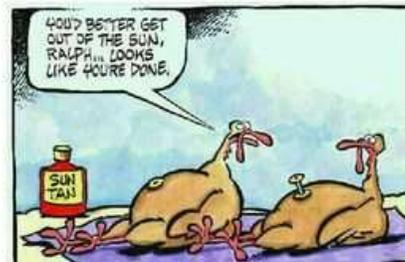
"It is like being a pumpkin. God picks you from the patch, brings you in, and washes all the dirt off you. Then He cuts off the top and scoops out all the yucky stuff.

He removes the seeds of doubt, hate, and greed. Then He carves you a new smiling face and puts His light into you to shine for all the world to see."

This was passed on to me by another pumpkin. Now it's your turn to pass it to other pumpkins.

I liked it enough to send it to all the pumpkins in my patch.

Submitted by Mariellen Smith



Happy Thanksgiving!

**The Croton United Methodist Church
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Return Service Requested