

**From the Heart**      September 19<sup>th</sup>,2002

**Pastor John Hicks**

**First United Methodist Church**

*“ For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”    Jeremiah 29:11*

It was a sad event what happened on that day  
That made so many people go away.

And it kindled almost all the way down  
And still 5,000 lives have not been found.

I endorse that our army will come back live and free,  
And that we will remember all the people who fought for our country.

And Lord, be our children’s mentor – help us teach them right from wrong.  
And help us, Lord, to still hold strong.

And let there be zest at the end,  
And let us rejoice and be glad in it -- Amen.

This poem was written by eighth grader Kristin Way in response to what happened on September 11<sup>th</sup>. What happened on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 had an impact on our nation, and on our people, and on our youth. What happened September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2002 also had an impact on our nation, our people, and our youth.

Did you notice what happened around our country? People from all backgrounds, from all races, from all political affiliations, from all different churches – young and old, rich and poor – came together to remember those who had fallen; to honor the firefighters, police, EMS, and military personnel who protect us and our nation; and to proclaim and celebrate the spirit of patriotism and freedom that still rings throughout our great country.

This was especially evident in Clewiston with special services and times of remembrance in many different groups and organizations throughout the day. The special evening community service of remembrance was particularly touching to me. The choir of combined voices from churches around our community warmed my heart. The youth of the Tiger Pride Band and the Clewiston High School Advanced Choir blessed my spirit with their contributions. We were up on our feet in appreciation for our fire fighters, police officers, and EMS personnel. Singing our national anthem with the police and firemen color guards holding American flags was what one person described as “awesome”. The spirit of patriotism was alive and flowing as we thanked God and lifted up those who had served and are serving in our armed forces, and ended joining together as one nation, one community, and even as one family singing, “God Bless America”.

For this evening, for this hour, we were one. It didn’t matter what church you went to or even if you didn’t go to church. It didn’t matter whether you were red or yellow, black or white, or even purple or green. It didn’t matter. We were all one together, praising God and celebrating the blessings of being Americans.

For me, it was a glimpse of some of what God wants for us all – to come together – one Lord, one faith, one nation under God. I thank God for all that He has blessed us with. I thank God that in Him, we who are many can become one. I thank God that we are blessed to be a part of this great nation, and I thank God that He gives us a hope and a future -- even in the midst of terrorism. May He always guide our country. May our eyes always be on Him. Today, tomorrow, and always, may God Bless America! Amen!

*(added note: In the hearts of our youth lie the future of our nation. We thank God for the many youth of our community and nation who met at the flag poles of their schools yesterday to pray for our country!)*