

The Beginning
April 24, 2008

Yesterday marked the beginning of General Conference. For those of you that may not know what General Conference is, it is a once-ever-four-year gathering of United Methodists from all around the world. Elected delegates meet for 10 days to set the agenda for our denomination.

They make decisions about mission and ministry for our church. They are the only group that can officially speak for the United Methodist Church. They make decisions on many of the major social issues of our day. It can be an exciting event. I will be following the events of General Conference via the internet from www.umc.org and following the Links to General Conference.

It has long been my practice, whenever a Church Conference such as this comes up to take time to pray for those who are there, making decisions on our behalf. I have found that prayer is a great way to begin something new. It invites God's presence and wisdom to be felt and made known through all the proceedings.

Whenever we begin something new in our life, whether it be a new job, a new role, a new journey, it is important for us to remember to take time to pray and lift up that newness to God. It makes such a difference for us to take time to pray and invite God with us on the journey.

I meet regularly with a group of men on Friday's for prayer and reflection on how we can live a life of faith. Recently, one of the men in the group said, "I am finding that this actually is changing me. I am more relaxed, more calm that I have been in the past. I find that I react to things differently." Everyone around the table agreed.

For me, that is what prayer does. It helps me to make better decisions. Because it helps me understand that I am not alone. Have you taken time for prayer recently? Do you have a normal time for prayer and for spiritual growth in your life? If not, I would encourage you to begin carving out time for God.

If you are beginning a new venture soon, take time to pray and invite God to be a part of it from the very beginning. While you are at it, please take time to pray for the 992 delegates to General Conference and the decisions they will be making over the remaining days. Please continue to pray for our denomination and our Congregation that we may remain faithful to the task of forming disciples for Jesus Christ.

In the hope Jesus offers us,
Rev. Scott Carlson

The Mission of Sun Prairie United Methodist Church is to invite and welcome people to be committed and compassionate followers of Jesus Christ through worship, through spiritual growth, through fellowship and through service to others.