



# e - Votion

EVOTION FOR WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 19, 2014

Dear Friends,

Today I am reading Matthew 25:31-46:

*When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord,*

*when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you? And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or in prison, and did not take care of you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life.'*

the  
least  
of  
these

*love unconditionally*

*invite inclusively*

*accept wholeheartedly*

When I was in first grade, I began taking piano lessons from Miss Joann Feazell at First Baptist

Church in Bristol. She was a wonderful piano teacher, but even more wonderful as a minister. Her title was "minister of music" at First Baptist Church, but she was much more than JUST a minister of music. She loved and cared for many children and youth through the years. (Reminds me of another Minister of Music I know.) She encouraged me in everything I wanted to do and ultimately, when through a series of unfortunate circumstances, our family left the Presbyterian church where we were members, she invited and welcomed my sister and me into the Youth Choir at First Baptist Church, an experience which changed my life. I know she did the same for hundreds of other young people. Quite frankly, if it weren't for her personal initiative in awakening me to opportunities available through church, I most likely would not be serving the church today. I probably would not have heard God's call into ministry, I probably would not have had the courage to express my faith publicly. Miss Feazell was a sure and certain example of the sheep referred to in this passage. She saw something in me that I didn't see in myself--and she was like that with all her students.

When I think about the ministries at First UMC today, I am reminded of my youth at First Baptist. My parents did not attend First Baptist Church on a regular basis. In fact, most of the youth who were at the church in those days, were not "children of the church." As I look back on it, I can only imagine how rowdy we were on Wednesday and Sunday nights! Yet, many of us were so convicted by our experiences, we have gone on to pastor churches (I'm pretty sure I'm the only female pastor from that group), teach religion at universities, serve as Christian educators and ministers of music. I praise God for the opportunity I had to participate in that group.

In many ways, we were hungry, thirsty, naked, and prisoners and were welcomed. These are surprisingly simple things. We've all done them at one time or another--sometimes un-self-consciously, responding in love to the need we see in another person. Other times our motives are mixed. We want to feel good about ourselves. We want to look good to other people or to God. We do something out of duty or guilt instead of pure love. But there is hope, because Jesus doesn't send anyone off to the left because of a bad attitude! (Whew)

Jesus doesn't say anything about needing to know the Apostles' Creed, or coming to church every Sunday, or trying to figure out for ourselves who is a sheep or a goat.

I'm thankful for the Joann Feazells of this world who love unconditionally, who invite everyone to participate in the kingdom, and who see Jesus in the least of these.

I found an old newsletter article I used in another church (I normally don't recycle but I do love this and hope you do too).

### My Church

My church is composed of people like me. We make it what it is.  
It will be friendly, if I am friendly.  
Its pews will be filled, if I help fill them.  
It will do great work, if I work.  
It will make generous gifts to many causes, if I am a generous giver.  
IT will bring other people into worship and fellowship, if I bring them.

My church will be a church of loyalty and love, of fearlessness and faith, and a church with a noble spirit, if I, who make it what is, am filled with those things.

Therefore, with the help of God, I shall dedicate myself to the task of being all the things that I want my church to be!

As we seek to be a church alive with the love of Jesus Christ, may we strive to remember and practice the above!

PRAISES AND PRAYER CONCERNS:

- Frankie Cradic who is recovering from surgery (Gall bladder and appendix)
- Barbara Marrs, at home at Mendy Hall's house
- Jean Jones, at home
- Jane Eddy

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CALENDAR:

- Don't forget your Operation Christmas Child Shoe Box! Due IMMEDIATELY and we still need a few more to make our goal of 250.
- We are looking for a good upright vacuum cleaner for the Neighborhood Center!
- Food Pantry is this Saturday-- Help and Donations needed! Contact Polly Crowder, Serena Crowder, Peggy Humphreys
- Communications Pillar--Thursday November 20, 7 pm
- Hanging of the Greens Sunday November 30.

"Preach the gospel at all times and when necessary use words."

St Francis of Assisi

Blessings,

Jane Taylor  
First United Methodist Church  
Johnson City, Tennessee