

Something to Pray About

By Cindy Sears – August 2009

“WHERE ARE YOU?”

“Will you be loyal to the United Methodist Church, and uphold it by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, and your service?”

I will.

We rejoice to recognize you as members of Christ’s holy church, and bid you welcome to this congregation of the United Methodist Church. With you we renew our vows to uphold it by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, and our service.”

Whenever a person joins our church or becomes a full member through confirmation, that person acknowledges the solemn vow above. Then, our congregation, which is present at the time, reaffirms the same vow before each other and before God.

How many times have you said this vow or reaffirmed it during a worship service? Do you understand that this is a vow before Almighty God?

Vow = a solemn promise in the form of an oath to God.

Oath = a solemn declaration or undertaking.

Promise = an assurance that one will or will not undertake a certain action, behavior, etc.

Assurance – a positive declaration that a thing is true; a solemn promise or guarantee; certainty (from assure = to make certain of, ensure the happening of)

Read over the vow again. Read it slowly. Understand what you have vowed before God to do—to pray, to be present, to give gifts to this church, and to serve in this church. Are you doing all these things regularly and consistently? When you promise to do something, the idea is to do it, whether or not you feel like it; whether or not it is convenient; whether or not it is easy; whether or not it helps you personally; whether or not it makes you feel comfortable or better or happier; whether or not it’s raining or sunny or cold or hot; whether or not you like the people you are serving with; whether or not you approve of every ministry effort of the church; whether or not someone thanks you for your effort or gifts; whether or not someone praises what you do; whether or not anyone else in the church is doing their part to obey the same vow.

God makes changes to our church membership through death or movement of people in or out of our fellowship. God brought you to this church. He gave you a spiritual gift or gifts. He gave you your job (yes, He did it, not you). Now, He expects you to use your gift(s) in service to this church and community (including the community at your place of employment); He expects you to give generously to the work of this church—in money and time and effort. We need you to step up and not only affirm your vows to this church and to God, but to act on them. We need teachers and assistants. We need prayers and people to pray. We need cooks and bakers. We need people willing to lend a hand to families dealing with sickness or financial troubles. We need a larger education building. We need drivers, plumbers, cleaners, nursery workers, organizers, painters, visionaries, prophets, singers, hospitality givers. The places and types of service are limited only by your imagination and your willingness to serve.

The question is will you act upon your vow? And when you stand before the Lord Jesus Christ after death or rapture, will He be able to say: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant?” (Hebrews 10:25)

Living before the face of God —Cindy Sears

See 1 Corinthians 12:4-11ff and 1 Peter 4:10, 11b about spiritual gifts and our responsibility to use them in the service of our Lord and Savior.