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A Word from Woody...

Screwtape's Lenten Message

What if C.S. Lewis' mythical demon Uncle Screwtape from Lewis' The Screwtape Letters once again wrote his nephew demon Wormwood on how to destroy Christian faith? Fortunately, we have acquired one such letter. One cannot speak about the lives lost in acquiring it. . .

My Dearest Wormwood:

You seemed shocked to find me attending a worship service last week. And I have received a word of warning from below that you have been gabbing **gossip about me, that I was actually "listening intently to the preacher's message"**. Indeed I was. But your foolish prattle betrays a diminutive mind. You appear to have forgotten the most elementary instruction from **Tempter's School: know thy enemy**—especially the Enemy Above!—well. Unfortunately, even our best underground intelligence can tell us precious little more than what the Enemy deigns us to know from His so-called Holy Book. But we hope to crack its code soon. The mystery is not what, but *why* He speaks as He does in those **pernicious pages. What's in it for Him? Where is His advantage?** Why not make slaves of the human vermin and be done with them? Instead the Enemy desires them for sons and daughters, if they will only believe in Him. Well, our sacred business is of course to encourage defiance, and for the most noble and pragmatic of reasons--autonomy! Convince the humans to embrace that demonic spirit of independence, that everything they own and earn and enjoy is simply a product of their own making which they think—hilariously!-- belongs to them. And we seduce them to believe this will go on forever. Thankfully, such amiable attitudes of autonomy will indeed go on forever to a glorious eternity, but not one as they suppose!

Anyway, back to the preacher. Did you hear his message? He began the season of Lent in a most threatening way-- **by reading from that Book the Enemy's parable of the sower and the seed.** It is a terribly confusing parable, for it begins with the pomp and circumstance of victory for our side! We have been long thrilled with the idea of the scattered seed of the disgusting gospel being immediately removed from human consideration by our Father below—as if from a path by birds of prey. And we have giggled with glee at the next two scenarios of the seed being scattered among

rocks and thorns, so that the Enemy's message actually grew a little in their hearts, only to be strangled out by persecution and the lure of wealth. But the mystifying part of this parable is that some of this seed falls on good soil, and tragically re-produces up to a hundredfold! My worst fear was that this preacher might try to address this strange story and apply it to **the hearers' lives. Fortunately, Globfest got to the preacher** with the most tantalizing of temptations. This erstwhile miserable minister used to believe the Enemy's message. But Globfest distracted him from such frivolity so that now instead of saving souls, all he wants to do is to save slobbs! At least, that is how we put it. Of course, those faithful to our cause call this **newer, more refined version of the Enemy's message "helping the helpless", "the social gospel" or "social justice"**.



The human rodent thereby gets saved for today, but eternity is ours! Globfest got the preacher to turn the two great commandments subtly upside down, so that now he encourages his congregation to be more concerned to love and cherish their neighbors than the Enemy. So the preacher gave a delightful message—he barely referred to the troublesome parable! Instead he re-interpreted it with delicious deceit. He preached that **the proper way to "farm" people is to help them grow to believe in themselves and their own inherent goodness, and above all to get a good education, which thus leads to a hundredfold reproduction of one's self-actualization— and self-absorption!** The effusive praise he received afterward from his congregation made me feel strangely warmed. There is a **special place for such preachers and laity in our Father's house below.**

Nevertheless, we must work diligently during the time of Lent, Wormwood. The fields are ripe for harvest, and fortunately the devilish laborers are many. But the Enemy is crafty. He has churches which have not (yet) bent the knee to our Father Below. Beware of such churches that resist our message of personal exultation and human applause. They foolishly try to distinguish between such things as truth and error. They even attempt to turn the tables on us by claiming our victory in crucifying the contemptuous Incarnate One has saving value for their sins. Our incompetence in not being able to keep Him in the tomb has only led to excruciating **complications today, hasn't it? Let us take care, then, to be about our Father's business, for rumor has it that the present darkness will soon give way to Dawn . . .**

Your Affectionate Uncle,

Screwtape

Youth Corner

Winter Jam!

Many thanks for Kaylor, Sasha, Mary Frances, and Pressley for serving at our youth fund raiser Valentine's Café. The Lord used your hard work and the generosity of this church to raise \$168! Praise God!

This month we'll go to Winter Jam at the Lakefront Arena on Friday, March 2nd. We'll meet at the church at 6:15 PM; the concert starts at 7:00 PM.

Please keep your eye out for plans for our youth mission trip this summer—it looks like it will be the week of June 18-23.



Church Family Night

We will move our meeting date from the first Wednesday to the second **Wednesday of March, 14th** so we can watch the simulcast of Lee Strobel's "The Case for Miracles" from 7:00-8:30 PM. Our meal will be the same time as usual—6:00-7:00 PM—and we'll have the option of enjoying **crawfish or Popeye's chicken**—or both!

Last month Emily Hingle spoke on her proposed mission trip to Thailand this summer.



Church Game Day Sunday!

You are invited to a potluck and game day on Sunday March 11th from 12:30 to 6:30 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Please bring a casserole or dessert and your favorite soft drink. (Alcoholic beverages are not permitted.) We will have several different games available such as Scrabble, Pictionary, Trivia, and others. There will be games for all ages and also prizes. Please feel free to invite others.



A lot on our plates, here...



Easter Celebrations

Palm Sunday Luncheon and Easter Egg Hunt! On Sunday, March 25th we'll enjoy a church fellowship luncheon celebrating Palm Sunday, and then at 12:30 PM we'll hold our **Easter Egg Hunt on the church lawn.** Please invite family and friends to this wonderful event!

Maundy Thursday Service: We'll hold a Maundy Thursday service on Thursday, March 29th from 6:30-7:30 PM. This is a special service not only to prepare **our hearts for God's love poured out to us through Jesus** and His new commandment to love others as He has loved us (John 13:34-35) but also to ready us for proper recognition of Good Friday and Easter. Please invite friends and loved ones for this special service.

Easter Lilies Beginning March 11th, you will have the opportunity to dedicate Easter lilies to decorate the sanctuary on Easter Sunday. Watch the bulletin for order forms, or contact susan in the church office to place an order.

Easter Breakfast: On Sunday, April 1st we'll begin our celebration of our Lord's resurrection by holding a church breakfast in the Fellowship Hall from 9:00-10:00 AM. There will be no Sunday School that morning, but we will have a brief devotional at 10:00 AM.

Easter Luncheon For Easter Sunday, April 1st the Parlor Sunday School class invites everyone to join them for lunch (dutch treat) at Piccadilly off of Clearview Parkway at 1:00 pm. We will have an Easter hat contest as usual. Piccadilly has a variety of foods and reservations will not be necessary.



Prayer Focus

- ✝ Barbara Velasquez, health
- ✝ The UMC, unity and faithfulness to the Bible and its doctrines
- ✝ Matthew Cull, recovery from accident
- ✝ Keith Randazzo, praise for his good health report!

Sermon Series on Ephesians

On Sunday, February 18th Pastor Hingle began **preaching a new series on Paul's letter to the Ephesians.** You are encouraged to read this letter in its entirety—only six chapters!—this month. This is a wonderful part of Scripture which addresses such issues as the church, spiritual gifts, and marriage and family roles.

Come Sing in the Choir

Choir practice continues to meet at 9:00 AM on Sunday mornings with our Music Director Leonardo Santos and Worship Leader Randy Roberts. For more information please contact the Church Office.

Mission: Voting Outreach!

On Saturday, March 24th we'll hold a refreshment table for voters from 10:00 AM-12:00 Noon. Please make plans now to contribute a homemade dessert—cookies and brownies are welcome!—and/or to help man the table and greet out neighbors with the love of Christ.

Finally, a Time for Guys!

We have a new adult Sunday School class which is geared for men! Pastor Woody Hingle is leading this group that meets in the Library at 9:30 AM. All men are invited and encouraged to bring friends!

and at Second Harvest!



Read your newsletter online at <http://www.LakeVistaUMC.org>

S.P.A. Ladies To Host Phylliss Schirer Simulcast

Lake Vista's S.P.A. Ladies invite you to join them and women from around the world on April 28th for an inspiring one-day event with Priscilla Shirer!

This global, one-day simulcast focuses on the power of prayer and learning to study God's Word for yourself. It will be brought to you in our Fellowship Hall!

Watch for more details in the coming weeks, and be in prayer about inviting your friends.

Addressing the Skeptics

We will continue discussing Sam Harris' *The Moral Landscape: How Science Can Determine Human Values*, which is a *New York Times* Bestseller.

Harris is a neuroscientist and author of other *New York Times* Bestsellers *The End of Faith* and *Letter to a Christian Nation*. Harris is considered one of the leading New Atheists along with Richard Dawkins.

We will meet on Friday, March 9th and continue our **discussion of Harris' book, chapter 4, "Religion"**. You are invited to join us, regardless of whether you have read the chapter, and bring your lunch (the church will provide the drinks).

Prayer Walk Around the Neighborhood

This month's prayer walk will be Saturday, March 10th from 10:30-11:30 AM . Please join us for this wonderful ministry!

Small Group Offerings

Newcomers are welcome at all the gatherings below!
Wednesday SONrise from 6:30-7:30 AM in the Chapel.
Wonderful Wednesday Bible and book study on the WCA book *A Firm Foundation: The Wesleyan Covenant Association* has recently put out a book called *A Firm Foundation: Hope and Vision for a New Methodist Future*, which consists of several articles by United Methodist ministers who discuss biblical truth in the midst of the current crisis over marriage in our denomination. The study includes a DVD, and we meet in the Fellowship Hall from 7:00-8:00 PM. All are welcome!

The S(tudy), P(ray), A(ct) Ladies meets Tuesdays from 9:00-10:00 AM, alternating between Cheryl Richard's house at 27 Warbler St., and Debby Grimm's house next door at 31 Warbler St. to study Lysa Terkeurst's *Finding I AM: How Jesus Fully Satisfies the Cry of Your Heart*. Partner Breakfast, March 6th, then back to Debby's house on the 13th and 27th and Cheryl's on the 20th.

Sunday School classes for all ages begin at 9:30 AM on Sunday mornings. Adult classes meet in the Parlor and library. Youth and children meet in the Education Building. *Please call Susan in the office (504-288-2242) if you have any questions about any of the above activities.*

A lighthouse for Christ in the heart of the lakefront.

Lake Vista

United Methodist Church

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